

BI 35239492



The Legacy of Cornelius Cardew

Antony Harris

PK



FOR REFERENCE ONLY

**NOT TO BE
TAKEN AWAY**

Thesis submitted in partial completion of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Birmingham Conservatoire

Birmingham City University

February 2011



Abstract

Any direction modern music will take in England will come about only through Cardew, because of him, by way of him. If the new ideas in music are felt today as a movement in England, it's because he acts as a moral force, a moral centre.

Feldman, 1967: 43

These words, uttered by Morton Feldman in 1967, are often cited in the literature surrounding Cornelius Cardew but their veracity is rarely discussed. The extent to which Cardew has been a central figure and force for new ideas in music forms the backbone to this thesis.

This thesis attempts to identify and define a 'Cardew aesthetic': a framework of underpinning principles and values that inform an approach and attitude towards music making. This is achieved through an exploration of Cardew's work, starting with his formative experiences with Stockhausen, the European traditions and his growing sympathies with John Cage and the American experimentalists. The thesis discusses Cardew's developing ideological awareness informed by his work with the Scratch Orchestra, and his ultimate rejection of the avant-garde and experimentalism, and his commitment to Marxism. The thesis identifies the significant threads and traits apparent across this diverse body of work. It argues that they represent a new way of approaching musical activity, and that this is the legacy of Cornelius Cardew.

The thesis then discusses the extent to which this legacy has influenced and informed a range of individuals and groups within a range of contexts. The thesis concludes by suggesting that Cardew was not only a central character in the development of 'new ideas' in the 1960s and 70s but that the Cardew legacy continues to inform practice and thinking, and continues to act as the moral force and centre of which Feldman speaks.

Table of Contents

List of Examples and Illustrations	4
Acknowledgments	6
Introduction	7
Literature Review	9
Research Methods	15
Navigating the Thesis	18
Chapter One: Stockhausen Serves Imperialism	20
Cardew the Polemicist	21
Cardew, Ideology, and the Bourgeoisie	37
Chapter Two: The Formative Years	43
Early Directions	43
Stockhausen's Assistant	47
The American Invasion	52
Chapter Three: Cardew the Bourgeois Composer?	55
The School of Cage	56
<i>Treatise</i> and Cardew the Improviser	65
New Dimensions: The 'School of Cardew'	73

Chapter Four: Scratch: Embodiment and Change	79
The Morley College Experience	80
Assembling for Action	86
Scratch Music and Scratch-Books	90
<i>The Great Learning</i>	99
The Public Face of Scratch	106
The Summer of Discontent	112
'Scratch Music is Dead: Long Live Scratch Music'	117
Chapter Five: Cardew the Revolutionary	121
Art for Whom? The Dilemma of the Bourgeois Artist	122
The Party Line	134
Chapter Six: Music for the Masses	141
'Tentative Experiments'	141
People's Liberation Music	153
Cardew and his Critics	158
The Avant-garde Revisited	165
Death of a Dissident	170
Chapter Seven: Towards a Definition of 'Cardewism'	177
A Lack of Definition	178
Toy Pianos and Squiggly Theremins: Cardew and the Canon	183
Diversity United: The 'Essence' of Cardew	195
A Cardewist Manifesto	209

Chapter Eight: 'Well, Well, Cornelius'	213
Sound and Silence: The Creative Music Movement	215
Founders of Scratch: Howard Skempton and Michael Parsons	227
The Cornelius Cardew Ensemble	238
Apartment House	247
CoMA: Contemporary Music Making for Amateurs	253
Epilogue	263
Appendices	
1 A Scratch Orchestra: draft constitution	272
2 An interview with Howard Skempton	274
3 An interview with John Tilbury	284
4 An interview with Michael Parsons	291
5 An interview with Barry Russell	302
6 An interview with Anton Lukoszevieze	313
7 An interview with Chris Shurety	322
Selected Scores	333
Selected Discography	335
Bibliography	337

List of examples and illustrations

2.1 Cardew, <i>String Trio No 1</i> (1954)	45
2.2 Cardew, <i>Third Piano Sonata</i> (1958)	46
2.3 An example of a 'snappy item'	49
3.1 Cardew, <i>Memories of You</i> (1964)	56
3.2 John Cage, detail from <i>Concert for Piano and Orchestra</i> (1957-58)	56
3.3 Cardew, <i>February Pieces</i> (1959-61)	58
3.4 Cardew, <i>Autumn '60</i> (1960)	61
3.5 Cardew, <i>Solo With Accompaniment</i> (1964)	62
3.6 Cardew, <i>Octet '61 for Jasper Johns</i> (1961)	64
3.7 Cardew, <i>Treatise</i> , pages 3-5 (1963-67)	69
3.8 Cardew, <i>Volo Solo</i> (1965)	73
4.1 Cardew, <i>The Great Learning</i> , Paragraph 2 (1969)	84
4.2 Double page spread from <i>Scratch Music</i> (1972)	93
4.3 Carol Finer, <i>Scratch Music</i>	95
4.4 John Nash, <i>Scratch Music</i>	95
4.5 Phil Gebbett, <i>Scratch Music</i>	95
4.6 Christopher May, <i>Scratch Music</i>	95
4.7 Bryn Harris, <i>Scratch Music</i>	95
4.8 Stella Cardew, <i>Scratch Music</i>	97
4.9 Tim Mitchell, <i>Scratch Music</i>	97
4.10 Cardew, <i>The Great Learning</i> , Paragraph 4 (1970)	101
4.11 Cardew, <i>The Great Learning</i> , Paragraph 7 (1969)	103
6.1 Cardew, <i>The Turtle Dove</i> from <i>Three Bourgeois Songs</i> (1973)	144

6.2 Cardew, <i>The Proletariat Seeks to Transform the World</i> (1971)	146
6.3 Cardew, <i>The Red Flag</i> (1972)	148
6.4 Cardew, <i>Father Murphy</i> (1973)	150
6.5 Cardew, <i>Revolution is the Main Trend</i> (1974)	151
6.6 Cardew, <i>Soon</i> (1971)	166
8.1 Dennis, 'Material No 6' from <i>Experimental Music in Schools</i> (1970)	218
8.2 Skempton, <i>Islands and Caves</i> (1975)	219
8.3 Paynter and Aston, 'Shapes into Music' from <i>Sound and Silence</i> (1970)	221
8.4 Skempton, <i>A Humming Song</i> (1967)	228
8.5 Skempton, <i>Saltaire Melody</i> (1977)	229
8.6 Skempton, <i>Of Late</i> (1992)	230
8.7 Parsons, <i>Walk</i> (1969)	231
8.8 Skempton, <i>The Durham Strike</i> (1985)	234
8.9 Parsons, <i>Piano Piece May 2003</i> (2003)	236
8.10 Russell, <i>Stags, hens and inflatable sheep</i> (2000)	240
8.11 Russell, <i>songlines and LONGlines</i> (1998)	243

Acknowledgments

In 1995, I attended the inaugural concert given by the Cornelius Cardew Ensemble at University College Bretton Hall. Knowing nothing of Cardew, I was surprised to find he was not actually a member of the ensemble due to his being allegedly assassinated 14 years previously. This was my kind of composer I figured. My first debt of gratitude therefore must go to Professor Barry Russell and members of the Cornelius Cardew Ensemble for planting this seed and for the ensuing discussions and opportunities.

Birmingham Conservatoire has provided me with a valuable supervision team: Dr Mark Lockett has proved to be a constant source of knowledge and illumination; Dr Steve Halfyard has pored over my text and taught me how to write with clarity; Howard Skempton has provided the historical integrity this project needed and his thoughts are referenced extensively throughout the text. Thanks also to Professor Peter Johnson, Head of Research, my external examiner Professor Lucy Green, and Dr Julia Winterson for her brutal but invaluable notes and guidance.

I am particularly indebted to those individuals who gave their time to talk to me openly and at length about Cornelius and their own work – Michael Parsons, John Tilbury, Dave Smith, Chris Shurety, Anton Lukoszevieve – and those others whose snatched conversations have been more valuable than they are probably aware.

Lastly, special thanks to my wife Jane for providing me with the love and stability needed to finish this thing, and Darwin for keeping me sane in the final months.

TH

June 2010

Introduction

Cornelius Cardew is an enigma. Depending on which sources one consults he is at once an influential and iconic figure of British musical culture and a marginal curiosity, a footnote to a misguided musical phenomenon. He is both praised for his uncompromising commitment to world-changing politics, and mocked for being blindly caught up in a maelstrom of naïve political folly. His works are both widely lauded as landmark achievements of the British avant-garde, and ridiculed as archaic and an irrelevant aside to the established musical culture. Even the events of his death are shrouded in mystery and lack a sense of closure.

As long ago as 1967, Morton Feldman cited Cardew as an influential figure, central to the future of modern music-making:

Any direction modern music will take in England will come about only through Cardew, because of him, by way of him. If the new ideas in music are felt today as a movement in England, it's because he acts as a moral force, a moral centre.

Feldman, 1967: 43

These words are now a regular feature of the literature associated with Cardew, yet their veracity is rarely discussed. The chapters that follow will demonstrate that Cardew was an original thinker, a charismatic leader, an able facilitator, and a committed activist. They will argue that he exerted considerable influence on numerous individuals and groups. But they will also argue that Cardew is a figure whose significance has been variously underestimated, undermined and misrepresented. They attempt to demonstrate that Feldman's prophecy stands up to scrutiny and that Cardew has indeed played a central part in the emergence of 'new ideas' in the 1960s and 70s and their perpetuation since.

The genesis of this investigation dates back to 1998 and my experiences working as a secondary school music teacher. Having first come into contact with the music and ideas of Cardew and the Scratch Orchestra as an undergraduate I decided to form a school Scratch Orchestra, informed by Cardew's original draft constitution (see appendix one).¹ The constitution was re-written in student-friendly language but broadly maintained the original ethos and categories of activity. The school Scratch Orchestra was a democratic organization, open to anyone who wished to join, committed to the performance of a range of music, including sharing and developing their own newly devised ideas and improvising. The first year of the Orchestra's existence culminated in the public outdoors performance of *Romeo and Juliet*, a production devised and directed by students with an original score created and performed by the school Scratch Orchestra. The relevance of the project to this thesis is that it was, for me, an embodiment of a rather vague and ad hoc understanding of what I perceived to be a Cardew approach – Shakespeare and contemporary music, devised as a democratic process between participants of a varied range of experience and ability, presented to an open public, for no cost, in an unconventional setting, and accessible to people who might not otherwise have the opportunity or inclination to access either Shakespeare or contemporary music. The direct adoption of what I considered to be a Cardew approach seemed to positively contribute to young people's lives.

Following this experience I became aware that nowhere in the sources relating to Cardew does this approach seem to be defined or investigated. I had somehow picked up a sense of Cardew's 'essence'. I had experienced its value at first hand, but could not locate confirmation of my experience in any of the expected places. I was not at all certain what the essence of Cardew actually was. This thesis seeks to address that void. It attempts to identify and define a 'Cardew aesthetic': a framework of underpinning

¹ The Scratch Orchestra and the draft constitution are discussed in chapter four.

principles and values that inform an approach and attitude towards music making. It identifies the significant threads and character traits apparent across the diverse body of Cardew's work and argues that they represent a new way of approaching musical activity. The thesis suggests that this aesthetic is the legacy of Cornelius Cardew.

Literature Review

The literature base relating directly to Cardew is relatively slim. His own writing is dominated by the polemical *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* (Cardew, 1974a), to be dissected in chapter one, though this was preceded by a variety of more modest outputs. Cardew contributed reviews and commentaries to numerous publications with some regularity throughout the 1960s, seemingly establishing himself as something of an authority on the leading avant-garde and experimental figures of the day: La Monte Young (1962c, 1966b, 1967a), Morton Feldman (1962b), Karlheinz Stockhausen (1961a, 1961b, 1965b, 1966a, 1967b), John Cage (1962a) and his collaborations with Merce Cunningham (1964b), Christian Wolff and Earle Brown (1962a) and a review of the final concert of the 1964 Darmstadt summer school (1964a). These, mostly brief, pieces provide glimpses of Cardew's emerging attitudes towards the diverging trends of the day. He describes, for instance, Berg's music as having 'superficial clarity rather than depth and richness of expression' (Cardew, 1964a in Prévost, 2006: 65) and Stockhausen's works of the 1950s as being in 'a very self devouring phase, obsessively concerned with internal problems of musical organization' (Cardew, 1965b in Prévost, 2006: 72). Cage's work, on the other hand, is described as being 'unquestionably the most important development in musical composition since the war, and will exert more influence on the future evolutions and changes in composition and performance than the work of any European composers' (Cardew, 1964b: 659–60).

Elsewhere, Cardew's preoccupation with notational precedents and developments is in evidence. 'Notation – Interpretation, etc.' (1961c) discusses a range of 'new' notations and their implementation, drawing on work by Cage, Feldman, Wolff and Stockhausen alongside reference to how this was informing Cardew's own work of that period. Some of the ideas presented here are picked up again in Cardew's discussion of *Autumn '60* (1962b), and later once again in the *Treatise Handbook* (1971a). Additionally, two reports on the creation of Stockhausen's *Carré* – on which Cardew collaborated with Stockhausen – were filed with *The Musical Times* (1961a, 1961b) and represent the earliest published evidence of Cardew's growing disaffection with the European traditions that seemed to hold sway in the early 1960s. These are discussed in chapter two.

Other writings of significance include the essay 'Towards an Ethic of Improvisation' (1968a) that appears in a number of places, most notably in the *Treatise Handbook* (1971a). The essay springs from the period in which Cardew was becoming increasingly consumed by notions of improvised music and represents an important turning point in his attitude towards music making, immediately preceding the inception of the Scratch Orchestra of which the 'draft constitution' (1969a), *Nature Study Notes* (1971b), and *Scratch Music* (1972a) are the significant starting points. Other important direct sources are the often brief but illuminating performance and introductory notes to his scores, most notably *Octet '61 for Jasper Johns* (1961d), *February Pieces for Piano* (1961e), *Four Works* (1966) and *Piano Album* (1973), all of which provide insights into Cardew's attitudes and are referred to elsewhere in this thesis.

Following *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* Cardew's published output significantly diminishes and what is available is provocatively challenging. 'Wiggly Lines and Wobbly Music' (1976a) continues where *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* finishes in its deconstruction of the 'new' notations Cardew previously expounded. More recently,

transcripts of speeches and talks Cardew gave at various events have become available (1974b, c1978, 1980). Other useful sources from this period include interviews with Cardew: a particularly provocative exchange with Adrian Jack (1975) in which Jack challenges Cardew's political stance, and a more sympathetic approach from Keith Potter (1975). Parsons (1974) and Tilbury (1981, 1982b) also discuss Cardew's overtly political phase from Cardew's own contemporary perspective.

1974 saw the original publication of Michael Nyman's *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond* (Nyman, 1999), now regarded as a seminal text. The work was significant in the attention it gave to the experimental scene in England. It also highlighted the gulf between the avant-garde and experimental traditions that Cardew pre-supposed in his earlier writings. Through his discussion of a range of experimental musical practice Nyman essentially attempts to define experimental music:

I shall make an attempt to isolate and identify what experimental music is, and what distinguishes it from the music of such avant-garde composers as Boulez, Kagel, Xenakis, Birtwistle, Berio, Stockhausen, Bussotti, which is conceived and executed along the well-trodden but sanctified path of the post-Renaissance tradition.²

Nyman, 1999: 1

The identification of 'experimental music' as a distinct musical phenomenon, and the prominence Nyman affords to Cardew and those associated with him, set the scene for future investigative work into this area. This work was not quickly forthcoming however, and literature on Cardew is characterized by a dearth of sources from the period immediately following Cardew's death in 1981. For many years John Tilbury's

² This distinction between the avant-garde and experimental labels is less well defined in the literature preceding Nyman's book, the terms being employed loosely and, at times, interchangeably. Cardew himself variously labels Cage as an 'experimental' composer (for instance, 1964b: 660), yet later referring to Cage as an exponent of the avant-garde (1974a: 33) demonstrating the flexibility with which the language of the time was employed. For purposes of clarity and consistency this thesis employs the terms according to what is now broadly accepted: the 'avant-garde' refers to music that, while often extreme, exists within the established tradition – such as the European serialism of the 1950s and 60s – and 'experimental' music refers to music that sits outside this tradition. In the context of Cardew this relates to his early exposure to the 'avant-garde' traditions of Europe and his later emergence as an 'experimental' composer informed by Cage and the American school.

biographical essay (1983) was the only authoritative overview of Cardew's work, and as such is referenced extensively throughout the thesis. Barrett (1987) is also a valuable source in providing a broad overview of the Cardew story. Virginia Anderson's MA thesis of 1983, *British Experimental Music: Cornelius Cardew and his Contemporaries*, represented the first investigative academic work into Cardew just two years after his death. Informed by a range of interviews with those who worked with Cardew it is notable for its discussion of Cardew's earlier work and the activities of the Scratch Orchestra. Rod Eley (1974) had already provided 'A History of the Scratch Orchestra 1969-1972' as the first chapter of *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* and Anderson complements what is a rather personal and overtly Marxist perspective with a more objective account. This was, again, an academic endeavour that seemed to fail to gather momentum, however, with nothing relating to the Scratch Orchestra appearing until the Orchestra's 30th Anniversary Symposium in 1999 (Ascough, Parsons & Chant, 1999).

Journal articles have been scarce with just a handful of notable texts. Timothy D. Taylor's 'Moving in Decency: The Music and Radical Politics of Cornelius Cardew' (1998) was the first piece to critically assess Cardew's political stance and contradictions, and as such is increasingly referred to in the slowly growing literature base. Michael Parson's 'The Scratch Orchestra and the Visual Arts' (2001) reflects on the continuing but rarely discussed influence of the Scratch phenomenon beyond the field of music. Coriun Aharonián's 'Cardew as a Basis for a Discussion on Ethical Options' (2001) is significant in being the first work to begin considering the notion of a Cardew aesthetic as something that might inform future generations. Additionally, Dennis (1991) looks specifically at the visual aspects of Cardew's *Treatise*, Anderson (2004a) investigates the use of Chinese characters in Cardew's *The Great Learning*, and my own modest offerings (Harris, 2004 and 2008) present ideas investigated through this thesis. The only PhD thesis to appear has been Walker (1995) until Virginia Anderson's own thesis was

completed in 2004 (Anderson, 2004b), though both of these are concerned with British experimental music more broadly. In the non-academic press, *The Wire* published its first detailed account of Cardew's work in 2001 (Cowley, 2001), a publication that seemed to coincide with a more general emergence of largely internet-based interest in Cardew, and the releases of a number of new and re-issued recordings.

In the more general writings on 20th century music Cardew tends to attract little or no attention. The significance projected by Nyman is rarely corroborated and Cardew is most often discussed in the shadow of Cage and Stockhausen. Paul Griffiths' *Modern Music* (1996) is such an example. Cardew is afforded a brief mention for bringing Cage's ideas to London and for later adopting a more directly political approach (Griffiths, 1996: 184). A page from *The Great Learning* is reproduced but, curiously, not discussed. In Griffiths' defence the text is only intended to be 'a concise history'. In Alex Ross' recent *The Rest is Noise* (2008), a widely acclaimed and otherwise comprehensive account of music in the twentieth century, Cardew is mentioned in passing just twice: firstly, in reference to him being Stockhausen's assistant and later on as Stockhausen's former assistant (Ross, 2008: 459–60). Salzman's *Twentieth-Century Music* (1988) similarly name-checks Cardew as Stockhausen's assistant along with a passing mention of *Treatise* and the Scratch Orchestra (Salzman, 1988: 214). Morgan's *Twentieth-Century Music* (1991) devotes four paragraphs to Cardew, identifying him a figure of note, though dismissing the later work as 'nothing so much as nineteenth-century salon music' (Morgan, 1991: 458). Lebrecht's *The Complete Companion to 20th Century Music* (2000) is simply incorrect, implying that the Scratch Orchestra was a result of Cardew's conversion to Maoism, and seemingly then confusing it with the Portsmouth Sinfonia (Lebrecht, 2000: 68).

The broader perception of Cardew and his work would, then, appear to be as a marginal figure. One area in which there seems to be greater recognition is in the field of music

education. There are a couple of specific references to Cardew in Paynter and Aston's seminal text of 1970, *Sound and Silence*, and to experimental music and the avant-garde more widely in some of the associated literature: Paynter (1972, 1982 and 1992), Dennis (1970 and 1975), Self (1967 and 1976), Schafer (1967, 1970 and 1975). The influence of these texts is discussed in Pitts (2000) and Rainbow with Cox (2006), though not with specific reference to Cardew. Laycock (2005) does make a direct link with Cardew, citing his influence on the way some composers practice, especially within education and community settings. These texts will be considered more thoroughly in chapter eight.

Two recent publications have helped to raise the status of Cardew, particularly within the academic world. In 2006 Copula Press published *Cornelius Cardew: A Reader* (Prévost, 2006) a collection of most of the available literature published by Cardew himself and commentaries by others dating from 1959–2001, much of it reviewed here. The result is a fascinating but relatively slim volume that offered nothing new to the public domain except a brief introduction by Parsons and the ability to access this material without the copious detective work. Most significantly, in 2008, shortly before the submission of this thesis, John Tilbury published his epic and comprehensive biography of Cardew, 25 years in the making, helping to establish a basis for illuminating our knowledge about Cardew (Tilbury, 2008). This thesis complements the historical sources, the limited academic investigation, and Tilbury's considerable biographical detail by laying the foundations for what we might call 'Cardew studies'. This thesis considers *why* Cardew should be investigated, *why* his work remains relevant almost 30 years after his death, and *why* he should not be relegated to a footnote in the history of British music-making.

Research Methods

Alongside the historical documents and existing texts this thesis is significantly informed by a series of interviews conducted by the author with a number of individuals who are either associated directly with Cardew, or whose work is informed by the adoption of what might be a Cardew aesthetic. These interviews were conducted in two batches: firstly, in 2003, I interviewed four individuals who are closely associated with Cardew and all of which were members of the Scratch Orchestra. Later, in 2008, I interviewed a further three individuals who have no direct personal connection to Cardew but whose work could be seen to be significantly shaped by his legacy.

The first batch consisted of Scratch Orchestra founders and composers Howard Skempton and Michael Parsons; pianist and Cardew biographer John Tilbury; and Scratch member and composer Dave Smith. The interviews were semi-structured and were kept as informal as possible. I allowed the interviewees to talk freely and resisted the urge to direct them through my neatly formulated series of questions. Instead, a careful note was made of which areas had been discussed and my questioning followed a 'prompt and probe' model (see, for instance, Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000: 278), probing participants to encourage elucidation of a particular response and prompting to bring the interviewee back to areas not yet considered. The benefit of this approach was that interviewees talked about a good deal more than I was requesting, aided by their willingness to talk enthusiastically without time constraint, and often raising ideas and concerns I had not yet considered myself. These initial interviews, then, played an invaluable part in developing my understanding of the research topic and in shaping the thesis.

These particular interviewees were subjected to a set of identical or similar core questions or themes alongside a set of questions more appropriate to their particular contexts or interests: for instance Skempton, Parsons and Smith were asked about their own work as composers; Tilbury discussed his work as an interpreter of Cardew's music; Smith answered more questions about his work within educational settings. The purpose of this batch of interviews were three-fold: firstly to attempt to establish and verify the historical facts. For instance, all participants were asked to describe a typical Scratch Orchestra meeting and responses were compared. Where historical events have been presented in the thesis as fact they have, wherever possible, been verified by at least two, often more, sources. Secondly, the interviews aimed to establish the extent to which Cardew had informed the individual's own work and, finally, to gather the interviewees' perceptions of how Cardew had influenced others.

Skempton was the first to be interviewed followed by Tilbury, Parsons and Smith. The sequence is significant as subsequent interviewees were sometimes asked questions based on previous responses from their peers, either to verify facts or to gain alternative perspectives on the same issue. Most usefully, Skempton was later subsumed into the supervisory team for this project, allowing me further opportunities to revisit areas of the original interview. Tilbury, Parson and Smith have all made further clarifications by email in the intervening years. The interviews were recorded and are quoted extensively throughout the thesis to support and illustrate historical events and arguments being made. Full transcriptions are included as appendices.³ The transcriptions were made available to the participants to ensure that they had been fairly represented.

³ The interview with Smith has not been included. This was a more spontaneous meeting in a busy pub. While the strategy of the interview followed the same pattern it tended to be considerably rambling and informal, the audio recording poor, and the transcription too disjointed or incoherent to be of any real value as a document. Instead Smith's interview has been relied upon considerably as a verification tool, though I have included a number of short references in the text.

In 2008, once the shape of the thesis had come together, I embarked on the second batch of interviews. These form the basis of the investigations in chapter eight, though they are at times cited elsewhere in the thesis. The intention here was to identify individuals whose work is informed by Cardew and devise a series of questions that encouraged them to make specific links. The interviews followed the same semi-structured approach and the first participant was Cornelius Cardew Ensemble founder and composer Barry Russell. This interview was essentially in two parts as I wished to question Russell on both his work with the Cornelius Cardew Ensemble and as a composer who works extensively in education and with young musicians. Next was Anton Lukoszevieze, founder and director of the contemporary music ensemble Apartment House. The objective here was to compare Apartment House with the Cornelius Cardew Ensemble with regards to their perceptions of a Cardew aesthetic. As such, Lukoszevieze was allocated a set of core questions similar to those to which Russell had responded, alongside other questions more specifically relating to Lukoszevieze's work, for instance in relation to recordings or performances by Apartment House.

The final participant was Chris Shurety, founder and director of Contemporary Music Making for Amateurs (CoMA), a UK based organization providing a range of opportunities for amateur and professional musicians to engage with contemporary music. This interview had no particular strategic connection to the others though the opportunity was used to ask Shurety general questions about his perceptions of Cardew and the Scratch Orchestra as well as questions that specifically encouraged making links between Cardew and the work of CoMA.

In addition to this interview material, the thesis is informed by more informal discussions with individuals and chance encounters with people at concerts, forums and conferences, some of whom worked closely with Cardew, and others with varying

degrees of personal interest. I have used these opportunities to verify events and gather a range of opinion and perceptions. They include conversations with Scratch Orchestra members and composers John White, David Jackman, Christopher Hobbs, Hugh Shrapnel, Laurie Scott Baker, Richard Ascough, Trevor Wishart and Michael Chant; AMM founders Eddie Prévost and Keith Rowe; Frederic Rzewski, composer and friend of Cardew; Jos Zwaanenburg, founder and director of the Cornelius Cardew Ensemble; Leif Jordansson, director of Stockholm's Great Learning Orchestra; Chris Coleman, spokesperson for the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist); and fellow Cardew scholar, Virginia Anderson. While such conversations are not cited in the text I hope they lend weight to the authority and reliability of the author's voice in the chapters that follow.

Navigating the Thesis

Chapter one investigates the publication of Cardew's controversial text *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* in 1974 and defines some of the concepts and concerns that increasingly informed his decisions and actions. The following three chapters then go back in time and chart Cardew's musical life from the mid-1950s until the period in which *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* was conceived with a view to assessing how events shaped Cardew's work and thinking. Chapters two and three focus on Cardew's early influences and his work from the late 1950s through the 1960s – the music that falls into what would broadly be described as avant-garde. The fourth chapter is a study of the Scratch Orchestra, a subject worthy of its own thesis, but here employed as a vehicle for exploring the transitional links between Cardew's earlier work and his increasingly political activity. The next two chapters deal mostly with the period following the publication of *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism*. Chapter five considers Cardew's political

position and his involvement with the Communist Party of England⁴; chapter six investigates Cardew's concurrent musical activity and the various critical challenges that accompanied this work.

The musical and professional activities of Cardew were varied, complex and often contradictory. The first six chapters of the thesis exemplify this and demonstrate that Cardew's legacy cannot be defined in historically conventional ways: that is, a body of works, related idiosyncrasies, specific techniques, or a linear development of style. The music is too diverse and the inherent extra-musical activities too significant – and at times too removed from the musical activity – to offer a convincing definition. Chapter seven, therefore, draws together the investigation, identifying alternative threads and traits that seem to underpin the multi-faceted Cardew and offers a broader suggestion of what I come to describe as 'Cardewism' – the sort of definition I had been unable to find following my experience with the school Scratch Orchestra.

Chapter eight stands slightly apart from the main body of the thesis, and offers a more speculative consideration of the influence of 'Cardewism' according to my definition. It takes the form of a series of investigations into a range of individuals, groups and organizations for whom Cardew affords a significant or particular credit, tracing and identifying the extent to which the work of Cardew has informed elements of their work. The epilogue returns to Feldman's predictions and considers the extent to which this thesis has demonstrated the truth of his remarks.

⁴ Later reformed as the Revolutionary Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist).

Stockhausen Serves Imperialism

The American composer and writer John Cage, born 1912, and the German composer Karlheinz Stockhausen, born 1928 have emerged as the leading figures of the bourgeois musical avant-garde. They are ripe for criticism.

Cardew 1974a: 33

The career of Cornelius Cardew was characterized by changes of direction and contradictions, but the publication in 1974 of his book *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* offers the most dramatic of departures. Cardew had for the previous decade been a widely lauded exponent of the avant-garde, and was considered by many to be Britain's leading figure of radical music making. *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* changed this perception. Written from a Marxist perspective and littered with the language of the revolutionary, Cardew launched a series of attacks on those he considered to be figures of the bourgeois musical fraternity¹, notably and vehemently Cage and Stockhausen. Most startling is the dismissal of his own work as 'just as backward as anything a Cage or a Stockhausen is capable of' (ibid: 79), the final chapter of the book being a repudiation of his earlier works.

In my early career as a bourgeois composer I had been part of the 'school of Stockhausen' from about 1956-60, working as Stockhausen's assistant and collaborating with him on a giant choral and orchestral work. From 1958-68 I was also part of the 'school of Cage' and throughout the sixties I had energetically propagated, through broadcasts, concerts and articles in the press, the work of both composers. This was a bad thing and I will not offer excuses for it.

Cardew, 1974a: 33

¹ Cardew's use of the term 'bourgeois' in *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* is in reference to what he considers to be a 'bourgeois society', that is, a society where the workers (including artists) are in the employ of capitalists who exert ideological influence on their subjects (Cardew, 1974a: 5). An artist who fails or refuses to challenge this status quo is deemed to be bourgeois. This notion is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

This was, then, a defining moment in an already turbulent career. It is against this backdrop that the first three chapters will explore the early work and thinking of Cardew.

The nature of Cardew's objections to his own and others' work in *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* is complex but crucial in assessing his creative and compositional journey up to that point. This chapter adopts a chronologically anomalous starting point by providing a broad overview of his thinking at the time of the book's publication in 1974, and defining some of the terms and concepts that form the basis of Cardew's argument. From this, the proceeding chapters chart Cardew's creative career from the mid 1950s, through to the point at which the 1974 crossroads were reached. This survey will take into account a range of important influences, both musically and ideologically, and provide details of Cardew's work in the fields of performance and improvisation alongside his compositional output. It is not intended, however, for this to simply be a biographical timeline of Cardew's early career, but that it should prepare the ground for the later discussion as to what defines Cardew's legacy. The notion of 'distinctiveness' will become an important thread throughout the thesis with a focus on the need to identify not only what Cardew's creative starting points were, but also how his reactions to such starting points shaped his thinking and what he personally injected into the avant-garde and experimental traditions.

Cardew the Polemicist

Stockhausen Serves Imperialism is a polemic and Cardew was acutely aware of the limitations of such a polemic. Within the first few lines of its introduction he questions the 'importance and significance of polemics such as those in this book in the context of the class struggles surging around us in the imperialist heartlands today' (Cardew

1974a: 5). He later goes on to admit that this book can play no active part in those class struggles and that it is 'irrelevant to the working class movement' (ibid: 8). Rather, the book is perhaps an expression of Cardew's ideological awareness, in the hope of instigating sympathy in its readers.

Stockhausen Serves Imperialism is stylistically of its time. Some 21st century readers may baulk at the language of class warfare, of the enemy in the form of the bourgeoisie, of the decay and imminent collapse of imperialism. *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* is steeped in this kind of socialist language and is at times aggressive in tone. In addition, we read it with hindsight – the revolution never came and capitalism has so far failed to self-destruct according to Marxist predictions – and its arguments can seem archaic, sometimes even quaint. Tilbury, generally an advocate of Cardew's arguments, notes that the 'irksome tone of *certainty*, of *irrefutability*, will persuade some readers simply to disengage from the argument' (Tilbury, 2008: 734).

It would be easy, then, to dismiss such a polemic as naïve or misguided, but this would serve to undermine an era of British political history that played an important role in the shaping of future generations. A number of ongoing phenomena – anti-capitalist activism, anti-war demonstration, green politics, trade unionism – owe varying degrees of debt to the radicalization of political thinking of the 1960s and '70s, some aspects of which (notably green issues) have since informed mainstream politics. Instead *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* should be approached with some acknowledgment of the cultural and political climate in which it was written – amid the Zeitgeist of socialist revolutionary fervour. As a result this is not intended as a contemporary critique on Cardew's political position, but instead an evaluation of Cardew's political and ideological position circa 1974.

In supporting his attacks upon Stockhausen and Cage, Cardew presents a process for critiquing avant-garde music as a means of assessing its worth within the assumed revolutionary socialist context. The process demonstrates a typically Marxist systematic logic and takes the form of a seven-step plan. Firstly, Cardew directs the critic to the score itself with a view to uncovering any 'superficial formal contradictions' (Cardew 1974a: 81) inherent in the piece. This might, for instance, be evidence of a disparity between the intention of a given piece of avant-garde music and its actual outcomes, or the manifestation of an artificial means of communication through notational precedents that may negate the intended dialogue between composer and performer, or composer and audience. The second phase of critique goes beyond the superficial and requires the critic 'to uncover the ideas that it embodies, expose its content ... whether they truly reflect what we know about the real world' (ibid), the 'real world' being defined as the bourgeois society dominated by the Marxist concept of exchange-value² and, most importantly, the struggle to change this society.

Cardew is dealing here with the notion of 'content' best examined by turning to Theodor Adorno. Adorno repeatedly states that an object of art contains a 'truth-content' that is to be found *in* the art object as opposed to the external social or philosophical concerns, and is not diminished or altered by the subjectivity of the creator or the consumer. Adorno claims that this content is cognitive in nature, though not in an instructional sense. Rather, the truth-content requires philosophical interpretation (Jarvis, 1998: 104; Zuidervaart, 1991: 194–6), of the type that perhaps Cardew is referring to in his plan for critiquing the avant-garde.

² 'Exchange-value' is the interpretation of the socio-economic system that underpins *The Communist Manifesto*: 'It [the bourgeoisie] has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom – Free Trade' (Marx & Engels, 2004: 6). For the benefit of this thesis I will use the term to broadly denote the type of society Cardew opposes.

The truth content of artworks cannot be immediately identified. Just as it is known only mediately, it is mediated in itself. What transcends the factual in the artwork, its spiritual content, cannot be pinned down to what is individually, sensually given but is, rather, constituted by way of this empirical givenness. This defines the mediatedness of the truth content.

Adorno, 2004: 170

Cardew is suggesting that this 'empirical givenness' be the starting point for assessing the validity of an artwork within a revolutionary socialist context, and that validity will always be mediated, or compromised, by its empirical givenness. In simple terms, a bourgeois composer can only create a bourgeois music, which in the context of a world defined by its struggle to overcome the bourgeois phenomenon is not a valid reflection of that world. Furthermore, Adorno's aesthetic theory is centred on the proposition that art's struggle for autonomy has undermined its very purpose:

As a result of its inevitable withdrawal from theology, from the unqualified claim to the truth of salvation, secularization without which art would never have developed, art is condemned to provide the world as it exists with a consolation that – shorn of any hope of a world beyond – strengthens the spell of that from which the autonomy of art wants to free itself.

Adorno, 2004: 2

The idea of 'strengthening the spell' is a theme that plays throughout *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism*, the spell in this context being bourgeois society, and with Cage and Stockhausen being accused of strengthening it. Despite this apparent sympathy with Adornoian thinking there is no evidence that Cardew engaged with the works of Adorno at any point in his life. Indeed, Tilbury suggests that he demonstrated a distinct lack of enthusiasm for Adorno and the Frankfurt School³ (Tilbury, 2008: 59-60 and 723) despite its prevalence in the circles in which Cardew initially moved, noting that this reluctance was 'an interesting, even reckless exclusion, and in light of this later political involvement, perhaps a fatal one' (ibid: 118). The similarities are more likely to have seeped through the distillation of the Frankfurt School's ideas within the musical and

³ The Frankfurt School is the commonly used description of a group of Marxist theorists based at the Institute for Social Research, founded in 1923, at the University of Frankfurt am Main and with which Adorno was associated from the 1930s onwards. Other prominent figures included Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse and Walter Benjamin.

intellectual communities he engaged with, especially (and perhaps unknowingly) in the early years in Cologne explored in chapter two.

Having tackled the internal content and contradiction of the artwork, the next three steps of Cardew's plan deal with investigations of external factors – the cultural environment and the avant-garde's place within it; the ever-changing social and economic factors and how they 'mould that cultural environment' (Cardew, 1974a: 81); and the role of political forces in shaping the manifestation of our cultural environment and therefore the avant-garde. The final two steps of the process require the critic to recognize that the avant-garde is therefore an embodiment of ideas that are 'characteristic of the ruling class' (ibid: 82) and that, worse still, the avant-garde actively supports the continued existence of the regime, through the absence of any challenge to it.

Because these ideas are reactionary and do not accurately reflect the present stage of our knowledge of the world, we see that their forms of expression are contradictory and incoherent, like the words of a liar who has lost all hope of deceiving his audience.

Cardew, 1974a: 82

This again demonstrates Cardew's position that the revolutionary's struggle is not simply part of the existing culture but defines the world as it exists. Cardew also demonstrates a preoccupation with the 'truth' that informs 'our knowledge of the world' and, as shall be discussed in subsequent chapters, 'honesty', that is, how we respond to a perceived truth.

The concept of truth has occupied philosophers throughout the ages. Truth is essentially that which 'signifies agreement with reality' (Kolakowski, 2008: 324), the difficulty being that the definition of truth is then dependent on reality – an even more complexly debated philosophical concept. Hegel states that 'the True is the whole. But the whole is

nothing other than the essence consummating itself through its development' (Hegel, 1977: 11) meaning that knowledge is only significant in terms of how it relates to the 'total history of Being' (Kolakowski, 2008: 51). This Hegelian notion of truth⁴ informed Marx and Engels who maintained that it is impossible for our knowledge of the world to ever attain absolute validity and that truth is therefore an ongoing process and relative to known theoretical concepts (ibid: 324): 'It is, therefore, the task of history, once the other-world of truth has vanished [the pre-enlightened world of religion and theology], to establish the truth of this world' (Marx, 1970: online). That which contributes to our knowledge of the world is 'true', that which does not is 'false' or, at least, invalid. This seems to be the interpretation of truth that Cardew gravitates toward: a truth that is relative to a world he considers is 'known' to be dominated by bourgeois society and the struggle against it. The concept is further muddied by the Marxism-Leninism that informed the political party of which he was a member.⁵ The Russian language contains two words for truth: *istina*, denoting the common understanding of that in agreement with what is known, and *pravda*, which carries moral compass – what is 'right' or 'should be'. Cardew seems happy to adopt whichever form suits his argument, as demonstrated shortly.

As a working example of this approach, and perhaps to pre-empt obvious critical responses, Cardew critiques his own graphic work *Treatise*, 'a large-scale opus on which I wasted more hours of craftsmanship and intellectual effort than I care to recall' (ibid: 92). *Treatise*, to be discussed in more detail in chapter three, is an elaborate 193-page sequence of graphic notations to be interpreted at the performers' discretion. The 'superficial formal contradictions' in such a work lie in the relationships between the composer, the score, the performer or performers, and ultimately the audience. Along

⁴ This is part of a much broader philosophy of the mind, expressed in the preface to *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Hegel, 1977).

⁵ Cardew's political party involvement is discussed in chapter five. Extensive biographical detail of this period of Cardew's life is found in Tilbury (2008).

with his contemporaries, Cardew was intent on exploring the possibilities of new and alternative notations as a vehicle for liberating the traditional barriers between composer and performer, and blurring the boundaries between composition and improvisation. But according to Cardew's interpretations of 'truth' and how it informs our knowledge of the real world the score is exposed as flawed. Cardew argues that implicit in the concept of *Treatise* is the idea that 'anything can be transformed into anything' (Cardew, 1974a: 84), a criticism he also levels at works by Cage, Stockhausen and Boulez.

Now everybody knows (not only Marxists and farmers) that a stone, no matter how much heat you apply to it, will never hatch into a chicken. And that even an egg won't hatch into a chicken without the right external conditions.

Cardew, 1974a: 84

Here Cardew is critiquing *Treatise* against truth in its *istina* sense: we know that things cannot be transformed into anything else and this is a 'superficial formal contradiction' of the score. *Treatise* takes as its starting point the assumption that a sequence of graphically represented shapes and symbols can be transformed into a sonic form. However, musicians in a performance of *Treatise* are not communicating the shapes and symbols to the audience through music, but rather their preoccupations with and observations of them.⁶ Instead, the score acts as a barrier between performer and audience, a barrier that effectively inhibits the communication of truth. The result is what Cardew describes as a falsification rather than an intensification of our understanding of the world (ibid: 84). Here, Cardew is employing the *pravda* understanding of truth: the validity of *Treatise* as a creative or aesthetic exercise is undermined by the fact it is based on an untruth relative to Cardew's interpretation of the real world. The result is that, in the words of Adorno, *Treatise* 'strengthens the spell'. In addition, the performance convention of a composer or performer asserting to the audience that they are hearing *Treatise* would also be considered by Cardew to be an

⁶ This is an accusation that could be levelled at any piece of notated music. The significance here, which is discussed in chapter three, is that *Treatise* was not conceived as a notation of sonic events but rather as a visual composition that can be transformed into sound.

untruth or a manipulation of fact. Rather, the audience are hearing the performers' musings on *Treatise*.

A continuation of Cardew's seven-step process reveals that *Treatise* – on a surface level at least – is very much a product of the culture in which it was created. While not a comfortable inclusion within the classical musical establishment of the time it still adheres, if more flexibly, to the roles of composer, performer and audience. It is Cardew's name, after all, that appears on the score and is given prominence in any programme note. This alone differentiates the work from the rock, jazz and folk music cultures of the day, where it is the performer who is primarily associated with any given piece of music. *Treatise* sits squarely within avant-garde culture, and against the wider musical landscape the avant-garde could be considered a music of cerebral aesthetics, for the delectation and stimulation of the intellectual elite. Cardew produces the goods for the benefit of those with the necessary privilege to consume them. This phenomenon of the producer-consumer relationship and its application to the arts of the western world is an inevitable effect of the economic culture-system of commoditisation, in itself a manifestation of a capitalist society.⁷ *Treatise*, as a work of avant-garde art, makes no attempt to challenge this: ergo it is 'bad'. A work such as *Treatise* is, according to this critique, an embodiment of the bourgeois ideal – the composer dealing not with the truth (be it *istina* or *pravda*) but with the manipulation, and therefore exploitation, of the audience. The composer exerts authority, and the audience is subservient to it. This process essentially replicates, or perhaps even celebrates, the bourgeois exchange-value dominated society.

⁷ This is an argument that resonates with Adorno's discussions of the 'culture industry' from the 1930s onwards (notably Adorno, 1991 & Adorno, 2002), though there is no evidence that Cardew was familiar with this work.

While Cardew's repudiation of his own work characterizes *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* he saves his most vitriolic attacks for the work of Stockhausen and Cage. Stockhausen's work is assessed according to the broadest definition of the imperialist regime – 'the cultural superstructure of the largest scale system of human oppression and exploitation the world has ever known' (Cardew, 1974a: 47). The stick with which Stockhausen is beaten is his 1959 work *Refrain* – a piece that marks the transition towards the more central concern with mysticism that came to characterize much of Stockhausen's output. This is an immediate impasse for Cardew who perceives such mysticism as a historical vehicle for suppressing communities both large and small, religion and spirituality being what Marx referred to as 'the opium of the people'.⁸ At best, a music that consciously attempts to remove the listener from reality can have no purpose in a world 'struggling towards a momentous revolutionary change' (ibid: 50): at worst, it is a manifestation of the oppressive system and deceives the listener.

It omits to mention that the cells on our bodies are dying daily, that life cannot flourish without death, that holiness disintegrates and vanishes with no trace when it is profaned, and that imperialism has to die so that the people can live.

Cardew, 1974a: 50

Stockhausen, therefore, serves imperialism and this, once again, demonstrates the inextricable link between Cardew's notion of truth and its relation to the struggle against imperialism, the 'truth' that imperialism must die being as absolute as dying cells. Stockhausen's concern with mysticism intensifies Cardew's objections. The foundation for a Marxist stance on religion, spirituality or mysticism is that 'Man makes religion, religion does not make man' (Marx, 1970: online), and that the apparent need to make religion is part of the human condition that must be challenged in the quest for enlightenment:

⁸ The source of this phrase is mostly attributed to the introduction to Marx's 1843 essay *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (Marx, 1970). The sentiments however are previously expressed in the Marquis de Sade's 1797-1801 novel *Juliette*: 'Tis opium you feed your people, so that, drugged, they do not feel their hurts, inflicted by you' (Bloch, 2002: 192).

The struggle against religion is, therefore, indirectly the struggle against that world whose spiritual aroma is religion ... The abolition of religion as the *illusory* happiness of the people is the demand for their *real* happiness. To call on them to give up their illusions about their condition is to call on them to give up a condition that requires illusion.

Marx, 1970: 131

So embedded in the Marxist perspective is this assertion that, for Cardew, the case against Stockhausen need go no further: with characteristic glibness he curtails the detail of his argument against *Refrain* with the claim that 'to go into it in greater detail would simply invest the work with an importance it doesn't have' (Cardew, 1974a: 50).

The work of John Cage is dissected in a more structured way, Cardew attacking on a more local but no less critical level. Cardew borrows from John Tilbury in his text, reproducing in full a talk given by Tilbury before a broadcast performance of Cage's *Music of Changes* (1951). *Music of Changes* employs a complex system of charts based on the 64 hexagrams in the *I Ching*, that dictate every aspect of its sonic make-up. In the talk, Tilbury identifies aspects that characterize the work on the understanding that these will also characterize Cage's perspective on society:

Music of Changes was written in 1951 and is the embodiment, wholly or partially, in musical expression of Cage's view of the world. By that I mean that before Cage can function as a musician he has to live as a man, and not as abstract man, but historically as a real man in a particular society. In the *Music of Changes* Cage is saying something about the real world, secreted through the sounds and silences which constitute the piece.

Tilbury in Cardew, 1974a: 41

Tilbury identifies three such characteristics: the freedom of sounds and their ability to exist in isolation from one another; the implementation of chance operations (*Music of Changes* was the first of Cage's works to be based entirely on chance operations); and Cage's approach to quantitative, accumulative change. Tilbury then makes comparisons with these characteristics and the workings of capitalist, exchange-value dominated

society. For instance, Tilbury asserts that Cage's preoccupation with the liberation and autonomy of sounds represents the illusory quality of individual freedom and spontaneity within bourgeois society: while the illusion is created that individuals are free and autonomous they are in fact governed by a 'mysterious cosmic force ... the capitalist law of supply and demand' (ibid: 43). An illustration of this 'force' is apparent in Adorno's discussion of the commoditisation of culture: the 'culture industry'. It is perceived, for instance, that consumers have an autonomous choice over the products of mass culture they might wish to consume, be it music, film, radio, magazines.⁹ Adorno argues in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* that, instead, the culture industry, in response to the laws of supply and demand, dilutes its products and the intended response to them on behalf of its consumers. It essentially provides consumers with a limited range of products designed to evoke a limited range of responses which can be replicated and duplicated effectively and efficiently. It is only by doing this that the system of supply and demand can be controlled:

Any trace of spontaneity in the audience of the official radio is steered and absorbed into a selection of specializations by talent-spotters, performance competitions, and sponsored events of every kind. The talents belong to the operation long before they are put on show; otherwise they would not conform so eagerly.

Adorno, 2002: 96

Adorno is referring to a particularly dramatic manifestation of this phenomenon but the notion could be considered to permeate any area of life dominated by exchange-value society. Tilbury is suggesting that this aspect of society is so embedded within Cage as a part of that society that, through the act of composition, he is portraying the illusory quality of freedom as 'real' or 'truth'.

⁹ There is not room in this discussion to consider how the digital age may have impacted on Adorno's interpretation of the culture industry. Cox, Krysa & Lewin (2004) draws heavily on Adorno's work in a collection of essays dealing with the economics of culture in the digital age.

Tilbury goes on to make connections between Cage's use of random and aleatoric procedures, not just in *Music of Changes* but also more generally. In this specific work Cage employs chance techniques at every stage of the compositional process, something Tilbury considers to be akin to the systemic promotion of 'chance' as a controlling factor explaining the cause of 'wars, mass hunger, pollution, neuroses' (Tilbury in Cardew, 1974a: 43): all aspects of global tension that Tilbury and Cardew would consider to result directly or indirectly from the inequalities inherent in the dominance of bourgeois societies.

Finally, Tilbury identifies and attacks Cage's attitude to change, a central premise of the work:

Cage has often said that he is interested in quantity, not quality, and change in the *Music of Changes* is precisely quantitative, accumulative change. Thus the sound material does not develop and change according to its own inner contradictions, but according to phenomena and conditions outside itself.

Tilbury in Cardew, 1974a: 43–4

This assertion is a little simplistic. Pritchett (1988 in Nichols, 2002: 208–9) identifies how Cage occasionally veered from the mechanical aleatoric approach – changing the duration and dynamics of individual sounds – when his musical sensibilities suggested a more pleasing result, thus allowing the music's inner contradictions to inform elements of change. But, more broadly, the piece is characterized by its sense of metamorphosis.

In *Music of Changes*, Cage sought a kind of perpetual variation resulting from the continued renewal of his material through what he termed chart 'mobility'. During the compositional process certain elements in Cage's charts were designated as either 'mobile' or 'immobile'; 'immobile' elements remained in the charts to be used once again; 'mobile' elements passed 'into history' and were replaced. This procedure guaranteed a high degree of entropy; the relative absence of repetition in the *Music of Changes* contrasts with his earlier chart compositions.

Bernstein in Nicholls, 2002: 207–8

It is the notion of selectively passing elements 'into history' that perhaps resonates most strongly with Tilbury's Marxist interpretation, for this is one of the key tenets Marx and Engels stated in 1848 as aiding the preservation of bourgeois dominated society:

The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relation of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form, was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify.

Marx & Engels, 2004: 7

Here, Marx and Engels identify the notions of 'everlasting uncertainty and agitation' – notions that could be considered to characterize the *Music of Changes* – as constructs of the new bourgeois society of the industrial 19th century. Tilbury brings the argument into the mid 1970s by equating Cage's continual introduction of material with the need to resolve contradiction, giving the example that 'the contradiction of capitalism can be resolved by our newly acquired TV-inspired electronic consciousness' (Tilbury in Cardew, 1974a: 44).

Cardew picks up on Tilbury's discussion by then relating Cage to his own view of the world defined not just by the exchange-value dominated society but the struggle to defeat it. He suggests that the identified characteristics that underpin the *Music of Changes*, in keeping with his critique of Stockhausen, single out Cage as an exponent of the bourgeois:

The 'just sounds' idea reflects the conception of things as being isolated from one another, hence there is no point in investigating their interrelations, and if nobody investigates the relationships between things then the bourgeoisie will be able to maintain its rule. The 'randomness' idea is a familiar weapon of the bourgeois ideologists to divert consciousness of the masses from the real laws ... On the idea of 'quantitative change' ... it denies the revolutionary aspect of change.

Cardew, 1974a: 45-6

Cage, therefore, also serves imperialism. In addition, not only are Cage's compositional ideas deconstructed, but also his approaches to the production and dissemination of these compositional ideas. Cardew, for instance, applauds the misbehaviour of orchestral musicians who abused the electronic equipment during a 'shambolic' performance of *Atlas Eclipticalis* (1961–2) in the early 1960s as a 'spontaneous expression to the sharply antagonistic relationship between the avant-garde composer with all his electronic gadgetry and the working musician' (ibid: 39) – essentially the class struggle in microcosm. On being engaged to take one of the harpsichord parts in a forthcoming performance of *HPSCHD* (1969) Cardew complains that:

I've heard the part is complex and difficult, but I wasn't asked whether I could play the instrument – and I know why, because it makes not the slightest difference what I play, or how I play it or how I feel about it. On the same degrading terms many talented and intelligent people will participate in that concert.

Cardew, 1974a: 40

There are two fundamental assumptions to which any sympathizer of Cardew's argument must subscribe. Firstly, his argument is underpinned by the belief that a composer is unable to divorce creative output from their experience, understanding and view of the world and its organization. Cardew's argument is unerringly based on the proposition that a composer's own experience and view of society is inextricably implicated in the construction and content of their music, as also expressed by Adorno (1992).¹⁰

Even a critic in agreement with this assertion could argue that music can only ever be representative of the conditions under which it is created and could ultimately only change as a result of a changing world order, being in itself incapable of actually instigating that change. The attacks on both Stockhausen and Cage focus on what

¹⁰ To illustrate, Adorno relates an infamous story about Picasso: 'An officer of the Nazi occupation forces visited the painter in his studio and, pointing to *Guernica*, asked: 'Did you paint that?'. Picasso reputedly answered, 'No, you did'' (Adorno, 1992: 85).

Cardew perceives to be their world view, as evidenced in their approach to artistic creation – a world view for which Cardew expresses a profound distaste. Cardew seems to be suggesting that recognizing the world according to his own definition and expressing this through one's approach to artistic creation could be a force for good. This is highly contentious: Adorno (1992) observes that artists reflect rather than instigate. A central argument in Raymond Williams' *Marxism and Literature* (2007) is that society and its forms are one inseparable entity: one simply cannot influence the other. Williams argues that the separation of society, economy and culture into three distinct categories is a relatively recent phenomenon that obfuscates the complex mutual interrelations between them (Williams, 2007: 11–21). The second assumption is that Marxism is 'good' and capitalism and imperialism are 'bad'. 'Good' music is music that benefits the cause of the Marxist and/or attacks and challenges capitalism. Cardew believes, then, that all music and art either subscribes to this ethic or not.

A successful argument against these assumptions would, of course, render Cardew's writings redundant, but that would be to misinterpret Cardew's intentions in the publication of *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism*. It has been identified that Cardew recognized the limitations of such a work in contributing to the struggle and *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* did not, of course, instigate a revolution. Cardew concludes his critique of Cage with a statement that perhaps reveals his intentions: 'I see no dilemma for Cage. It may not be all plain sailing, but there's no reason why he can't shuffle his feet over to the side of the people and learn to write music which will serve their struggles' (Cardew, 1974a: 40).

This is almost akin to a plea and perhaps symbolic of the respect Cardew retains for Cage's intellect and influence despite the distaste he holds for what he perceives as Cage's world view. In keeping with the consideration that artists reflect rather than

influence the world Cardew states that 'those diseases'¹¹ lie in society, not in the mind of misguided composers' (ibid: 82). But, crucially, he goes on to ask the question: 'Does the fact that the roots of all our cultural ills lie in society absolve the individual artist from all responsibility for these ills? Certainly not' (ibid). This last statement perhaps most effectively sums up Cardew's underpinning intention, for a revolution depends on people, not an argument in isolation. It is the belief in an argument by the majority of the people that leads to potential revolution, as Mao proclaimed: 'Before you make a revolution, you must first create public opinion' (Mao Tse-tung, 2004b: online). Cardew's intention is perhaps not one of immediate revolutionary action but one centred around the conviction that he must encourage and develop that belief – a call for more to act on the principles he expresses rather than resigning to the status quo. His words to Cage are a call to join forces rather than an attempt to eradicate his work. Interestingly, there is no such call in the text to Stockhausen whom Cardew perhaps felt had traversed too far from reality: 'Cage at least tries to reproduce the real world (the bourgeois world) and not the kingdom of heaven as does Stockhausen' (ibid: 46).

Whether Cardew chose the right mechanism for attempting this instigation is open to debate. *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* is harsh, steeped in the rhetoric of the day, aggressive in its delivery, and runs the risk of alienating those it wishes to inform.¹² But in understanding its central thrust of ideals, convictions and beliefs, it stands up to accusations of simply being a naïve polemic. The Cardew of 1974 was one who believed that the inequalities represented in the world could and should be challenged, and that artists or 'cultural workers' were as well placed as any to take a leading role in that challenge.

¹¹ A typical example of the use of the provocative language that characterizes *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism*.

¹² During my interviews with those associated with Cardew all participants expressed varying degrees of reservations about the impact *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* had on those Cardew wished to inform.

Cardew's repudiation of the avant-garde had a noticeable impact on the experimental music scene.¹³ While some of his contemporaries and associates shared his convictions and followed Cardew into his more politically focussed work (to be discussed more fully in chapters five and six), those continuing to explore the avant-garde and experimental phenomena had lost a significant and high profile exponent. While the publication of *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* by no means drew a line under the work of experimental composers and musicians, it did mark a passing of an era. By 1975 the hub of British avant-garde and experimental music-making activity defined by its association with Cardew (and the Scratch Orchestra) had fragmented.

Cardew, Ideology, and the Bourgeoisie

Cardew employs a number of terms within *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* without providing definitions. Given the centrality of these terms in understanding the development of Cardew's thinking it is important to consider the detail and context of their application. The notion of 'ideology', for instance, underpins *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* and becomes increasingly important in the exploration of Cardew's work from 1958 onwards. The term, therefore, requires some unravelling.

The term is generally supposed to have been coined by Antoine Destutt de Tracy in the late 18th century as a scientific term denoting the study of ideas (Freedon, 1996: 14). The crudest employment of the term is in the context of 'political ideology': a set of ideals, doctrines and beliefs that direct an individual's or group's goals and actions, based on an assumption of how society should function and how best to achieve that functionality. Most modern political parties would claim to be underpinned by such an

¹³ Details of the impact on specific individuals are discussed in subsequent chapters.

understanding of the term, if rarely actually employing it: their ideology informs their mission and goals and their methods for achieving these goals.

This idea of ideology being informed by an inner dialogue within an individual or group of individuals is rather simplistic, and the term is more broadly recognized as being a resultant of a more complex interaction of external factors. Green (1988) presents this understanding most concisely:

I regard ideology as a collective mental force which both springs from, and perpetuates, our material, social relations. Along with producing objects, societies produce ideas. These form into bodies of knowledge, and certain of them take on an essential role for the maintenance of the society.

Green, 2008: 2

This is more in keeping with the understanding of ideology from a Marxist perspective.

While Marx and Engels never explicitly define the term it is implicit in their writings.¹⁴

Kolakowski explains that:

Ideology in this sense [in the writing of Marx and Engels] is a false consciousness or an obfuscated mental process in which men do not understand the forces that actually guide their thinking, but imagine it to be wholly governed by logic and intellectual influences.

Kolakowski, 2008: 126–7

Marxist thinking suggests that there is a dominant political ideology – that of the dominant class, the bourgeoisie. Louis Althusser (1971) concisely describes this as ‘the system of ideas and representations which dominate the mind of a man or a social group’ (Althusser, 1971: 158). The dominant ideology is presented and perceived as being in the interests of the whole society but is in fact solely in the interests of the dominant class. In this scenario the ‘ideology’ is not in the control of many who subscribe to it, but is governed by external factors such as the mass media. This confuses

¹⁴ The closest to an overview of Marx and Engels’ approach to the term is perhaps the first section of *The German Ideology* published in 1932 (Marx & Engels, 1998: 33–6).

the real interests of the working class leading to a 'false consciousness' as exemplified in the earlier reference to Adorno's interpretation of the culture industry.¹⁵

Green argues that the false consciousness is a result of the process of ideological formation rather than a conscious decision on behalf of the bourgeoisie to manipulate society:

Although, logically, [ideologies] result from a division between manual and mental labour, their formation does not involve the notion of a class of bureaucrats who work with their minds, ideologically manipulating a class of manual workers. Ideology is not simply constructed by one class or group of people and believed by another, but rather, wrought from the total social relations in a society. Nevertheless, that it explains things in a way that is to the advantage of certain social strata and the ill of others, is one of its most notable characteristics.

Green, 1988: 2

The significance of this Marxist interpretation of ideology is that it can become a tool for critiquing the actions and mechanisms of individuals and society rather than simply defining a worldview according to which one might act. Freeden suggests that:

The Marxist approach to ideology has sensitized us to crucial aspects of human thinking in societies and about societies, and to the sources, limitations and imperfections of such thinking. It has, above all, provided political philosophers and practitioners with critical vistas from which to assess, interpret and attempt to transcend existing forms of social, economic, and political thought.

Freeden, 1996: 14

The idea of Marxism as a 'critical vista' is apparent throughout *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* and it is this understanding of a Marxist ideology – the 'truth' discussed earlier – that permeates Cardew's thinking.

¹⁵ Elements of this theory are explored by a multitude of Marxist philosophers and theorists, notably in György Lukács *History and Class Consciousness* (Lukács, 1971) and Antonio Gramsci's theory of 'cultural hegemony' (Forgacs, 1988; see also Kolakowski, 2008: 979–82 for an overview of this concept). It also resonates with Marcuse's theory of *One Dimensional Man* (Marcuse, 1991) who suggests that such repressive systems ultimately result in the negation of any ability to oppose the system, allowing the systems to maintain power. This particular text will be referred to in subsequent chapters. Other useful texts dealing with concepts of ideology include Eagleton (1991), McLellan (1986), Subotnik, (1991) and Williams (1977).

Cardew's employment of the terms 'bourgeois' and 'proletariat', and his self-imposed description of his work as a 'bourgeois composer', also need some clarification. Marx identifies and defines the importance of the proletariat in the introduction to *A Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (Marx, 1970: online). It is here that he expresses the notion of revolution 'not as a violation of history but as a fulfilment of its innate tendency' (Kolakowski, 2008: 105). Marx asserts that the proletariat is a product of the industrial phenomenon:

It is not the naturally arising poor but the artificially impoverished, not the human masses mechanically oppressed by the gravity of society, but the masses resulting from the drastic dissolution of society, mainly of the middle estate, that form the proletariat.

Marx, 1970: 138

Marx goes on to explain how this phenomenon, given a push in the right direction, will ultimately collapse under its own contradictions:

By demanding the negation of private property, the proletariat merely raises to the rank of a principle of society, what society has raised to the rank of *its* principle, what is already incorporated in *it* as the negative result of society without its own participation. The proletariat then finds himself possessing the same right in regard to the world which is coming into being as the German king in regard to the world which has come into being when he calls the people *his* people, as he calls the horse *his* horse. By declaring the people his private property, the king merely proclaims that the owner of the property is king.

Marx, 1970: 138

It is this logic that later underpins *The Communist Manifesto* – the inevitable fact that capitalism's existence is 'no longer compatible with society' (Marx & Engels, 2004: 19). The manifesto establishes the central argument that while the history of society has always been founded on class struggles, the modern age (that is, the nineteenth century industrial age) is defined by a the simplification of class divisions: 'society as a whole is more and more splitting into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly

facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat' (Marx & Engels, 2004: 4). Engels gives explicit definitions of these terms on the opening page of the manifesto:

By bourgeoisie is meant the class of modern Capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage labour. By proletariat, the class of modern wage-labourers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labour power in order to live.

Marx & Engels, 2004: 1

It is these definitions of the terms that Cardew abides by, though the term 'bourgeois composer' is somewhat confusing. As Cardew notes in the introduction to *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism*:

In bourgeois society, the artist is in the employ of capitalists (publishers, record companies), who demand from him work that is, at least potentially, profitable. And ultimately he is in the employ of the bourgeois state, which demands that the artist's work be ideologically acceptable.

Cardew, 1974a: 5

This demonstrates that Cardew is aware of the 'dominant ideology' but also indicates that he would consider the artist to sit squarely in the proletariat camp. This, of course, is not the case when he later critiques Stockhausen, Cage and his own work. This anomaly is explained by Cardew's commitment to a revolutionary rather than a theoretical approach to Marxism that will be discussed in greater detail in chapters five and six. *The Communist Manifesto* is defined not so much by the 'two great hostile camps' as by the ongoing struggle between those camps – the exploitation of workers by the bourgeoisie and the resistance of that exploitation on behalf of the proletariat.¹⁶ By 1974, and the publication of *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism*, Cardew was ensconced in the proletariat struggle (again, explored more fully in chapters five and six) as defined by Marx and Engels: Cage and Stockhausen were not. Given Marx and Engels' analysis of a

¹⁶ This is a rather simplified summary for the sake of this argument. The manifesto explores three separate inter-relations: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat; the proletarians and the communists; and the communists and various existing opposition parties (Marx & Engels, 2004; Kolakowski, 2008: 186–91).

bipartisan social structure, a composer not engaged in the proletariat struggle (which, as discussed, defines Cardew view of the real world), can only be at home in the bourgeoisie, or, at best, the petit bourgeoisie.¹⁷ For Cardew, a bourgeois composer is one who, in the absence of any active engagement with the proletariat struggle, by default supports or perpetuates the bourgeois dominated society. Cardew believes Stockhausen and Cage to be the embodiment of a cultural world that maintains the inequality of this status quo. Stockhausen and Cage, therefore, serve imperialism.

¹⁷ A term commonly used to describe a sub-class below the bourgeoisie but above the proletariat: typically those operating very small capitalist concerns or working independently to make capital gain. It is not a term found in Cardew's own writing.

The Formative Years

By the time Cardew published *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* he was a prominent and highly regarded figure of the musical fraternity he so vigorously attacked, with a catalogue of published works, a busy recital schedule and numerous broadcasts to his name. To put his rejection of this fraternity into context it is necessary to examine the fifteen or so years prior to its publication. This chapter starts at the beginning of the Cardew story, tracing his musical life from the mid-1950s. It makes reference to his musical education and discusses the important formative experiences, especially with regard to Stockhausen, that influenced his earliest work as a composer. It also attempts to identify traits that, even at this early stage, are distinctive to Cardew, and perhaps indicative of the direction he would take during the 1960s as he rose to prominence.

Early Directions

Brian Cornelius McDonough Cardew was born in 1936, one of three sons, into relative privilege. His mother was a painter and teacher, his father a potter of some historical note with a particular interest in cultures of the East and of Africa.¹ These diverse cultural and aesthetic interests contributed to what Michael Parsons describes as an 'unconventional atmosphere of libertarian bohemianism' (Parsons in Prévost, 2006: ix). His early musical training was one of traditional western classical values – a chorister at Canterbury Cathedral Choir School, lessons on piano and cello, and studies at the Royal Academy of Music (RAM) from 1953–57. This juxtaposition of the traditional rigours of

¹ See Cardew, M. (1989).

public school and a formal musical training against a liberal upbringing of wide ranging cultural exposure provided the foundation for Cardew's early musical development.²

While at the RAM, Cardew proved himself to be a skilled pianist and composer with a notable tendency to eschew the conservatism of the RAM at that time – typical of music education establishments in general – in favour of engaging with the contemporary European avant-garde. Cardew, for instance, gave the first UK performance, along with his peer and friend Richard Rodney Bennett, of Boulez's *Structures I* (1952), which in the context of a 1950s Royal Academy was 'probably tantamount to an act of rebellion' (Tilbury, 1983: 4). Cardew studied composition under Howard Ferguson, a composer more sympathetic to Walton than Boulez. Cardew's compositional output from this period, however, was strictly within the European fashions of the day, exploring serial techniques and uncompromising in the rhythmic and harmonic complexities and detail. The very early pieces take the form of chamber and piano music – string trios, piano sonatas, *Three Rhythmic Pieces* (1955) for trumpet and piano – and a single suite of miniatures for orchestra (perhaps a requirement of the RAM training).

The earliest catalogued work is *String Trio No 1* (fig. 2.1) dated 1954 when Cardew was at the RAM. An exercise in 12-tone technique, it demonstrates skilful handling of the material if little to distinguish it other than perhaps its divergence from Ferguson, his compositional mentor, who at that time was engaged in composing *Amore Languedo* and *The Dream of the Rood*, his last statements in oratorio form before abandoning composing altogether in favour of editing early keyboard music.

² See Tilbury (2008: 1–28) for biographical details on Cardew's family background, childhood and anecdotes of his schooldays.



Fig. 2.1: Cardew, *String Trio No 1* (1954), BMIC Collection.

Tilbury suggests that Cardew's strategy for dealing with the conservatism of the RAM was to adopt a 'dual existence – satisfying the demands the Academy made on him whilst pursuing his real interests' (Tilbury, 2008: 29). Indeed, there were elements of the classical tradition in which he relished. For instance, a devotion to the keyboard works of Bach, an influence that manifests itself in the later piano albums of the 1970s; the discipline of technique and virtuosity, a returning character trait of subsequent works;

and aspects of musical analysis, the study of which he was due to return shortly before his death (Tilbury, 2008: 943).³

Cardew continued to seek out influence from beyond the English way of doing things. His *Second String Trio* and *Three Rhythmic Pieces*, both dated 1955, demonstrate his homage to Webern. Anton Lukoszevics writes of the 'economy of execution' and the 'fragmentary elusiveness which seems to foreshadow the expressive disjointedness of the later works' (Lukoszevics, 2001: CD sleeve notes). A collection of three piano sonatas (1955, 1956 and 1958 respectively) perhaps offer the clearest insight into Cardew's emerging compositional style, helpfully all dealing with the same medium. The influence of Webern, Boulez and Stockhausen rates highly in all three, though the third (fig. 2.2) perhaps demonstrates the more self-assured Cardew.

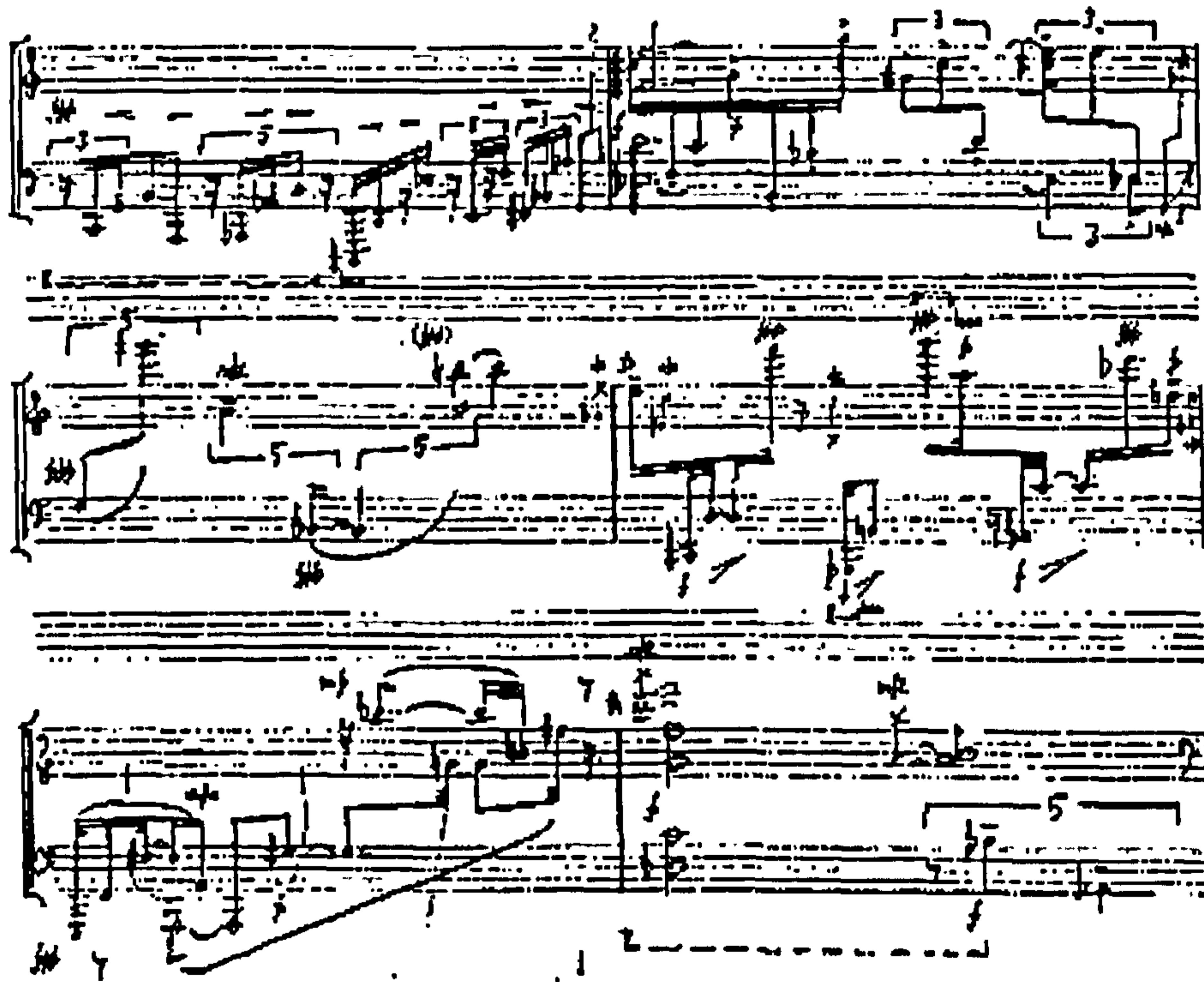


Fig. 2.2: Cardew, *Third Piano Sonata* (1958), BMIC Collection.

³ This intention was mentioned numerous times during my conversations and interviews with those associated with Cardew.

Stockhausen's Assistant

A critical period of Cardew's early career was his tenure in Cologne working as assistant to Karlheinz Stockhausen in 1958–60. Stockhausen was struck by Cardew's technical skill and understanding of contemporary compositional theory (Tilbury, 2008: 55), but also perhaps by his skill as a performer and his ability to improvise.⁴ It is possible that Stockhausen was also attracted by the closeness to his own stylistic tendencies apparent in the *Third Piano Sonata*, which became the first of Cardew's early works to begin to establish itself in the repertoire of the day.⁵ Stockhausen was working on *Carré* for four orchestras⁶, commissioned by Radio Hamburg and Cardew's remit was to assist in the production of the vast score, a trust Stockhausen did not as a rule hand out.⁷

Cardew's period in Cologne, and specifically working with Stockhausen, did not provide the creative release from the rigidity of the British musical culture that perhaps Cardew had hoped for. Cardew's time in Germany coincided with what was a culminating period in the modernist approach to compositional technique. The post-war modernist and serial school of composers held considerable sway at this time. Alongside Stockhausen, Boulez and Messiaen other prominent figures included Luigi Nono, Luciano Berio, Henri Pousseur and, in America, Milton Babbitt. Morgan (1991: 348) notes that 'with few exceptions, the most active younger Europeans of the time were all to some degree involved with serial techniques'. It would seem, then, that there was every potential for Cardew to face similar challenges to the conservative constraints from which he had fled:

⁴ A suggestion anecdotally attested in my discussions with both Howard Skempton and Michael Parsons.

⁵ It was premiered in Cologne, and recorded, by David Tudor (see discography).

⁶ See Maconie (1976) for an overview of this work.

⁷ It was during this time in Cologne that Cardew also discovered the work of John Cage and David Tudor. For clarity of argument, chronology will be put on hold for the time being and the profound influence of Cage will be discussed in the following chapter.

The conditions he found in Germany in 1957 were as oppressive as anything he had left behind – though in a different way: total serialism had achieved the status of religion whose followers defended and counter-attacked with all the fanaticism and intolerance of true believers.

Tilbury, 1983: 4

Cardew contributed two 'reports' to *The Musical Times* in 1961 documenting the process of preparing and executing the first performance of *Carré*. The reports contain thinly veiled criticisms of the culture in which Cardew had become immersed, displaying the characteristic bluntness that was already emerging in his writing style:

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

Cardew, 1961a: 620

There is little doubt that Cardew was frustrated by the work, finding himself 'aided, irritated, confused, encouraged, and sometimes even guided' by Stockhausen and his 'random narrations' (ibid: 619). On a personal level, however, they were able to work together 'with much friendly discussion' (ibid: 620). It is these frustrations that are most illuminating in examining how the process shaped Cardew's thinking.

A key theme in the reports is the conflict between the roles of collaborator and assistant, and in a much broader sense the notion of collaboration in the creative process. There is some confusion as to exactly what the terms of Cardew's employment were. Accounts of the tenure in typical historical surveys or in texts citing biographical details always describe Cardew as 'Stockhausen's assistant',⁸ though in *The Musical Times* reports Cardew refers to the 'collaboration with Stockhausen on 'his' [sic] *Carré*' (ibid: 619). This conflict causes Cardew to ponder on the notion of composer collaboration. His own

⁸ For instance: Morgan (1991: 457), Ross (2008: 459), Barrett (1987: 20).

collaborative ideal is perceived as a situation where either composer is free to 'add, change, modify, oppose, protest, destroy, restrict, embroider, etc' (ibid) musical materials that might be passed back and forth between creative minds. It was recognized early on that this would not be the case.

Cardew's first task was to realize a collection of '101 snappy items': quickly sketched ideas that gave general details regarding instrumentation, dynamic, pitch, durations and movement between the orchestras. Figure 2.3 shows Cardew's own example of such a 'snappy item', the sign on the right giving details of the spatial movement between orchestras and the number nine defining the dynamic level.



Fig. 2.3: An example of a 'snappy item'.

This awoke in Cardew an important notion – that of a 'basic score', a score that provides some basic direction and 'personality', but rather than the score taking the form of a comprehensive list of instructions, a 'basic score' simply gives direction for any realization. Along with Cardew's growing awareness of Cage and scores that require creative involvement from the performer, the logical conclusion was to suggest that these '101 snappy items' could represent a score for publication in itself. This would not

be in Stockhausen's plan however: 'The score, if published, would be a score of a piece for four orchestras by Karlheinz Stockhausen and no mistake about it' (ibid: 620).

Through the discussions in *The Musical Times* reports Cardew seems to be identifying immovable forces in Stockhausen's approach. Firstly, that Stockhausen does not seem to demonstrate faith in how others might interpret or manipulate his intentions; and secondly, that Stockhausen is reluctant to give up the control afforded by providing a fully functioning 'final score', a control that is in general terms a construction of the western classical tradition. With this in mind, coupled with the slightly underhand realization that Stockhausen's compositional personality manifested itself only in the 'basic score' and not necessarily in any Cardew-created 'final score', Cardew set about reinstating some of his earlier notions of creative collaboration:

That is to say that were the realizer to approach the Basic Score with sufficient boldness, these manifestations could become insignificant – intentionally concealed, or unintentionally ignored. I, for one, would certainly now approach my task in this fearless spirit, and allow my imagination to act unconditionally on the material of the Basic Score.

Cardew, 1961a: 620

In practice, Cardew generally worked with Stockhausen's intentions at the forefront of his mind, a result of the close eye Stockhausen paid to the process – the creative 'personality' of *Carré* also manifesting itself in the advice and the 'copious notes and hieroglyphics' (ibid) Stockhausen provided alongside the basic score. A further culling exercise at the rehearsal stage put the final stamp of Stockhausen's authority on this collaboration: 'The sections which were finally cut in the performance were either ones in which my personality conflicted with his – or seemed to – or ones which manifested virtually no personality at all' (ibid).

The first performance of *Carré*, in Hamburg, prompted Cardew to muse further on the nature of collaboration, for by this point there was none. Cardew had no further

involvement with the work following discussions with Stockhausen related to the timings. Cardew also discovered that the dividing of the audience into four differently facing sections resulted in only a quarter of the audience experiencing the quadraphonic movement that was intended (Cardew, 1961b: 700). The rehearsal process was inevitably confounded by a series of practical problems involving communications between the orchestras and conductors but was marked most notably in Cardew's second *Musical Times* report by the last minute cuts to the score – without Cardew's consultation. Cardew had been engaged in 'some obscurely fabricated supervisory role' (ibid: 699), but in the event participated only passively without even access to the score while cuts were made. The performance was greeted by a mixture of 'prolonged cheers, cat calls, boos and clapping' (ibid: 700). As for Cardew's experience of the performance: 'I sat in a cubicle and bit my nails' (ibid).

The Stockhausen experience instigated or perhaps confirmed an already emerging tension between Cardew and the European approach in which he had by now been firmly grounded. The evidence seems to demonstrate that he was not sympathetic to this tradition either musically or culturally: he was suspicious of the figurehead style of the European avant-garde composer, and the carefully defined, closely guarded roles inherent within the hierarchy, and frustrated that it did not seem to allow for the collaborative approach to music making he had perhaps hoped would be central to his work with Stockhausen. He was also ill at ease with the detailed notational emphasis and systematic techniques of the avant-garde composer. What emerges is a trait of rejection that can already be seen to be typical of Cardew. He had dismissed the tonal conservatism of English music as he experienced it at the RAM and had now become frustrated with the alternatives he had found in the European avant-garde. Looking to America was perhaps inevitable.

The American Invasion

At 1958 Darmstadt summer school Cardew met John Cage, David Tudor, Merce Cunningham and Earle Brown for the first time, the impact of which cannot be overstated. John Tilbury best describes the American composer's visit as an 'intrusion', a much needed 'disruption' to the European fraternity (Tilbury, 1983: 4), also leaving its mark on Stockhausen.⁹

Cardew's initial immersion in the American experimental music of the day was from the perspective of the performer. Contemporaries and colleagues have been quick to note Cardew's skill and charisma as a performing musician in my conversations and interviews with them. Howard Skempton in particular identified him as a 'very sophisticated, really quite brilliant musician', often referring to what he describes as 'high definition performance'. Morton Feldman, in a dedication following Cardew's death, acknowledges his exquisite playing of Feldman's own music (Feldman, 1982). Cardew was not prolific as a recording artist but gave regular recitals and attracted a degree of attention in the early 1960s when he and John Tilbury gave a series of performances featuring American experimental music alongside Cardew's own pieces. As performers, Cardew and Tilbury were drawn to the music of Cage, Feldman and Christian Wolff mostly as they felt they shared common ground with the American composers' lack of connection with any particular musical tradition or history, a connection that seemed such an immovable force within the European tradition: 'The predominance of American music in our programmes was of significance; in particular it reflected an attitude to the past which, like that of the Americans, was pure and simple: we rejected it' (Tilbury, 1981: 16). In addition, Tilbury was drawn to the American

⁹ See, amongst much else, Cott (1974), Wörner (1973), Maconie (2005).

composers as a release from some of the stylistic conventions of the European avant-garde he found so alienating:

The fact that the Americans had not banned certain chords and progressions from their work impressed me. True, in the last analysis they too had created artificial systems, but these did not seem to 'police' the music in the way that European serialism did.

Tilbury, 1981: 16

Of Feldman's music in particular, with which Tilbury has since shared a long and respected association¹⁰, he talks of 'a *human* agency at work ... an imaginative musical mind' (ibid). Indeed, the music of Feldman is an important recurring thread at this stage of Cardew's musical development. In Tilbury's own assessment of Cardew's early career he notes:

Cardew's performances, in particular of the music of Morton Feldman, constitute to all intents and purposes my first lasting memory of the man as artist. Those floating, sourceless sounds, which he played with an unerring sense of timing and an artistry that was as convincing as it was unconventional, evoked an emotional response quite unlike any other I had experienced in listening to music, and which was intensified by Cardew's profound identification with Feldman's work.

Tilbury, 1981: 16

The evidence would suggest that Cardew's role as a performer, specifically engaging with the music of Cage, Feldman and Wolff, was a significant formative experience that would inevitably inform and shape his future work.¹¹ Moreover, Cardew's association with the American composers occurred with a level of engagement quite different from that of his work alongside Stockhausen. Much of the repertoire with which Cardew and Tilbury engaged requires an acute degree of creative and personal involvement. Rather than simply interpreting instructions according to an autocratic composer, Cardew was required with this music to work from *within* the score – the performers themselves

¹⁰ An association perhaps best exemplified by a four-disc set of Tilbury performing Feldman's piano music (www.matchlessrecordings.com/feldman-all-piano). See also Tilbury (n.d.) 'On Playing Feldman'.

¹¹ Tilbury (2008) makes considerable reference to Cardew's performing activities during this early phase.

being an important creative force in bringing the score to its ultimate presentation. The process allowed and required an immersion in the score as a creative being that working with Stockhausen's '101 snappy items' forbade. This was an aspect of Feldman's music to which Cardew felt particularly drawn:

The music of these composers¹² springs from states of mind, as of being, a certain attitude of mind embedded in a particular atmosphere. What goes on in this atmosphere, the decisions taken in it, and conclusion reaching in it, in a word the logic of any activity within this atmosphere, remains completely obscure to us if we cannot enter into the same atmosphere.

Cardew, 1962a in Prévost, 2006: 39

Despite the privileged insight Cardew had received into Stockhausen's methods, it appears that it was Feldman with whom Cardew was interacting on a musical level. Although Cardew has historically been labelled 'Stockhausen's assistant', his relationship with Feldman was perhaps the more profound, something Skempton reinforced most strongly during my interview: 'whenever we talk of Cardew we keep coming back to Feldman. He just can't be ignored'.

Cardew's formative years, then, were a combination of rejection, frustration and realization: the rejection of the conservatism of the English musical fraternity of the day; frustration with the orthodoxy and dominance of the European modernist tradition; and ultimately the realization that the American experimentalists offered an alternative. It was against this backdrop that Cardew returned to England in 1960 and attempted to establish a musical scene that did not yet exist.

¹² 'These composers' refers to John Cage, Christian Wolff, Earle Brown and Morton Feldman. Later in the article (a transcription of a radio programme on the American school of John Cage) Cardew notes that when he talks of states of mind it is 'chiefly Morton Feldman that I had in mind' (Cardew, 1962a in Prévost, 2006: 46).

Cardew the Bourgeois Composer?

Cardew's *Two Books of Study for Pianists*, completed in the year of Cage's visit to Cologne, reflects the disruption caused by the American invasion. The continuing influence of Stockhausen is discernible in the application of a scale of six dynamics and in particular the mobile character of the material (within the given space of time the sounds may be distributed freely by the performer), but the ideological source of the music is to be sought elsewhere – the isolation of tones, the feeling of discontinuity ... and the wayward harmonic language ... reveal that the new American aesthetic had taken root in European music.

Tilbury, 1983: 4

The impact of Cage and his contemporaries swiftly became apparent in Cardew's compositional work as attested here by Tilbury. The reference to the shift in 'ideological source' is also critical and suggests that elements of Cardew's music – isolation, discontinuity – already demonstrated the bourgeois tendencies of Cage as critiqued in *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism*. This chapter explores Cardew's music of the 1960s, the period in which Cardew considered himself to be a 'bourgeois composer'. It considers how the experience and exploration of Cage's music marked the starting point for a tentative move away from music simply as a product – that is, an artefact produced by the composer for the delectation of an audience – to the notion of music as a process and, crucially, Cardew's developing preoccupation with the role of the performer in bringing music to life. Cardew perhaps saw in Cage and Tudor's collaboration many of the creative facets absent from his own collaboration with Stockhausen. This chapter, then, will assess the significance of the Cage influence, which aspects of Cage's music Cardew was most drawn to, and the areas of conflict and departure between the two. The chapter will ultimately return to Cardew's notion of the 'bourgeois composer', with a more informed assessment of Cardew's position within the bourgeois musical culture he repudiated.

The School of Cage

The influence of Cage is clearly visible in Cardew's scores throughout the 1960s: the move into a wider variety of notations, the use of indeterminate structures, the blurring of roles between composer and performer. Cardew's *Memories of You* of 1964 (fig. 3.1), for instance, pays a direct homage to Cage, borrowing from a specific notational idiosyncrasy of Cage's *Concert for Piano and Orchestra* (1957-58) (fig. 3.2), both giving the performer directions as to the physical placement of a sonic event in relation to a piano.

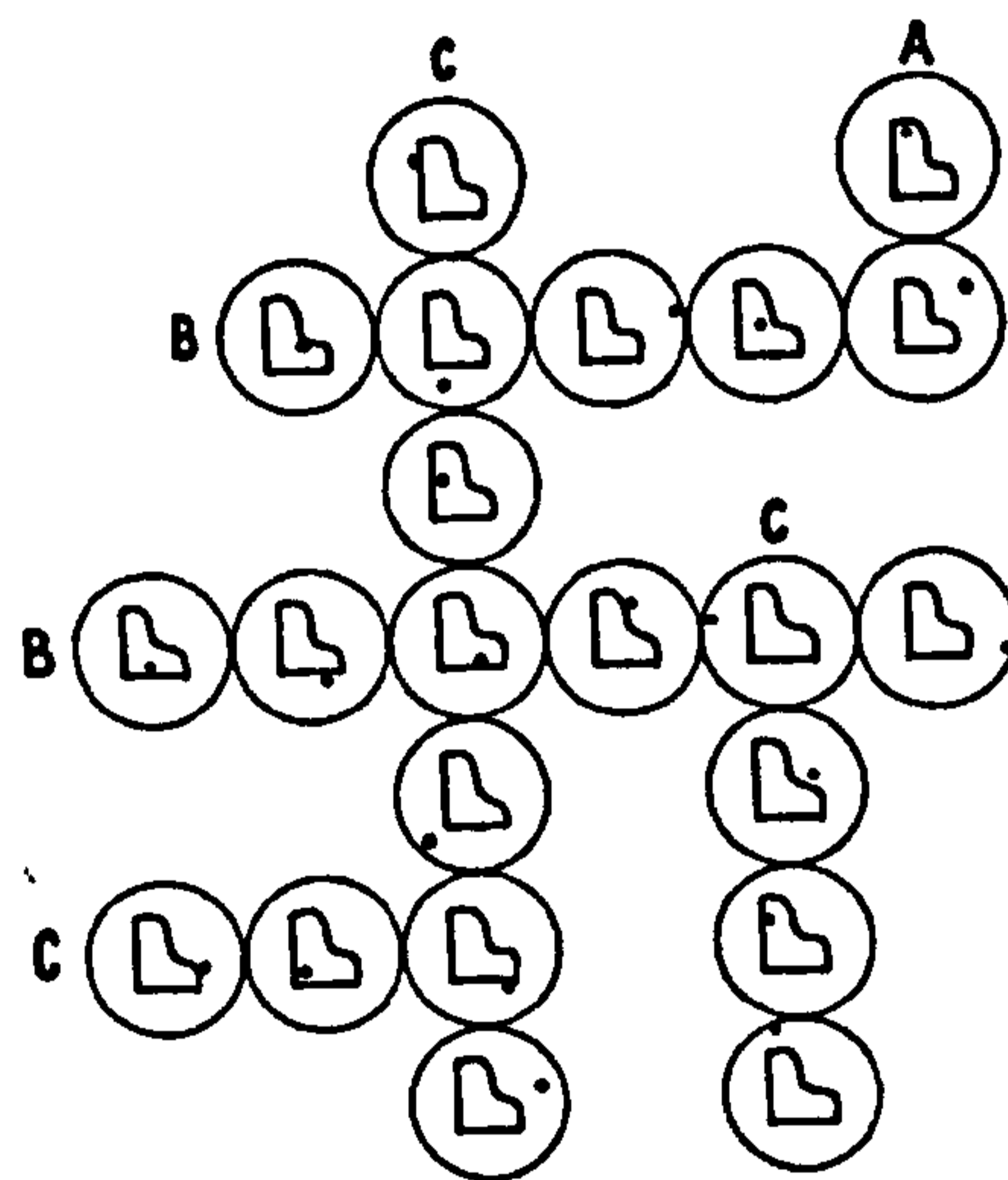


Fig. 3.1: Cardew, *Memories of You* (1964), Universal Edition.

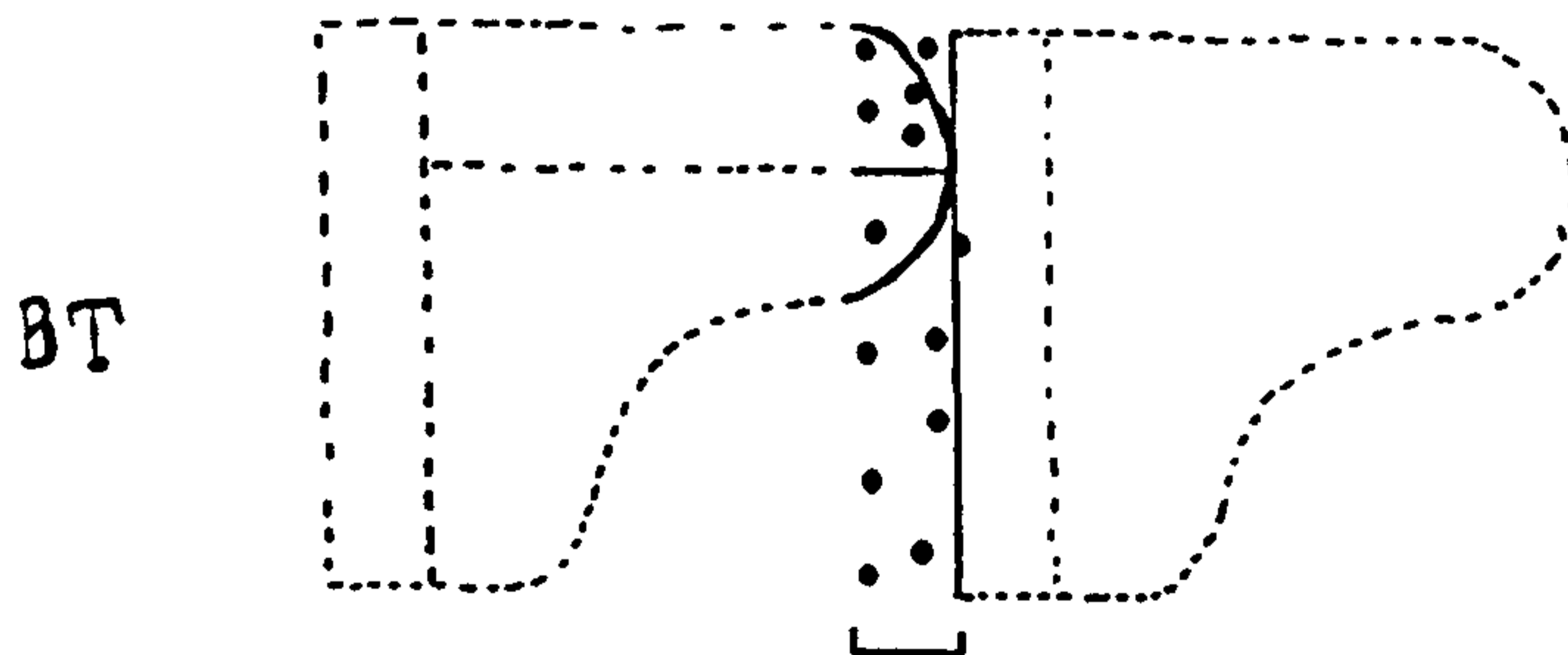


Fig. 3.2: Cage, detail from *Concert for Piano and Orchestra* (1957-58), Edition Peters.

Restricting the impact of Cage on Cardew to the visible is rather superficial, however. The *February Pieces for Piano* (fig. 3.3), for instance, date from this period and exemplify the multiple strands of influence that were beginning to inform Cardew's work. They inhabit a kind of halfway house between the European school and the world of Cage and Feldman – detailed and virtuosic in the handling of the musical materials but improvisatory and free in character and with indeterminate construction. It would seem that Cardew was not simply concerned with borrowing and adapting new compositional ideas. He was also considering fundamental changes to his attitudes towards music. In Cardew's own musings on his initial reaction to the music of Cage he makes reference to the notion of 'honesty', by default suggesting this was a quality he found missing from European music:

How did I come to appreciate this music in the first place? I was lucky enough to have some personal contact with David Tudor when he played some of it, and I could appreciate the spirit in which he performed. I have a fundamental conviction that every honest utterance makes sense, and his attitude to the works was enough to convince me of their honesty.

Cardew, 1962a, in Prévost 2006: 40

Whether this demonstrates a quality in the performer or the music is not clear but it does identify the catalyst for Cardew's interest. What Cardew means by this honesty needs some unravelling. He suggests that an honest approach to composition is one whereby you present, as a composer, what you intend, or at least not knowingly present ideas that contradict your intentions. Cardew (1962a) gives an illustrative example of simple decisions of pitch. In some situations only one note is the right note for the composer's intended context, and so that is the note a composer gives. To give a different note would contradict intention – it would be dishonest and compromise the work. Compare this with a situation where the composer has no specific pitch in mind – any note will do as long as there is one. One option, given that any note is appropriate, is to give an arbitrary pitch. But, Cardew notes, in doing so the composer is 'evading the

responsibility of writing what he heard, which was no particular note' (ibid: 40), essentially a dishonest choice and a contradiction of intention. In addition the composer would be 'denying the performer the possibility of choosing spontaneously, which might have served, by his hesitancy, or air of decision, or of seeking, to create the right atmosphere for the piece' (ibid).

The image shows a handwritten musical score for 'February Pieces' by John Cage. It is divided into four systems, each labeled on the left:

- February I (1st System):** Features a complex arrangement of notes and rests across multiple staves. A box labeled 'section 1' is at the top left. Dynamic markings like 'f' and 'p' are present.
- February II (2nd System):** Continues the notation with various note values and rests.
- February III (3rd System):** Shows a dense texture of notes and rests, with some notes marked with 'x'.
- (4th System):** A simpler system with fewer notes, including some with dynamic markings like '(f) p'.

At the bottom left, there is a line labeled 'section 1' with a box containing the number '1'.

Fig. 3.3: Cardew, *February Pieces* (1959–61), Hinrichsen.

'Denying the performer' is the critical notion here. 'Honest' music breaks down, or attempts to break down, the artificial boundaries between composer and performer, the rules and regulations existing only through convention. An 'honest' composition reveals, to the closest degree, what the composer intended – not what the composer is

able to do with pre-determined rules, specific technique or notational conventions but simply what is in the composer's head. Cardew felt this in the music of Cage, certainly as performed by David Tudor. We return again to Feldman, this time through Cardew's own notes, in whose music Cardew also felt the presence of honesty:

A pupil of his [Feldman] – Michael von Biel – once asked him how, remembering the importance that Feldman attached to the actual notes that he does write – he obviously hears all of them very [acutely] – he accounts for the occasions where he doesn't specify any notes. Feldman replied that in this case he had heard all the available notes. So that it did not constitute a gap in his hearing of notes, but a blur.

Cardew, 1962a in Prévost, 2006: 42

Cardew also demands honesty from the performer. He asserts that if a performer is genuinely interpreting a piece 'he will express himself in his choice, himself and thus also, his conception of the piece' (ibid). Furthermore, Cardew considers that if a performer is uncertain as to how to interpret any given music then 'he had better refrain from performing the piece until he is no longer in a quandary' (ibid) or, logic pursues, run the risk of presenting a dishonest performance. This is not often an option on the concert platform, but is revealing of the commitment and involvement Cardew was coming to expect from a performer.

It was Cage's determination to liberate the performer that perhaps had the most profound effect on Cardew. The pieces from 1958 onwards demonstrate the increasingly democratic involvement of performers in realizing the music through an attempted liberation from the 'constraints of oppressive notational complexities' (Tilbury, 1983: 5). Tilbury notes that while Cardew's rejection of serialism had allowed him room to manoeuvre as a composer, his adoption of indeterminacy allowed him to extend 'creative freedom' to the performer. But, crucially, it is the value that Cardew attributed to this creative freedom and the process of indeterminacy that is most significant: 'with [Cardew] "indeterminacy" was not simply another compositional technique, displacing

a previously discredited one, it was a logical musical expression of his humanism' (ibid). It was emerging that Cardew's preoccupation with indeterminate processes was as much, if not more, to do with *people* than with music.

This expectation of the performer is reinforced in the introduction Cardew provides for the publication of a collection of *Four Works* in 1966 (though the earliest of these works, *Autumn '60*, dates from 1960):

It is not possible for a conductor to distribute parts for *Autumn '60* among orchestral musicians and then get up on the rostrum and conduct the piece. The very fact that the parts and the score are identical implies a higher degree of interest and involvement is demanded of the musicians. They have to acquaint themselves with the musical principles underlying the work; they have to investigate the range of possibilities opened up by the score. And finally they have to accept the responsibility for the part they play, for their musical contribution to the piece.

Cardew, 1966c

Autumn '60 (fig. 3.4) takes the form of what Cardew had previously referred to in the Carré reports as a basic score, and is visually relatively conventional – standard staves, clefs, barlines, pitches and articulations. The reading of the score is less conventional and there are pages of instructions for both the conductor and the musicians, of which there can be any number playing any instruments. The instructions guide the performers on how to interpret the score and, intriguingly, actively encourage performers to ignore or contradict aspects of it. A scored and annotated example is given for further clarification though Cardew is quick to note that this is to demonstrate the myriad possibilities rather than any definitive sonic intention on his part: 'The musical potentialities of *Autumn '60* cannot be fully exploited in a single performance [as] the example on page 8 shows' (ibid).

Fig. 3.4: Cardew, *Autumn '60* (1960), Universal Edition.

The musical score consists of five systems of staves, each with performance instructions and dynamic markings above the notes. The instruments and parts are as follows:

- System 1:** Includes parts for Viola (pizzicato), Saxophone, and Trombone. Instructions include 'pizz', 'mule', and 'pizz Viola III'. Dynamics include *p* and *f*.
- System 2:** Includes parts for Bass, Guitar, Saxophone, and Viola. Instructions include 'mute', 'pizz', and 'II'. Dynamics include *f* and *p*.
- System 3:** Includes parts for Horn, Saxophone, Violin, Strings, and Bass. Instructions include 'pizz' and 'mute'. Dynamics include *p*.
- System 4:** Includes parts for Saxophone, Piano, Viola, and Horn. Instructions include 'pizz'. Dynamics include *p*.

Additional performance instructions and dynamics are scattered throughout the score, including 'II', 'III', 'IV', 'I', 'D', 'E', 'pizz', 'mute', and various dynamic markings like *p*, *f*, and *mf*.

The other pieces in the *Four Works* collection demonstrate similar processes of indeterminacy, performer involvement and non-specific instrumentation, though *Solo with Accompaniment* (fig. 3.5) and the previously referenced *Memories of You* relinquish staff notations entirely.

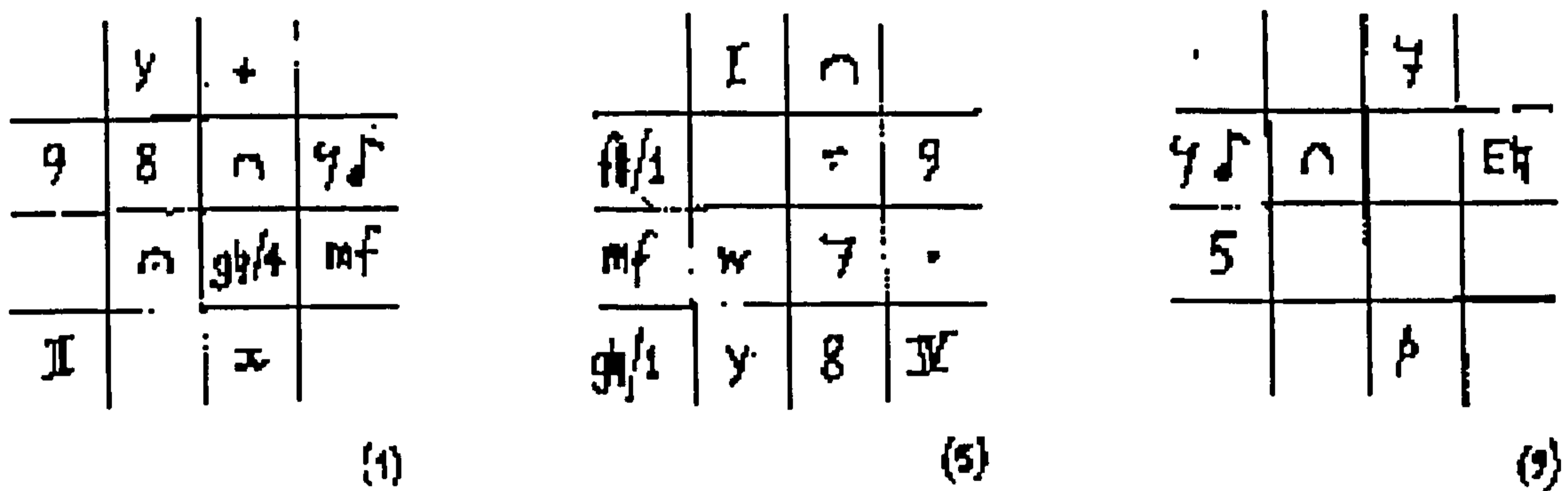


Fig. 3.5: Cardew, *Solo With Accompaniment* (1964), Universal Edition.

Perhaps another way of considering such scores is to think of them as starting points rather than the traditionally accepted western notion that the score denotes the intended end point of the compositional process – the process of interpretation and performance being considered a separate stage of the musical process. The *Four Works* demonstrate a process whereby the interpretation and performance are a continuation of the compositional process, the score being the means by which the piece can or may come about. There is another instance of a direct line to Cage embedded within this – the rejection of composed music as a commodity or at least a fixed commodity of defined value, what Tilbury describes as the ‘super-objectivity of serialism’ and the ‘preoccupation with the perfection of the ideal object’ (Tilbury, 1983: 5). Cardew is clear on the role of the score for *Autumn '60*: ‘A balance must be maintained between cogent explicitness (necessary to galvanise the player into action) and sufficient flexibility (in

the symbols and the rules for their interpretation) to permit evolution' (Cardew, 1966c). The work, then, is a tantalising balance between the structured and the free, the prescriptive and the autonomous. In reverting back to Cardew's work with Stockhausen it would appear that elements of the *Four Works* are in part realizations of the ideal he had envisaged in bringing the '101 snappy items' to life. Cardew notes that: 'Any performance is a kind of documentary relic (more or less revealing) of the composer's intention' (ibid). The work itself, and the personality manifested within it, are only in the written basic score, and may or may not be apparent in any interpretation. Any performance is essentially a comment on the work, though, as Anton Lukoszevieveze notes: 'Cardew maintains a skeleton of his own pitch material which will, by chance, remain just in and out of focus' (Lukoszevieveze, 2001).

Octet '61 for Jasper Johns (1961) (fig. 3.6) perhaps demonstrates an even stronger connection with Stockhausen's 'snappy items' and further explorations into hybrid notational techniques. The score consists of an ordered cycle of 60 'musical events' – plus one more that can be inserted at will into the cycle – which is permitted to start and end anywhere and may be played for any length of time. While still identifiably music notation due to the conventional staves, clefs and note heads, many of the musical symbols have been presented in mutated or extended forms. The instruction page provides guidance as to what specific symbols denote, though in the 'musical events' these symbols are embedded within more complex graphics and therefore demand varying degrees of invention in terms of how they might apply in context. Much is left for free interpretation, such as the numbers apparent in various guises throughout – themselves a reference to the number-strewn paintings of Jasper Johns to whom the piece is dedicated.

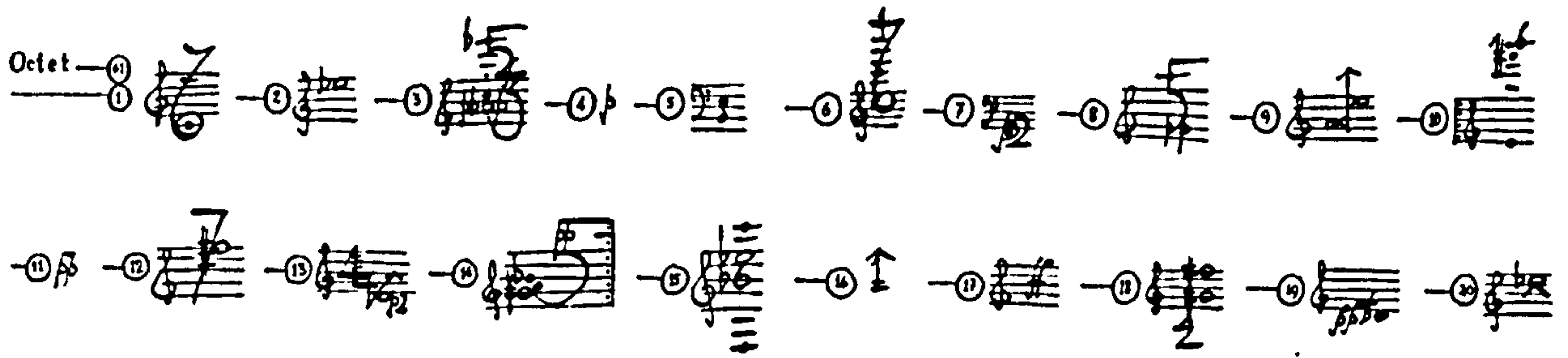


Fig. 3.6: Cardew, *Octet '61 for Jasper Johns* (1961), Hinrichsen.

An additional 'musical event' – given the symbol of an arrow pointing diagonally up to the left – is defined as meaning 'out, away; something completely different. This sign should be interpreted only once in any performance' (Cardew, 1961d). This again brings us back to the notion of personality in the basic score, though this time Cardew seems more insistent that this personality should reach the performed realization as he intended: 'the simple identity of the piece is given once and for all by [this] sign: the piece will be known and remembered (if at all) as the piece where something peculiar happens in the middle' (ibid).

The significance of *Octet '61* lies in the further sacrifice of composer control. The *Four Works* require performers to interpret symbols and interact with the score but Cardew largely retains control of structure and form – while there is flexibility they are still 'composed' pieces in that sense. *Octet '61*, however, requires performers to make macro-structural decisions, where to start, stop, punctuate and, crucially, how to join the musical events together to maintain continuity and to form a complete piece. This highlights another facet of Cardew that equates with Cage, what Tilbury observes as 'the ability to take calculated risk: risk taking is part and parcel of both indeterminacy and improvisation' (Tilbury, 1983: 3).

To take risks in sacrificing these conventions requires a trust in the performers – a trust in them to approach the score in the spirit in which it is intended; a trust in them to invest in the score the energy and commitment required for it to be successfully realized; a trust that perhaps all composers would wish of their performers but one that in this instance is central to the piece. Trust, if secure, must be mutual – the performer must also believe and trust in the composer. Indeed, Skempton has often commented on the strong personal bonds and friendships Cardew developed with those he worked alongside. This brings us back to the starting point of this discussion: Cardew's appreciation of the honesty he felt in the Cage/Tudor collaboration. Honesty is embedded within the notion of trust – it is essentially what makes it or breaks it. *Octet '61* is perhaps an embodiment of this honest approach to composing. Where musical material or ideas are concrete they are included explicitly – in the pitch information, for instance, which is largely governed, and in the insistence of the 'something completely different'. But in the instances where Cardew imagines a number of possibilities the ideas are presented as such, or in a way that gets as near as possible to that ideal given the constraints of notating in any form. There is no doubt that in performing *Octet '61* the sense of trust is implicit. As David Bedford notes more generally:

Speaking as a performer in many of Cardew's early works it must be said that the experience was totally rewarding. Our creativity was constantly being challenged, and the empathy of the performers, channelled into producing a coherent piece of music despite sometimes sketchy and sometimes paradoxical instructions, was often remarkable. It should be noted that none of Cardew's works ever gave total freedom to the performer. The instructions were a guide which focused each individual's creative instincts on a problem to be solved.

Bedford, 1982, in Prévost 2006: 301

***Treatise* and Cardew the Improviser**

Despite the influence of, and parallels with, aspects of Cage and his contemporaries, there were emerging distinctions in the way Cardew operated as a musician. This is

perhaps demonstrated most acutely through Cardew's growing interest in spontaneous music-making and the forms of improvisation more informed by practices found in the sphere of jazz than in the world of avant-garde art music. Improvisation, and specifically its jazz infused forms, was a mode of music-making that Cage was known to dislike. Cardew, however, was drawn to, if not specifically the stylistic conventions of jazz, the attitude of those musicians engaged with it, especially within the more radical circles. This interest in spontaneous explorations of sound manifested itself in two significant directions that considerably occupied Cardew throughout the mid 1960s, namely, his performance activities with the free improvisation group AMM, and the creation of *Treatise*, the graphic score he was to later repudiate in *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism*.

AMM¹ were formed in 1965 by Lou Gare, Eddie Prévost and Keith Rowe. While informed by the more left-field branches of music making of the time, all three were more embedded within jazz culture than the world of the avant-garde composer. It was AMM's intention to work within areas of free improvisation that may be distinct from their jazz-informed foundations, their self-declaration being that AMM 'concerns itself – certainly outwardly – with musical improvisation of an experimental kind' (AMM, c1970: liner notes). It was perhaps this alternative foundation for music-making that interested Cardew. Keith Rowe, for instance, had trained primarily as a painter and was drawn to improvised music as a means of escaping the commodity driven culture of painting, noting that 'with music I didn't have the commodity ... I hit the guitar and made a note, and the note disappeared into air' (Rowe, 2001: 2). This train of thought would no doubt have resonated with Cardew's own emerging struggle with the expected role of the composer and the score in western art music.

¹ AMM is indeed an initialism though what the letters stand for is a closely guarded secret, as are the reasons for such secrecy. It is not even clear whether Cardew, as an incoming member of the group, was aware of the significance.

Cardew joined AMM in 1966 playing piano and cello, along with cellist Laurence Shaeff, originally a jazz bassist,² and engaged in a series of performances and recordings. AMM performances, or 'AMM music' as it was billed, was never planned or discussed and typically took the form of an hour or two of freely improvised experiments, characterized by explorations of the sonic possibilities of the instruments through a range of conventional and extended techniques, amplification and electronics, and – perhaps with a nod to John Cage – transistor radios. Cardew, given his background in a formal musical education rather than free jazz, was something of a misfit and the impact of AMM on his thinking about music cannot be underestimated. The central thrust of this impact is apparent in Cardew's 1968 essay 'Towards an Ethic of Improvisation'. Cardew considered the music created through the freely improvised modes of AMM to be inclusive of all sonic possibilities in a way that 'composed' music is not. AMM music makes any sound permissible, though Cardew admits that 'members of AMM have marked preferences' (Cardew, 1971a: xviii). It is this inclusiveness of sound that Cardew seems to use as a way of defining AMM music as distinct from other forms: 'an openness to the totality of sounds implies a tendency away from traditional musical structures towards informality' (ibid: xviii). Indeed, Cardew seems to be suggesting that AMM is more do to with sound than it is to do with music. It is the focus on the exploration of sound rather than musical constructs that make AMM music such a singular experience:

Informal 'sound' has a power over our emotional responses that formal 'music' does not, in that it acts subliminally rather than on a cultural level. This is a possible definition of the area in which AMM is experimental. We are *searching* for sounds and for the responses that attach to them, rather than thinking them up, preparing them and producing them. The search is conducted in the medium of sound and the musician himself is at the heart of the experiment.

Cardew, 1971a: xviii

² AMM was later joined by Christopher Hobbs. Christian Wolff was briefly a part of the group during 1968 and, since 1980, John Tilbury has played a significant role in the continuation of the group to the present day.

This is a significant statement and reinforces Cardew's preoccupation with reversing some of the accepted notions of what constitutes a stimulus for a musical performance – that is, in western art music at least, the score. This new interpretation of the creative process – searching rather than preparing – provides something of a context for *Treatise* (fig. 3.7).

Cardew had trained as a typographer at the London College of Printing in 1961–2 (Tilbury, 2008: 129). While no doubt informed by his interest in the visual aspects of notation this was part of a long term plan to develop a craft that would secure income alongside his musical activities.³ Following this training Cardew was employed as a design assistant at Aldus Books in London where *Treatise* was conceived:

While there I came to be occupied more and more with designing diagrams and charts and in the course of this work I became aware of the potential eloquence of simple black lines in a diagram. Thin, thick, curving, broken, and then the varying tones of grey made up of equally spaced parallel lines, and then the type – numbers, words, short sentences like ornate, literary, art-nouveauish, visual interlopers in the purely graphic context of the diagram.

Cardew cited in Tilbury, 2008: 228⁴

Treatise was in part informed by Cardew's reading of Wittgenstein, in particular *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Wittgenstein, 1974) from which the title is formed. The central concern of *Tractatus* is (rather crudely) the nature of language and communication, and its function in how we might make sense of the world. The backbone of *Treatise* is perhaps its exploration of the nature of language and communication within the musical context – that is, notation, the tool most commonly used within western art music to 'discuss' or share music. Most crucial to the discussion here is that the creation of *Treatise* between 1963 and 1967 was, in its latter stages,

³ Cardew subsequently worked sporadically in publishing over the next 15 years, especially at times when finances demanded. Tilbury (2008) provides the biographical detail of these employments.

⁴ Tilbury notes that this formed part of a talk preceding a broadcast of *Treatise* but provides no details of where or how it is recorded. It is probably part of Tilbury's private collection.

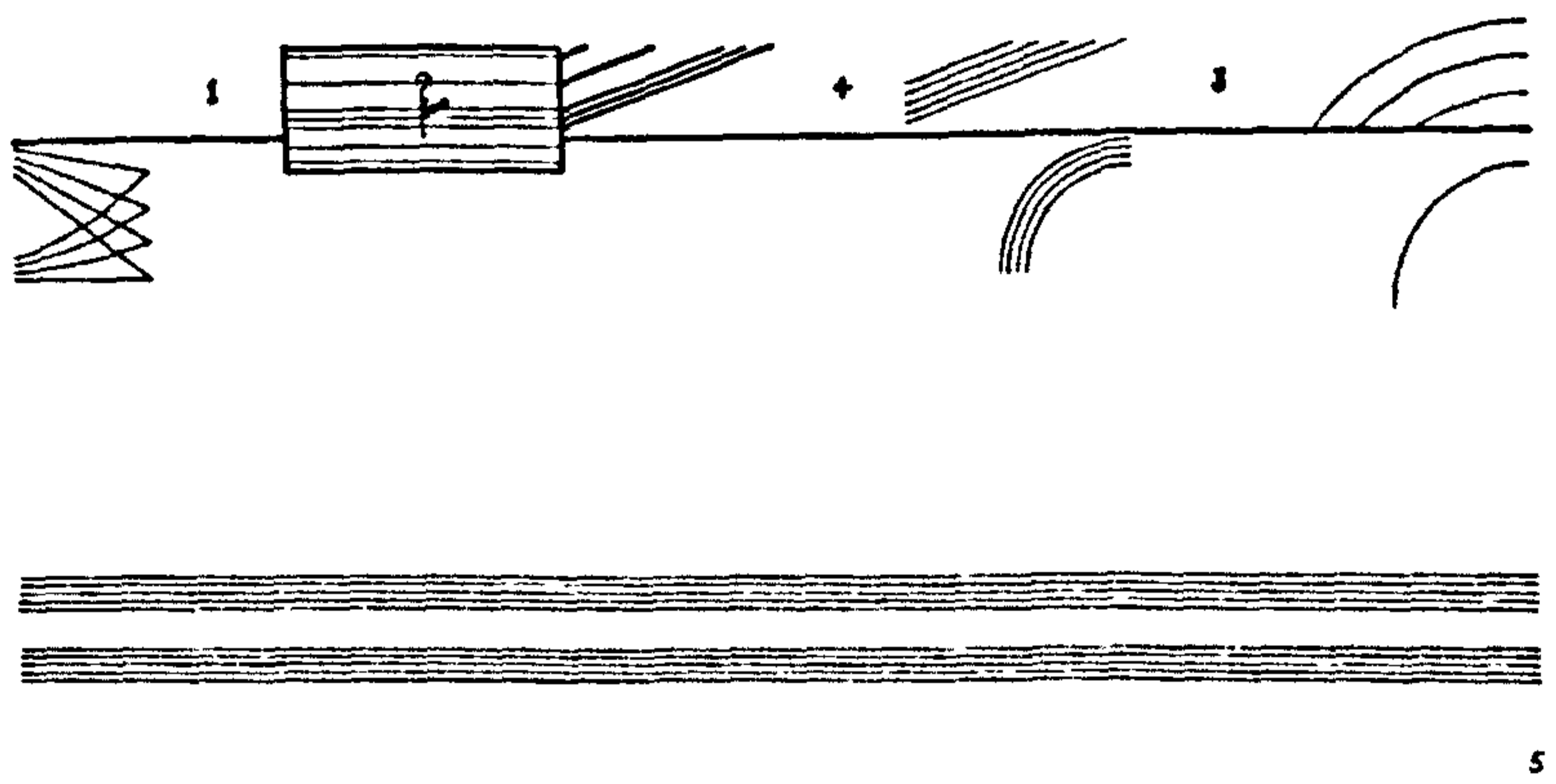
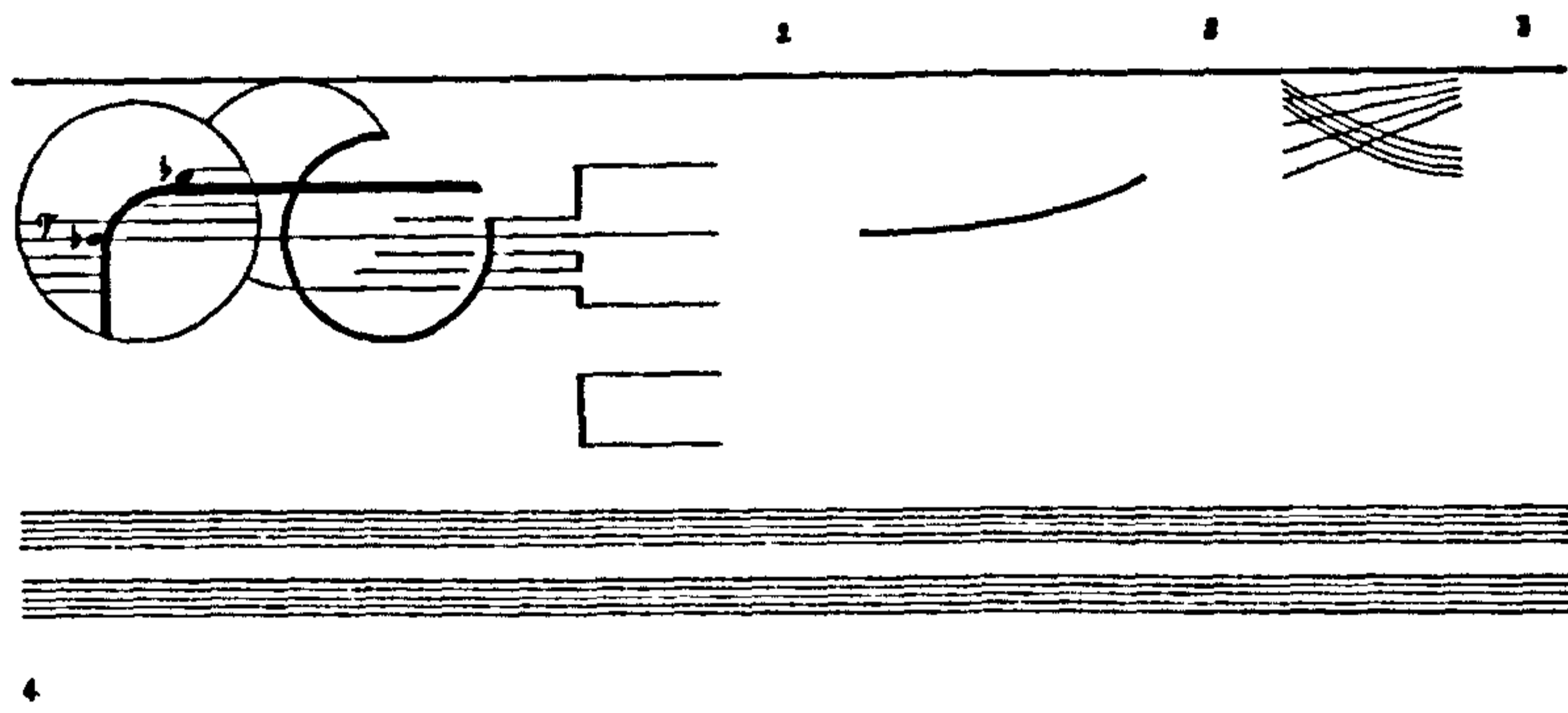
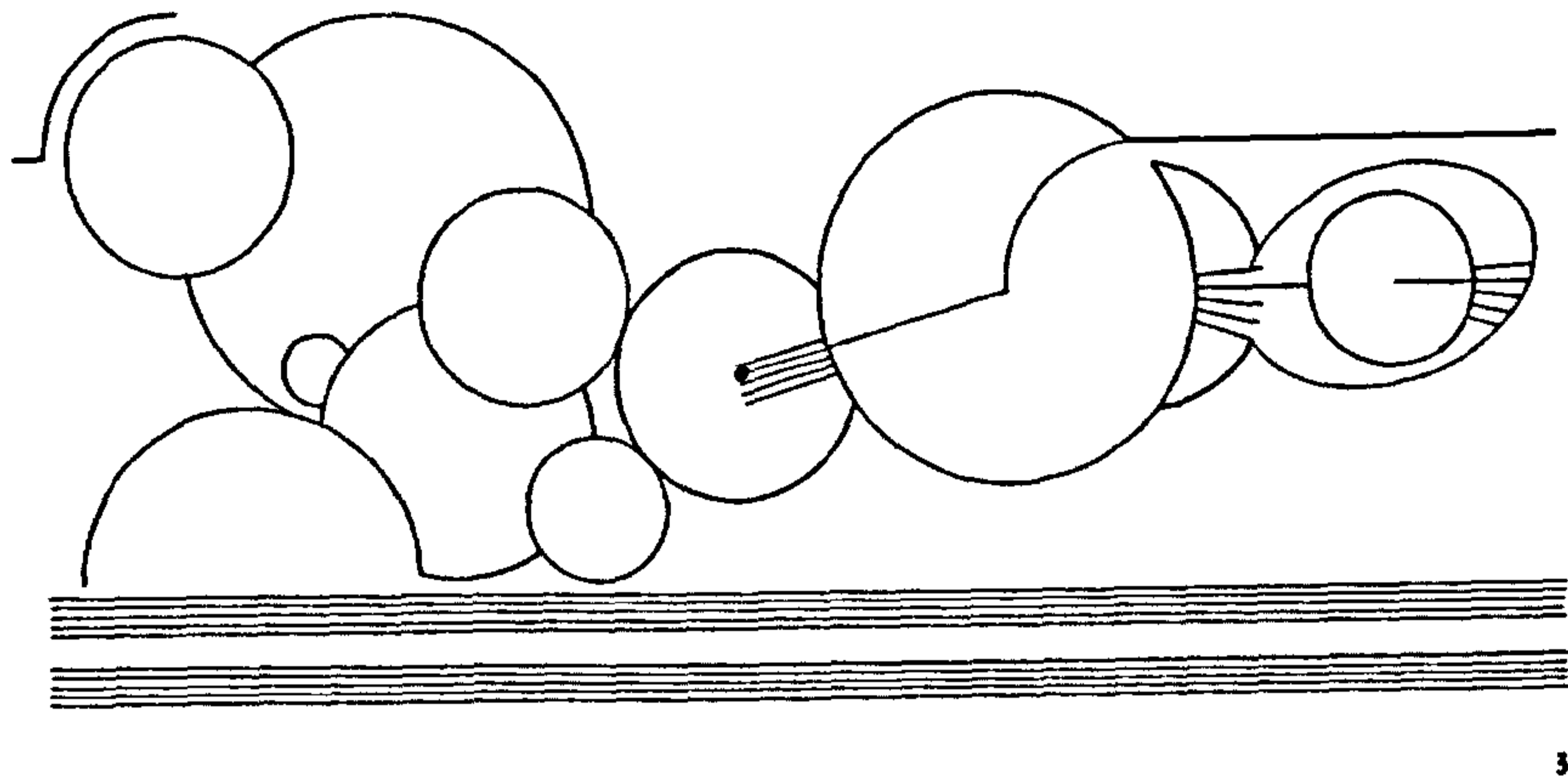


Fig. 3.7: Cardew, *Treatise*, pages 3–5 (1963–7), Edition Peters.

a parallel activity to Cardew's work with AMM and was, in part, a compositional reaction to the new-found freedoms that improvised music had allowed. Cardew himself later noted that:

I now regard *Treatise* as a transition between my earlier preoccupation with problems of notation and my present concerns – improvisation and musical life. Joining AMM was the turning point, both in the composition of *Treatise* and in everything I had thought about music up to then.

Cardew, 1970, in Tilbury 1983: 7

Treatise unfolds over a 193-page sequence of graphics. It takes the form of a continuous weaving of shapes and symbols only a handful of which are recognizably related to conventional musical notation. A double staff runs across the bottom of each page providing the only initial evidence that the score's intention is perhaps a musical one. The intended purpose of the staff is unclear. It can be, and often is, employed simply as a practical device on which an interpreter can record ideas, though Brian Dennis contemplates the more significant role of representing the interpreter in 'an almost metaphysical manner' (Dennis, 1991 in Prévost, 2006: 354). The graphics themselves include lines and dots of varying boldness, numbers, filled and unfilled squares, circles, triangles and fragments or derivations of such shapes alongside irregular shapes. Musical symbols include staves, clefs, sharps, flats, rests and note stems sometimes appearing as one would expect, but more often skewed in some way or combined with other graphics. Cardew notes that sixty-seven such elements were established in an early 'elaborate scheme' (Cardew, 1971a: i) on which initial sketches were based. In addition to the graphics a single black line is evident throughout. This line is sometimes disrupted or hidden, but, with the exception of just five pages, implicit on every page. Some pages are sparse with perhaps just a single graphic event but most contain multiple symbol types and juxtapositions of varying complexity. But the score is not haphazard or nonsensical. Rather than an abstract sequence of disconnected imagery, the pages demonstrate a mostly logical flow from start to finish. Ideas are expanded and

explored; ideas draw to a close; new ideas are introduced. A scan through from start to finish shows thematic development and the recapitulation of earlier gestures. *Treatise* is, in essence, a visual composition.

Most crucial and defining is the fact that, unlike the *Four Works* and *Octet '61*, Cardew includes not a single word of performance note or guidance as to how the score should be used, a conscious decision from the outset:

I wrote *Treatise* with the definite intention that it should stand entirely on its own, without any form of introduction or instruction to mislead prospective performers into the slavish practice of "doing what they are told.

Cardew, 1971a: i

Cardew did provide a *Treatise Handbook* in 1971, though it seems through external pressures rather than choice as his own introduction to the handbook attests: 'It is with great reluctance ... that I have let myself be persuaded to collect these obscure and, where not obscure, uninteresting remarks into publishable form' (ibid). The handbook takes the form of a collection of the notes Cardew made during the creation of the score alongside largely anecdotal information relating to specific performances of *Treatise* rather than a guide to its realization. While performers might choose to consciously inform their interpretations of *Treatise* with reference to the precedents outlined in the handbook, the original intentions of avoiding 'slavish practice' are kept largely intact.

Treatise shares the 'starting point' attitude as exemplified in the *Four Works* and *Octet '61* but coupled with an exponentially increased number of possibilities. The score could act, and has acted, as a stimulus for improvised music; a stimulus for a performance achieved through protracted and democratic discussion among the performers; a starting point for a more formally prepared compositional activity; an electronic or electroacoustic work; a multi-media or inter-disciplinary performance; or any number of unimagined responses to the question of how to represent the score in alternative and

perhaps not necessarily sonic ways. Additionally, and significantly, a performance does not necessarily require the services of what we would traditionally regard as trained musicians.

Cardew himself, through his work with AMM and through other compositional endeavours, demonstrated the multiplicity of the score. Both the orchestral *Bun No. 2* (1964) and *Volo Solo* (1965) (fig. 3.8) for any solo instrument are composed realizations of *Treatise*, the former being based on pages 45-51, the latter 'contains (with a few trivial alterations connected with the gaps, which figure in *Treatise* as numbers) the entire formal scheme of *Treatise* transliterated into well-tempered pitches' (Cardew, 1971a: n.p.) Cardew also engaged in performances of *Treatise*, including with AMM, and including versions based on varying amounts of predetermined decision-making and more spontaneous improvisatory approaches. Tilbury, with whom I discussed approaches towards the score, notes that Cardew's attitude towards *Treatise* became freer as a result of his work with AMM.

TH: How did Cardew's involvement with AMM influence his work on *Treatise*?

JT: His attitude towards it changed. It became freer. It was something you could use more impressionistically whereas originally I think it was more like a real notation – what does this and that symbol mean; how does the modification of that symbol affect the sound and all those sorts of things. A lot of people to this day do it like that. There's no reason why they shouldn't. But then having done it with AMM – with three of them coming from an art background they have a freer response to it. They work backwards – Keith Rowe would see something in a far corner I hadn't even noticed. I would be working left to right like a typical musician. He looked at it more like a picture.

What Cardew had discovered through working with AMM and *Treatise* was less to do with specific compositional technique and more to do with identifying a mode of music making that blurred the lines between the acts of composition, the acts of interpretation, and the acts of performance – a mode that essentially integrated these elements of the creative process, and a mode that was beginning to characterize his work.

Fig. 3.8: Cardew, *Volo Solo* (1965), Edition Peters.

New Dimensions: The 'School of Cardew'

By the mid 1960s Cardew was part of a small but committed scene in England. It was within this context that Feldman noted Cardew's prominence: 'if the new ideas are felt today as a movement in England, it's because he acts as a moral force, a moral centre (Feldman, 1967: 42). This movement was by now starting to demonstrate a life of independence from the American and European influences from which it had initially grown. Cardew had been instrumental in bringing the music and ideas of Cage and his contemporaries to Britain but there was perhaps a growing distinctiveness between Cage and Cardew throughout the 1960s that ran deeper than the most visible departure into the world of improvisation would suggest. David Bedford commented that to

equate the two was 'unfair, since he [Cardew] brought a typically English elegance and wit even to some of his more apparently eccentric compositions' (Bedford, 1982: 11).

Tilbury asserts that 'in fact, Cardew's admiration for Cage had nothing to do with Cage's compositional techniques' (Tilbury, 1983: 5). This is perhaps overstated – Cardew was undoubtedly impressed and profoundly attracted to Cage's techniques – but, crucially, there is distinction to be found in the values each attached to the use of indeterminate techniques. Nyman recognizes that:

[The] work of Cardew has grown from a need to simplify demands and presentation without compromising ideals in an increasingly accessible way. By contrast, Cage's and Wolff's indeterminate scores of the early sixties not only demanded considerable technical expertise in performance, but also the ability to comprehend quite sophisticated abstract musical concepts.

Nyman, 1999: 110

The notion of accessibility is to be dealt with in subsequent chapters, but the differences in the application of indeterminate techniques are critical. In rather crude terms Cage's development of indeterminate techniques was with the aim of relinquishing the human influence on the music – to allow the sounds to act for themselves or to limit the musical and cultural baggage with which a musician might approach the realization of a score. Tilbury believes that 'Cage's notational systems presuppose a denial of the influence of musical background (that is, history), whether Cage's own or the performers', and, moreover, generally allow for no spontaneous expression during performance' (Tilbury, 1983: 5). For Cardew, the real value of indeterminate systems was just the opposite – to encourage human influence. As Bedford describes, the instructions in Cardew's scores of the early 1960s guided the performer on 'how to interpret a particular system of notation using one's own musical background and attitudes' (Bedford, 1982: 11).

Similar distinctions are apparent in the values Cage and Cardew attach to aspects of collaboration, a theme that preoccupied Cardew since the Stockhausen experience.

Again, generalizations are inevitable but, for Cage, collaboration was a further means of liberating the music from the strangle-hold of flawed human intervention – the theory being that the more personnel involved, the less opportunity for a single ‘personality’ to inflect the music. In an article as early as 1948 – ‘A Composer’s Confessions’ – Cage, in describing the processes of *Double Music* (1941), notes that ‘the peculiarities of a single personality disappear almost entirely and there comes into perception through the music a natural friendliness’ (Cage, 1948 in Nicholls, 2002: 167). While Cage was excited by the social implications of collaborative music making, Cardew saw the social interactions as the very ‘personality’ of the music. If his own personality in pieces such as *Autumn ‘60*, *Octet ‘61*, or *Treatise* manifests only in the ‘basic score’ then the final performance can *only* be characterized by the approaches and musical baggage or personalities of those interpreting them.

At the heart of Cage’s art is the music – the sound and its liberation. In that sense it is ‘concert music’ and functions in much the same way as all concert music that preceded it. It is music created for, or the creation of opportunities for sounds to happen in a context where it is received by listeners in the form of an audience. While it is true that not all performances of Cage’s music take place in concert halls, the principle remains largely intact. It would be disingenuous to suggest that Cardew’s art was not to do with the music, but at the same time Cardew’s focus was on the social, the self, the person, their social interactions, their intellectual stimulation, their ‘musical well-being’ perhaps. The presentation to, and reaction of, an audience is almost tangential.

All this leads to the suggestion that the distinctions are sufficiently pronounced to consider the existence of a ‘school of Cardew’ – a school of thought and practice that was informed by the American experimentalists and elements of the European avant-garde, but with some idiosyncratic shifts born out of frustrations and conflicts with those

traditions. By way of exemplifying these idiosyncrasies, consider the following instructional notes from a number of Cardew's scores:

Free use may be made of notes apart from those provided – No part of any sign is obligatory. (*Octet '61 for Jasper Johns*, 1961)

A musician is not obliged to make a sound at any point, not even if the given material suggests or permits one. (*Autumn '60*, 1960)

Any of the written notes may be omitted. (*Material*, 1964)

It is not necessary to follow a scheme (the one outlined above or any other) when combining the pieces. (*February Pieces*, 1959-61)

This performance is not the only possible one: circumstances may encourage the devising of others. (*The Great Learning*, Paragraph 2, 1969)

Anything in the matrix may be changed. (*The Great Learning*, Paragraph 5, 1970)

There is no obligation to reach the end. (*The Great Learning*, Paragraph 6, 1969)

These instructions give rise to a distinctive characteristic that I have come to describe as 'get-out clauses'. It is not unusual for them to appear after lengthy and detailed instructions of how the score should be interpreted – as if Cardew, after slavishly devising the necessary rules and regulations for a successful interpretation, feels a deep unease with the restrictions he may be placing on the creative life of the music. To compensate Cardew ensures there is sufficient flexibility in the instruction to allow for the eventuality that the musicians might have a better idea, or a system more appropriate to the context. Perhaps we return here to the notion of honesty. In moments where Cardew is not certain if there is an honest reason to impose a specific instruction, he inserts his permission to ignore. In this respect Cardew serves to undermine and subvert the basic tenets of what a composer might be expected to do.

We should now revisit the arguments stated in *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism*, the point Cardew would reach within just a few years of the activities and output discussed in this chapter:

The bourgeois/capitalist society that brought music out of the church into the realm of bourgeois art, and reached undreamed-of power and imperial glory through the upheavals of the industrial revolution, is now in the last stages of decay, and modern music reflects that decay.

Cardew, 1974: 57

The music discussed in this chapter is the very 'modern music' that Cardew is here attacking. But in identifying the distinctiveness of Cardew's approach we have identified the possibility that rather than reflecting on the political and social directions of Britain in the 1960s, Cardew is perhaps tackling the 'decay'. Cardew's music of the 1960s was beginning to challenge many of the rules and conventions that had previously governed the hierarchy of musical creation and dissemination – the very rules and regulations that Cardew would later identify as feeding from the 'false consciousness' that results from the capitalist system of social organization. Granted, Cardew's indeterminate scores could hardly constitute a direct attack on the system, or even provide a particularly effective vehicle for exposing Cardew's developing world view, but there is a sense of 'chipping away', perhaps even subconsciously, at a culture with which he feels ill at ease.

This chapter, therefore, draws to a close by returning to Cardew's notion of the 'bourgeois composer', and his self-imposed indictment. There is no questioning the fact that Cardew – or the 'school of Cardew' – was grounded in the world of the bourgeoisie in its broadest sense, and that the influence of the European avant-garde and American experimentalism was a residual force in his work up until the publication of *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism*. But the ideas that underpin Cardew's work of this period suggest that he was already moving in a different direction. The noticeable thread is one of humanity – a concern with the well-being, in this case largely, but not limited to, the musical well-being, of the people at the centre of making the music. The politicization of Cardew's thinking occurred later – as will be discussed in the following chapters – and, while he was not considering his work in these terms during the period discussed here, this focus

on 'the people' suggests that Cardew was perhaps more in tune with the Marxist notion of the proletariat than he later assumed.

If we are to assess Cardew's work of this period from what Freedon described as the 'critical vista' of Marxist ideology (Freedon, 1996: 14)⁵ this starts to make more sense. The publishers, broadcasters and record companies, as Cardew notes in the introduction to *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* (Cardew, 1974a: 5), are the 'dominant class' as they control the means of production. They operate according to the ideology that is in their interest. This is the 'dominant ideology' presented to and perceived by the workers (the composers, performers) and the consumers (the audience) to also represent their interests – this results in a false consciousness perpetuated by the dominant class to maintain the system from which they benefit. The workers and consumers are therefore exploited, and any need for resistance to that exploitation is masked by their perceived wellbeing. Cardew undermines this in a number of subtle but crucial ways. Much of his music, for instance, was not commissioned so was perhaps not responding to the demands of the dominant commissioning class. Moreover, his music is primarily built around the needs and well-being of those playing the music rather than the consumer, which undermines the exchange-value operation of supply and demand. Finally, it blurs the lines between the roles of composer, performer and audience demonstrating the artificial nature of such lines, perhaps constructs of the prevailing false consciousness. It could be argued that Cardew was never quite the bourgeois composer he later repudiated in *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism*: rather, he was a proletarian composer who, as yet, had no natural home outside the bourgeois world of the 1960s' experimental and avant-garde musical fraternity, and who had yet to realize his role in the class struggle.

⁵ As discussed on p. 39.

Scratch: Embodiment and Change

For Cardew, the years 1969–72 were characterized by a particular phenomenon in the shape of the Scratch Orchestra, a creative collective of like-minded musicians and artists co-founded in 1969 by Cardew with Howard Skempton and Michael Parsons. 25 years after its inception, at a celebratory event at the Institute of Contemporary Art, London, former Scratch Orchestra members were asked to record their recollections of the time for a piece in the programme (Scratch Orchestra, 1994: 35–40):

I personally feel his [Cardew's] influence and relevance is no less meaningful for me today, thirteen years after his death, than it was in 1970 when I joined the Scratch. (Richard Ascough)

Everyone mattered, everyone counted. We were all stars. We all got our 15 minutes of fame ... it was about ordinary people, non-musicians, being encouraged to play music alongside professionals. Cornelius enabled us all to achieve this unbelievable dream with the Scratch Orchestra. (Carol Finer)

What is its influence? Not much, you may feel, looking around at the trend in music in Britain today. But it's rather subtler than that, for those of us who were in it. I think it is safe to say that little of what we do musically, even 25 years later, is undertaken without the impact, however faint its memory. It is our Background Radiation, an ineradicable part of us; and our lives could not possibly have been the same without it. (Christopher Hobbs).

The tremendous amount of activity raised all sorts of questions that seemed at the time unresolvable within the Scratch Orchestra. Those involved were all affected by the experience ... the questions raised then are still in evidence today and waiting solutions. (Laurie and Brigid Scott Baker)

To an aspiring young composer who had recently experienced Schoenberg, Boulez etc, the impact of the Scratch Orchestra was overwhelming, and not a little disconcerting – so much to unlearn! The Scratch was about getting to grips with the fundamentals of music. In retrospect, a return to such primitivism was necessary to clear the air in order to see the situation more clearly. (Hugh Shrapnel)

The history of music took a whole new direction with the Scratch Orchestra. That movement carried along everyone who participated in the Scratch. No one was untouched by it. It crystallized a mood for change of its times, and in turn changed the direction of lives. Its function as a musical construct for changing people's lives abides in the memory and is imprinted in the music culture. (Michael Chant)

The previous chapter identified Cardew's preoccupation with 'the people' at the centre of his world of music making and it would appear that the Scratch Orchestra took this preoccupation to the next level, as attested by these recollections. However subjective and coloured by emotional response they may be, these comments demonstrate the strength of feeling among its participants: they certainly believe they had been part of *something* of significance. This chapter aims to identify what that *something* is and what its significance may be for those participants and, most importantly, Cardew himself.

Alongside the historical account of events this chapter will consider the Scratch Orchestra from two distinct angles. Firstly, through the consideration of 'embodiment' – as Nyman notes: 'For Cardew (if for no-one else) the orchestra was the embodiment of certain educational, musical, social and ethical ideals' (Nyman, 1999: 133). Tilbury also identifies that the Scratch Orchestra 'bore [Cardew's] stamp ... it was the embodiment and realisation of the ideas he had formulated about musical life over a long period' (Tilbury, 1983: 9). Secondly, this chapter will consider the Scratch Orchestra as a vehicle for, and perhaps a catalyst for, shifting approaches and a developing ideological awareness. The events of the Scratch Orchestra undoubtedly changed and shaped Cardew's thinking and these changes are imperative in understanding Cardew's post-Scratch era. The Scratch Orchestra, then, represents both the embodiment of ideals and the changing and shaping of those ideals. In simple terms, this chapter will deal with what went into the Orchestra, what happened along the way, and what came out the other side.

The Morley College Experience

In 1967 Cardew was employed on a part time basis to teach composition at the RAM, an institution he found no less conservative and stifling as he had a decade previously

(Tilbury, 2008: 343). Tilbury notes that, while the RAM recognized the potential benefit of Cardew enhancing compositional tuition, it tended 'not to broadcast Cardew's presence so that only the alert and neoteric student would have known that this particular path of compositional study could be pursued' (ibid: 342).¹ In September 1968, partly by way of an antidote to his work at the RAM, Cardew founded an experimental music class at Morley College, South London – a series of workshops dedicated to the exploration of contemporary experimental music from Europe (mostly Britain) and America, alongside Cardew's interests in improvisation. The series of workshops ultimately ran in some form for five years but the initial twelve months are of particular interest here. The workshops were open to a wide range of participants and attracted about 20 individuals. A number were sympathetic students from the RAM. Others were amateur musicians looking for new musical avenues, others still were from the sphere of visual art. Howard Skempton notes, in my interview with him, that what some of the participants were lacking in technical skill – certainly by the standards of the RAM – they made up for with considerable enthusiasm and Cardew was aware of an untapped energy:

TH: What were the events leading up to the formation of the Scratch Orchestra?

HS: In 1968 he started an experimental music class at Morley College. I had started studying privately with him. The great thing about studying with Cardew was that, because he was a performing musician and interested in improvisation, he was very happy to involve his students in performances and first performances – the first performance of *Schooltime Compositions*, the first performance of *The Tiger's Mind*, and the first British performance of Terry Riley's *In C*. His students took part in all of those. I think he realized that there was quite a lot of enthusiasm that wasn't being exploited. When he started the Morley college class there were people there who clearly didn't have the skills to go to the Academy but they had plenty of enthusiasm. They might have been visual artists. Some of them taught at art colleges. He was excited by this and he felt there was huge potential there.

Skempton had sought out Cardew as a private tutor because of his span across the European and American contemporary music scenes, and the fact that he was a

¹ Tilbury documents the tensions between Cardew and the Academy through a series of entertaining anecdotes which are, unfortunately, not relevant to this discussion (see Tilbury, 2008: 333–372).

performing musician. Skempton was absorbed into the Morley College class as a matter of course. Another key figure was Michael Parsons. Parsons was already acquainted with Cardew and the experimental scene through his work in music journalism and through attending AMM events. Parsons saw the chance to work more closely with Cardew as a much needed impetus, stating in my interview with him that:

MP: I'd got into a bit of a dead-end trying to write serial music – in the Boulez/Stockhausen tradition. I felt that it wasn't really going anywhere, and [the Morley College class] was a revelation of all kinds of new possibilities of music making in a much more informal way.

For Parsons, the experience was one of liberation. He talks of Cardew 'giving permission' to work in new ways, not just to Parsons himself but in a less direct way to a whole generation of composers and musicians. The fact that Cardew had himself been an accomplished practitioner of the traditions he critiqued gave this extra weight:

MP: He gave you permission. And it was particularly encouraging coming from him because he'd actually been part of that background himself. It wasn't as if he was someone from outside who was saying that kind of serial music is all finished. It was coming from someone who was actually a leading practitioner of it.

TH: Do you think that was important?

MP: Yes. He had proved his credentials. He'd worked with Stockhausen. He'd written quite ambitious and formidable pieces like the *Third Piano Sonata* which are thoroughly immersed in that kind of serialism. Then he'd criticized it from the inside and gone on to work with Cage, Wolff and Feldman. So he was very much aware of the background against which he was critiquing this. That was very liberating. He gave us permission to explore things in a much more spontaneous way.

The Morley College class was also to have an instructive impact on Cardew himself, and this is where a pattern starts to emerge. The direction of Cardew's compositional output up to this point had been partly driven by issues relating to his work as a performer: the 'high-definition' performance of the virtuoso resulting in the clarity and detail of the piano sonatas; the honesty of Cage/Tudor performances manifesting itself in scores requiring an increasing amount of performer interaction; his work with AMM manifesting itself in the improvisatory nature of *Treatise*. It is logical to assume that the move to working with a more disparate group of musicians and artists – a group whose

single collective connection is enthusiasm – will impact on the compositional approach. The *Four Works* dispensed with some of the hierarchical anomalies of the composer/performer collaboration: *Treatise* dispensed with the notion of the instructional role of the composer opening up the opportunity of improvisational freedom to a new level. Crucially, *Treatise* could be performed by trained and untrained musicians alike. The *Schooltime Compositions* of 1967 have an even stronger focus on the interaction of *people* and their abilities than on concerns with creating ‘beautiful artefacts’ (Tilbury, 1983: 8). But it is not until we look at the score of *The Great Learning* (1968–70) that we see an overtly conscious attempt to reconcile the notion of the ‘musician’ as historically defined in the west – that is, a person with technical skill on an instrument and the ability to realize a piece of music from a score – with the ‘non-musician’ who might not have developed those skills. *The Great Learning*, by no coincidence, was conceived, at least in part, around the same time that the Morley College class was founded, and was a compositional endeavour that ran parallel to the early stages of the Scratch Orchestra.

The Great Learning is a vast work in seven movements or ‘paragraphs’ based on the first chapter of the Confucian text of the same name², and dedicated to the Scratch Orchestra. The work will be examined in detail later in the chapter. The main concern here is Paragraph 2 (fig. 4.1), composed during the initial period of the Morley College class.

² Sometimes translated as *The Great Digest*.

The Great Learning, paragraph 2

Singing

KNOW THE POINT OF REST AND THEN HAVE AN ORDERLY MODE OF PROCEDURE

HAVING THIS ORDERLY PROCEDURE ONE CAN GRASP THE AZURE THAT IS TAKE HOLD OF A CLEAR CONCEPT

HOLDING A CLEAR CONCEPT ONE CAN BE AT PEACE IN - TERNALLY

BEING THUS CALM ONE CAN KEEP ONE'S HEAD IN MOMENTS OF DANGER

HE WHO CAN KEEP HIS HEAD IN THE PRESENCE OF A TIGER IS QUALIFIED TO COME TO HIS DEED IN DUE HOUR

Drumming

Mary

Polaris

Touch

Superior

Imek

Castor

Pollux

Taste

Michigan

Spades

White

Black

Smell

Huron

Hearts

Romulus

Remus

Sight

Erie

Diamonds

Right

Left

Hearing

Ontario

Clubs

Brobeson

Fig. 4.1: Cardew, *The Great Learning*, Paragraph 2 (1969), Cornelius Cardew Committee.

In my interview in 2003, Skempton recalled how the Morley College classes were a combination of looking at specific repertoire and exploring improvisation. Describing a typical class he states:

HS: We used to work on various things – we might work on a version of Cage's *Variation One* during the first hour and three quarters, then we'd break for tea and in the last part, which would be two hours, we'd improvise.

It was elements of the improvising, and the diversity of the participants in their approach and experience of improvising, that seemed to provide the spark for Cardew:

HS: That [improvising] was always very frustrating because people had more enthusiasm and more ideas than skill. So there was a lot of noise and very quickly it reached the point at which you couldn't really contribute. Nothing you could do added to what was happening already. So it was a very frustrating experience for everybody taking part. He [Cardew] devised *The Great Learning* really to reign in and exploit the talents people had.

A draft of Paragraph 2 of *The Great Learning* was presented to the Morley College class in January 1969 (Tilbury, 2008: 482). It is scored for voices and drums, and, while challenging, is performable by anyone with a desire to participate. A specific departure for Cardew is the role of the score itself. The score acts only as an aide memoir to whoever may be organizing or leading a realization. The instructions note that the drum rhythms should be memorized. While the score gives no such specific instruction for the singers, given that there is every chance a performance may involve non-readers, these would also generally be taught by rote – and this was the approach Cardew himself took when preparing the first performance with the Morley College class, preparations that took precedence over the usual range of activities. Whatever the performance situation there is no doubt that the score does not play the central role in a realization than that of *Autumn '60* or *Octet '61* – that is a score to be 'read' by the performers as part of the performance process. It should, however, be noted that Cardew pays no less attention to the presentation of the score throughout – the A3 facsimile demonstrates the

same fastidious typographical detail found in his *Treatise* and his earlier indeterminate scores.

The first performance of Paragraph 2 took place in May 1969, in an epic seven-hour concert including Cage's *Atlas Eclipticalis* (1961–2).³ Paragraph 2 required more forces than the Morley College class could offer and therefore friends and family were drafted in to expand the voice parts. Over 50 musicians, artists and enthusiasts took part in the performance. In all but name, the first performance of Paragraph 2 represented the first event given by 'The Scratch Orchestra'. Cardew, recognizing the potential of this expanded group, approached Skempton and Parsons to join him in each putting five pounds into a bank account and founding the Scratch Orchestra.⁴

Assembling for Action

In the June 1969 edition of *The Musical Times* Cardew published 'A Scratch Orchestra: draft constitution' (see appendix one) with a view to holding the first Scratch Orchestra meeting in July and an inaugural concert in November. This document stated the initial intentions of the Orchestra and provided a blueprint for the instigation and maintenance of Scratch activity at least during the first phase of its evolution.

The draft constitution defined a Scratch Orchestra as 'a large number of enthusiasts pooling their resources (not primarily material resources) and assembling for action (music-making, performance, edification)' (Cardew, 1969a: 617). This concise definition is immediately followed by a clarification of terms:

³ See Tilbury (2008: 358) for details of the other repertoire.

⁴ The founding trio of Cardew, Skempton and Parsons is factually accurate though probably the result of circumstance rather than any particular consultation – possibly that only Skempton and Parsons had five pounds to spare (Tilbury, 2008: 35–60; Anderson, 1983: 52). Skempton himself, in my interview in 2003, confirms that the main reason for being a co-founder was his agreement to contribute financially.

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

Cardew, 1969a: 617

This represents an intriguing nod back in the direction of the earlier composition work – the use of the ‘get-out clause’ as identified in chapter three (pp. 81–82). Within the first few lines of the constitution Cardew at once sets the agenda, yet also gives permission for that agenda to be shaped beyond his personal control. Christopher Hobbs, a member of Orchestra, also notes that the draft constitution is drawn up for *a* scratch orchestra not *the* Scratch Orchestra, pointing to the notion of any number of scratch orchestras growing from the same starting point (Hobbs in Anderson, 1983: 58), though Cardew does then go on to refer to *the* Scratch Orchestra throughout the text. The active encouragement of the members to steer the Orchestra is further exemplified in an item on the agenda drawn up by Cardew for the first meeting on July 1st 1969:

7. Make it clear that despite all these plans and projects nobody as yet knows what the orchestra is, and that they can make it what they like, that it probably isn't a sublime organism on a higher plane telling us what to do, but just us making music together.

Cardew, 1969b

Cardew's very last point of ‘just us making music’ is revealing and often overlooked, given the directions the Scratch Orchestra ultimately took. This is perhaps symptomatic of the tendency afforded by hindsight to assume or imagine starting points that make it easier to provide a direct thread through to the end point. This is the approach Rod Eley takes in his ‘A History of the Scratch Orchestra’, a text that formed the first chapter of *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* in its original edition.⁵ Eley argues that, while a subconscious rather than overt process, the Scratch Orchestra's starting point was ‘a

⁵ This text was written at Cardew's request and provides a history of Scratch from a Marxist perspective. Eley withdrew permission to reprint the chapter in Prévost's 2006 collection of Cardew related writings.

negative, self-indulgent and basically reactionary rejection of the culture and values of the ruling class, of bourgeoisie' (Eley, 1974: 11). Eley describes the members as a 'pool of dissatisfied young people' (ibid: 15) with 'a genuine, serious and principled interest in finding out what was the right way to contribute to society' (ibid). This argument holds some truth. Why, for instance, would this particular group of individuals choose to join the Scratch Orchestra rather than any number of other amateur orchestras or choral societies? The possibilities for an alternative creative and social forum must surely play a part in this, though it should be noted that a number of members also performed in other, more traditional, ensembles. It is also a fact that certain members were overtly political – John Tilbury, for instance, was already a committed Marxist and this would later play a significant role in shaping the Orchestra. But Eley's assertions present the political attractions of the Scratch Orchestra at its inception as a priority over the musical attraction. This is refuted elsewhere: in an interview in the late 1990s, David Bedford commented that 'it may be heretical to say, but I think the Scratch Orchestra was middle class people having fun and then, when they decided to get political, it got too serious for them' (Bedford in Winterson, 1999: appendix p. 2).

I spoke to both Parsons and Skempton about the initial intention of the Scratch Orchestra. Parsons recalls the ethos in the early stages being one of simply getting together to make music, this aspect being more important than concerns with audience perceptions.

- TH:* What were the central aims of the Scratch Orchestra in terms of reaching out to a public?
MP: Well there was very little discussion in the early days – there was a sort of taboo on theorizing and discussing. The ethos was just to get together and play. Cornelius himself never really explained what he thought we were doing. It was very much free exploration and experiment. Though it was always intended to be, as Cornelius put it, in the public sphere – it was presented in town halls around London initially and then in public places and informal situations like parks and playgrounds and so on. His idea was to get out and be part of the outside world – to break out of what he saw as the narrow world of concert going ... But in the early days he was more concerned with the effect on the performers themselves – liberating peoples' potential and encouraging people to work together. The question of audiences was secondary in the first year or two.

Likewise, Skempton does not believe that any explicit politic initially drove the Orchestra suggesting instead that the political edge expounded by Eley was part of its evolution rather than inception:

TH: How did the Scratch Orchestra change over time?

HS: I talked at that time about a honeymoon period. I think the first concert was around September '69 and the honeymoon period lasted about a year – not very long ... I don't think party politics was very important to Cardew in '68–'69, but John Tilbury was already a Marxist and one or two members of the Orchestra became very interested in Maoist thought. There was a lot of discussion at that time and I think that the more liberal wing of the orchestra was tolerated. Cardew was not one of the most outspoken initially. He was definitely in the middle and he was holding the Orchestra together. And he thought that it was important to do concerts with the BBC and to maintain friendly relationships with, for example, the press. It was quite pragmatic, quite practical in that way and he was a very good leader in that way – he was someone who could bring people together. It was only really later that he became more extreme himself.

The evidence, then, suggests that Cardew's original intentions for the Scratch Orchestra were primarily musical, and through this social with political overtones, but not consciously responding to political ideology. As Skempton attests:

HS: Although it wasn't a socialist organization it served to democratize art in a big way. That was the whole idea.

The intention was, in Cardew's words, fundamentally 'just us making music together' and the draft constitution became the vehicle for this music making. Eley notes that the constitution was the 'unifying factor' (Eley, 1974: 18) providing the foundation on which concerts could be organized and encouraging 'ideas, composition and activities which drew together all the disparate elements of the membership' (ibid). The draft constitution contains five broad areas of activity or 'basic repertory categories' (Cardew, 1969a: 617) – Scratch Music, Popular Classics (a category that became more publicly associated with the contemporaneous Portsmouth Sinfonia founded by Gavin Bryars⁶),

⁶ The Portsmouth Sinfonia were an ensemble of untrained musicians (many of whom could barely play their chosen instruments) committed to playing only music of the popular classical

Improvisation Rites, Compositions, and Research Project. It is suggested that these provide, either in part or wholly, the material for 'concerts' – a word Cardew employs 'for lack of a better [one]' (*ibid*). The design of concert events is left to the members in rotation, starting with the most junior by age. The first concert, organized by Christopher Hobbs, took place at Hampstead Town Hall on November 1st 1969.⁷

Scratch Music and Scratchbooks

Defining 'scratch music' presents some difficulty. It is at once the most fundamental and yet, for many, the least successful of the repertory categories. Cardew himself states that members were not clear as to what scratch music involved (Cardew, 1972a: 9). If Cardew's stamp, however, is to be recognized in the early stages of the Scratch Orchestra, the notion of scratch music is perhaps the most visible, the most idiosyncratic, and certainly the form of music making most explicitly driven by Cardew himself.

Scratch music, in its purest sense as outlined in the draft constitution, required each member of the Orchestra to keep a 'scratchbook' in which any number of 'accompaniments' are notated using any means – 'verbal, graphic, musical, collage etc' (Cardew, 1969a: 617). An accompaniment is simply a musical event that 'allows a solo (in the event of one occurring) to be appreciated as such' (*ibid*). Scratch music can perhaps best be described as the differentiation between solo and accompaniment (another echo of earlier composition work), the differentiation between the two being achieved purely through 'the mode of playing' (*ibid*), and any accompaniment offering enough scope to become a solo if the need arises. Cardew envisaged scratch music as a combination of composition and improvisation (Cardew, 1972a: 9) and conceived it as a

repertoire. Their incompetence at tackling such music led to performances characterized by hilarity (see Nyman, 1999: 161–2).

⁷ See Tilbury (2008: 392–5 and 407–418) for detailed descriptions of early Scratch Orchestra performances.

training ground: 'Scratch Music was proposed as a kind of basic training for participation in the Scratch Orchestra, the idea being that each person should write a number of pieces of Scratch Music equal to or greater than the number of people in the orchestra' (ibid: 14).

Skempton, however, recalls scratch music as a more spontaneous form of music – tentative explorations, often initiated during periods waiting for Cardew's arrival at a Scratch meeting:

TH: Could you describe a typical Scratch Orchestra meeting?

HS: The meetings were very relaxed, they were very enjoyable, pleasant. What usually happened is that somebody would start drumming with a stick or some sort of object on the floor and people would start improvising 'scratch music' which is very low level accompanimental music. Or we might just be chatting. But we'd be waiting for Cardew who was inevitably late.

Tilbury in response to the same question:

JT: Well, you'd turn up. Most people would bring some sort of instrument with them. We'd find somewhere to sit and we'd kind of play around and tune or prepare our instrument in some way. Everyone would do this and gradually the whole Orchestra would be seated around just tuning up and this was where the idea of scratch music came from – a low level accompanimental sort of music that could accompany any other musical activity. They always started with this.

This in itself demonstrates a flexibility of understanding between Cardew and even his closest collaborators, for Cardew's own definition hints at a more calculated approach to initiating musical activity. Perhaps in a bid to energize and facilitate the development of scratch music – which in hindsight appeared to become something of a pet project for Cardew – he offered the Orchestra a series of subsequent notes, clarifications and guidance building on the initial statements of the draft constitution. In some cases these take the form of explicit tasks for completion – miniature composition briefs, perhaps, as in this example: 'Ask members to make up songs. Words and melody – without accompaniment' (Cardew, 1972a: 14). In other instances the notes aid understanding of

the intentions of scratch music: 'Think about: Rites and Scratch Music are vessels that catch ideas that would in the normal course of events be thrown away, and forgotten, sometimes definitely rejected' (ibid: 14-15).

Cardew also recognized that there was an amount of 'linguistic felicity' to the term scratch music and that it is 'used to describe other types of music' (ibid: 15). Why Cardew remains insistent in maintaining strict nomenclature is something of a mystery – perhaps simply for practical reasons of communication. Cardew suggests that such other usage of the term scratch music, for instance in the way Skempton refers to it, should be 'thought of as "unnotated Scratch Music", where it is known that notation is intrinsic to Scratch Music in its original definition' (ibid). The centrality of the notation is once more an important characteristic.

Cardew's additional scratch music notes led ultimately to the publication of *Scratch Music* in 1972, suggested to the orchestra in the Summer of 1971. The publication itself is something of an achievement given Michael Chant's response to Cardew's call for contributions:

I know no one who claims to understand what Cornelius Cardew means by 'scratch music'... these examples of scratch music are mere phenomena: the noumenon of Scratch Music remains beyond the intellectual intuition of uncountably many individuals.

Chant in Cardew, 1972: 17

The resulting publication contains, along with some introductory notes, an extended collage of scratch music – 24 double page spreads of notations taken directly from members' scratchbooks and sequenced according to a visual, rather than a sonic, aesthetic, sometimes over-layering each other, sometimes in isolation.

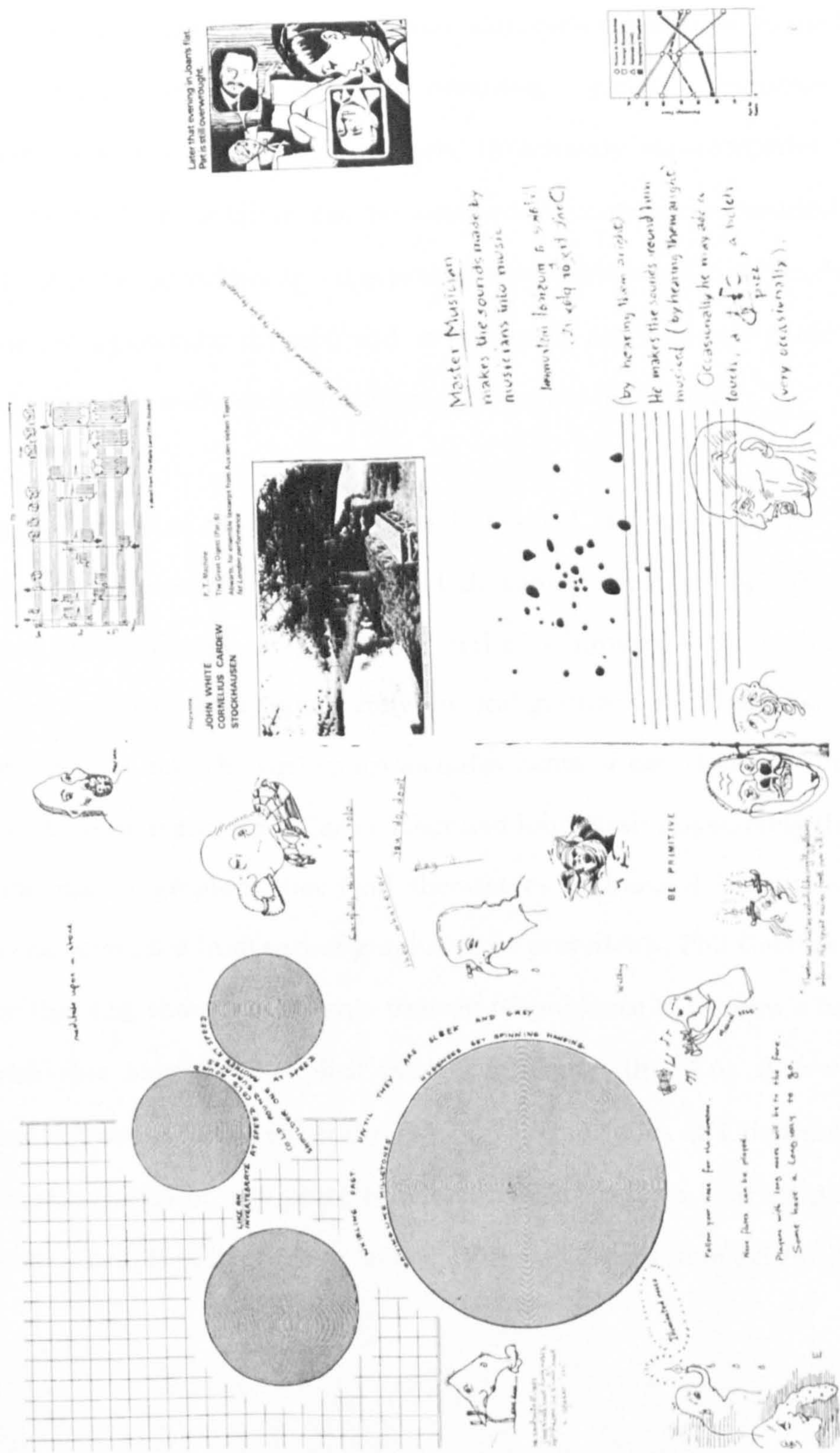


Fig. 4.2: Double page spread from *Scratch Music* (1972), Latimer New Dimensions.

Figure 4.2 presents one of the busier of these spreads. The original intention was the inclusion of a broad range of distinct categories. Cardew's suggestions to the Orchestra included counting, cosmic, nature, doodling, games, exercises, traffic, building/destroying, bells, and poetic visions. In actuality the categories were less defined but the final presentation can be assumed to contain the broadest scope of 'items' available in the scratchbooks – it is at once a celebration of Scratch to date, a kind of cementation of a particular concept, and, in retrospect, acts as a user-guide to scratch music. For Cardew, it was the definitive attempt to convey his intention.

To attempt to categorize the various items is beyond the scope of this discussion although there are some characteristics and divisions worth noting. There are, for instance, two broad, though not mutually exclusive groups – those that reference explicitly sonic events or imply specifically musical gestures, and those that, at least in the first instance, do not. The first camp includes items of descriptive or instructional texts such as these examples from Carole Finer and John Nash respectively (figs. 4.3 and 4.4), and the use of graphics that lend themselves to musical interpretation, often borrowing characteristics from earlier graphic score precedents. Phil Gebbett's graphics, for instance (fig. 4.5), share more than a passing resemblance to Cardew's own *Treatise*, while Christopher May gives explicit pitch information (fig. 4.6). A few items use conventional notational forms, either directly (Cardew includes an Ode from Paragraph 5 of *The Great Learning*) or as a point of reference such as Bryn Harris's playful steam train (fig. 4.7). A couple of items go as far as borrowing chunks from existing pieces.

Rolling sounds
 Sounds made with any rollable objects, rolled round trays,
 saucers, the floor etc.
 Sounds to be smooth and continuous

Think of any simple tune,
 such as a child's nursery
 tune, and hum it quietly
 backwards, taking as much
 time as you need, & then some.
 (Pause when you like)

I

Fig. 4.3: Carol Finer, *Scratch Music*, Spread W.

Fig. 4.4: John Nash, *Scratch Music*, Spread I.

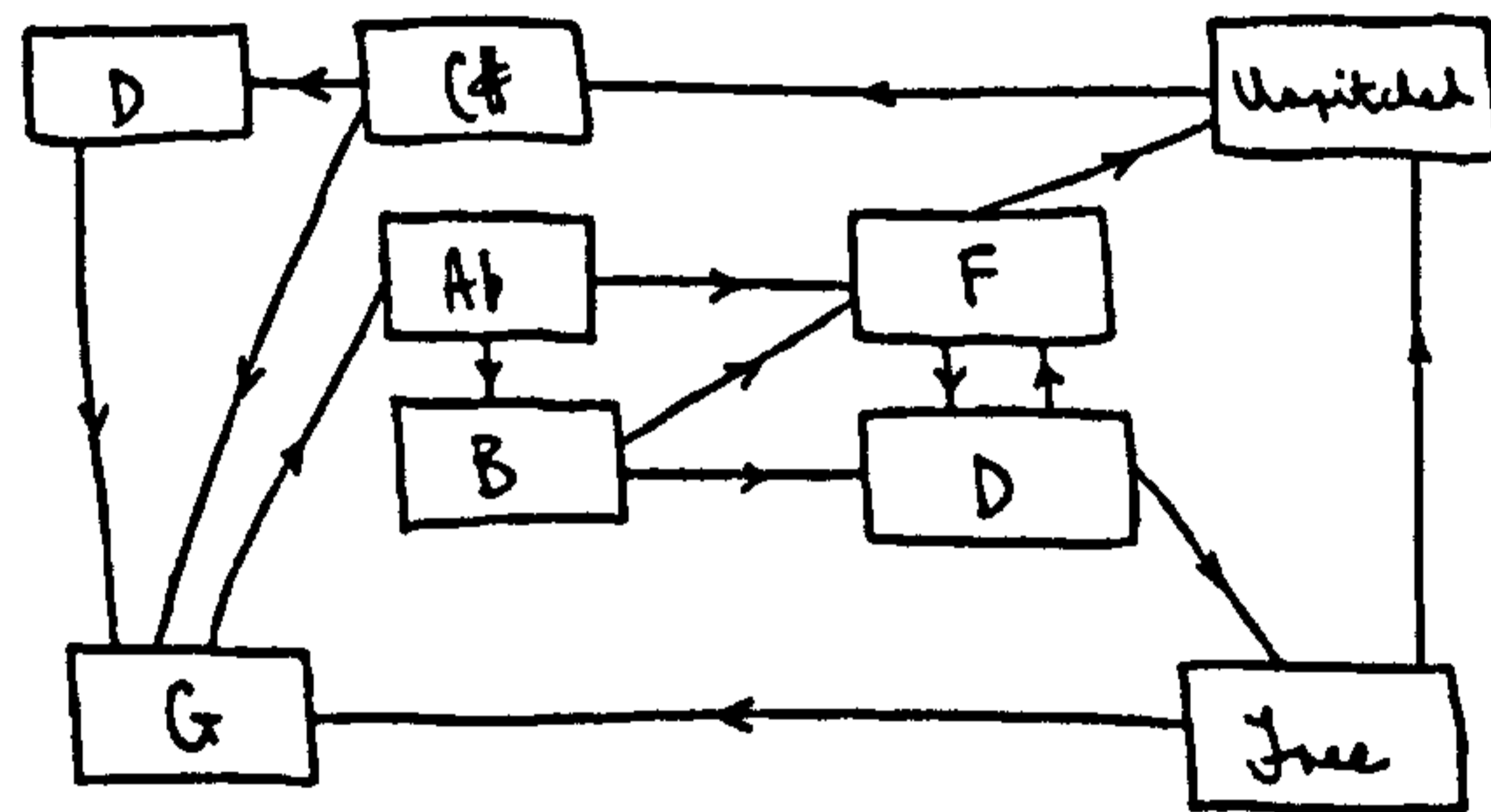
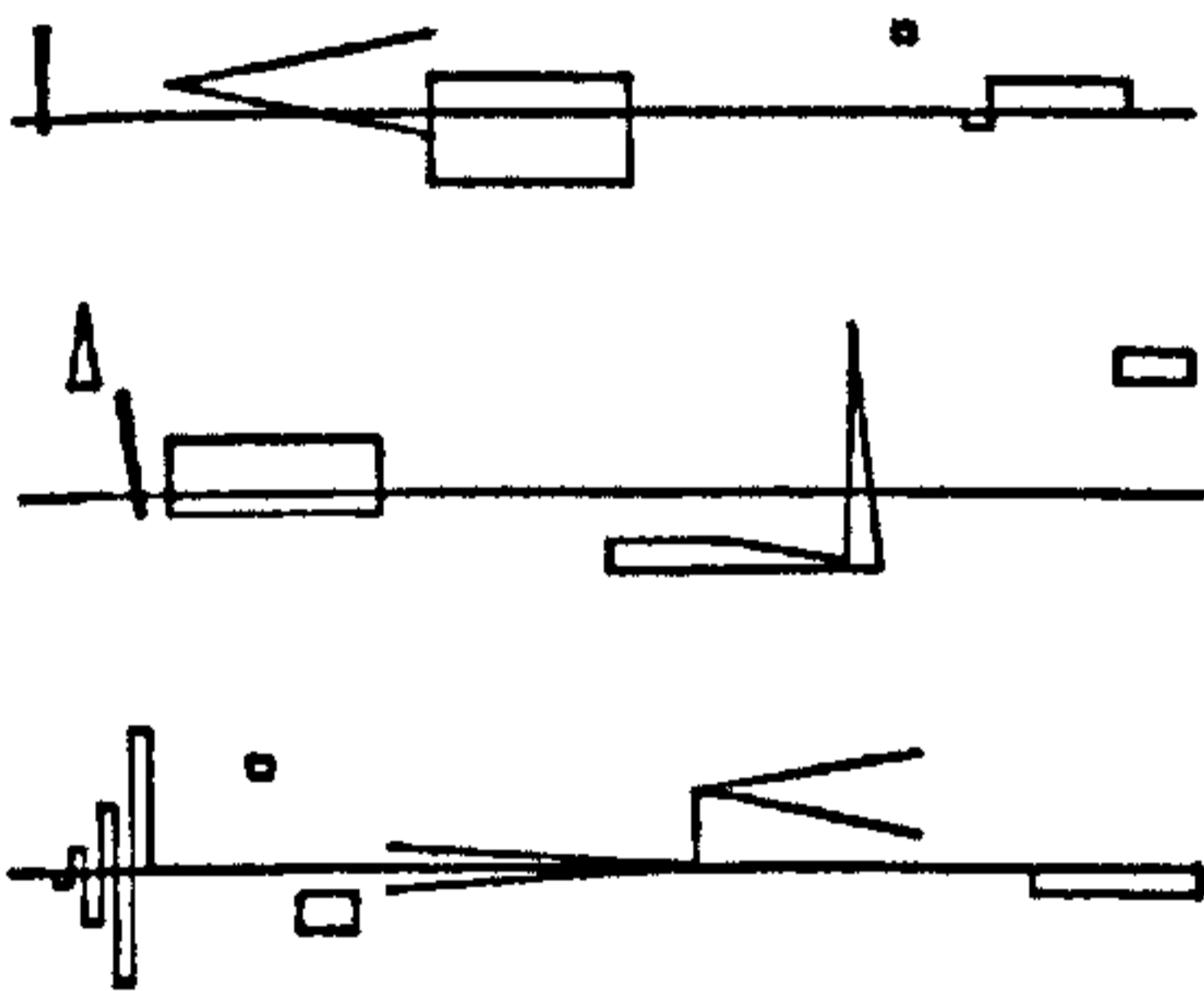


Fig. 4.5: Phil Gebbett, *Scratch Music*, Spread M.

Fig. 4.6: Christopher May, *Scratch Music*, Spread G.

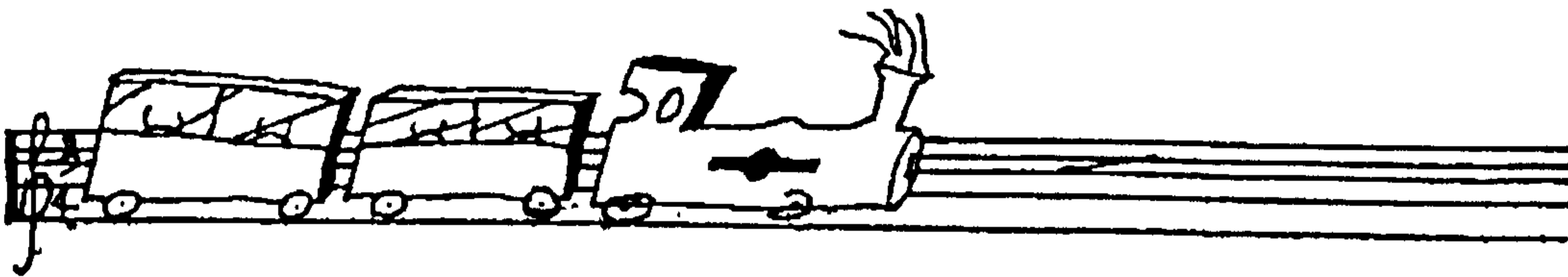


Fig. 4.7: Bryn Harris, *Scratch Music*, Spread W.

Gebbett reproduces detail from Tim Souster's *Waste Land Music* (1970) (as seen in figure 3.2), and elsewhere extracts from Berberian's *Stripsody* (1966).

The second camp relies on the abstract, encouraging a greater degree of subjective response in interpretation. Again, text, graphics, imagery (both textual and visual) and combinations of these elements are the tools of communication but explicit sonic references are absent. Many are Fluxus-like⁸ in nature, suggesting physical and meta-physical activity – 'Paint a carpet or part of a carpet red' (Carole Finer); 'Make it rain, if it is raining already, make it stop' (David Jackman) – or graphics, imagery and sketches devoid, perhaps consciously so, of reference to notational precedents (figs. 4.8 and 4.9, Stella Cardew and Tim Mitchell respectively). A good number straddle these two camps, perhaps hinting at a physical act that may create sound, or a natural activity with inherent sonic characteristics, or an abstract graphic from which notations could be construed. And others are simply humorous (Lou Gare's 'Follow your nose' caricatures in figure 4.2), or just strangely beautiful – 'tune a brook by moving the stones in it' (John Nash, borrowed from R. Gustaitis).

In addition, individual 'scratchers' display their own 'scratch personae'. Some scratchers settle upon and maintain a distinctive style or form – David Jackman's short, snappy instructions ('switch a torch on and off'; 'whistle aimlessly'; 'very slowly turn whatever you are doing at any time into its opposite'); Tom Phillips' series of postcard items; Howard Skempton's series of grids. Others, Cardew included, explore a range of possibilities crossing freely between the broad divisions outlined here.

⁸ Fluxus was the term applied to a fluid community of composers and artists, initially informed by Cage, Duchamp and others, and operating throughout the 1960s and 1970s. See Nyman (1999: 72–88).

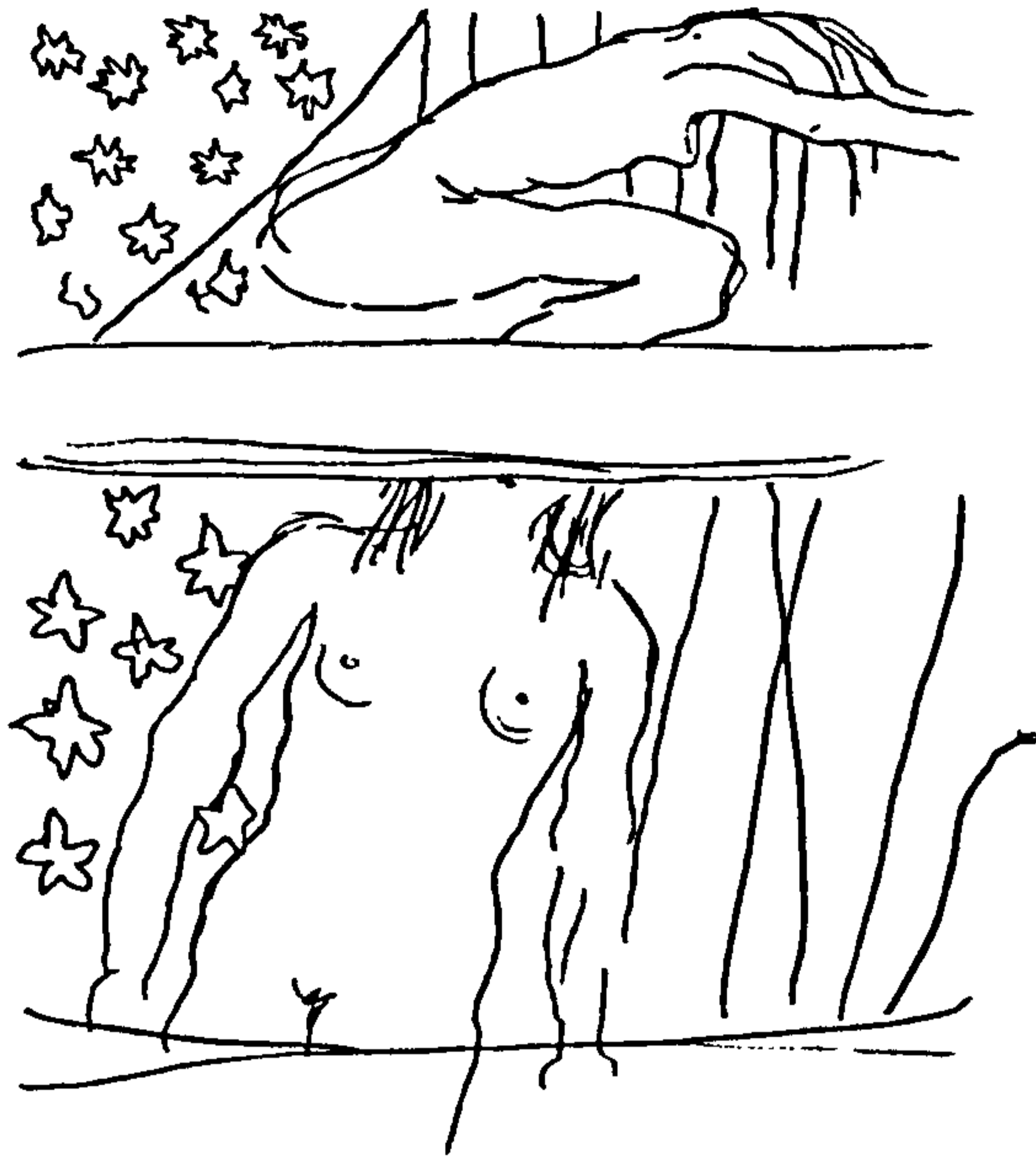


Fig. 4.8: Stella Cardew, *Scratch Music*, Spread B.

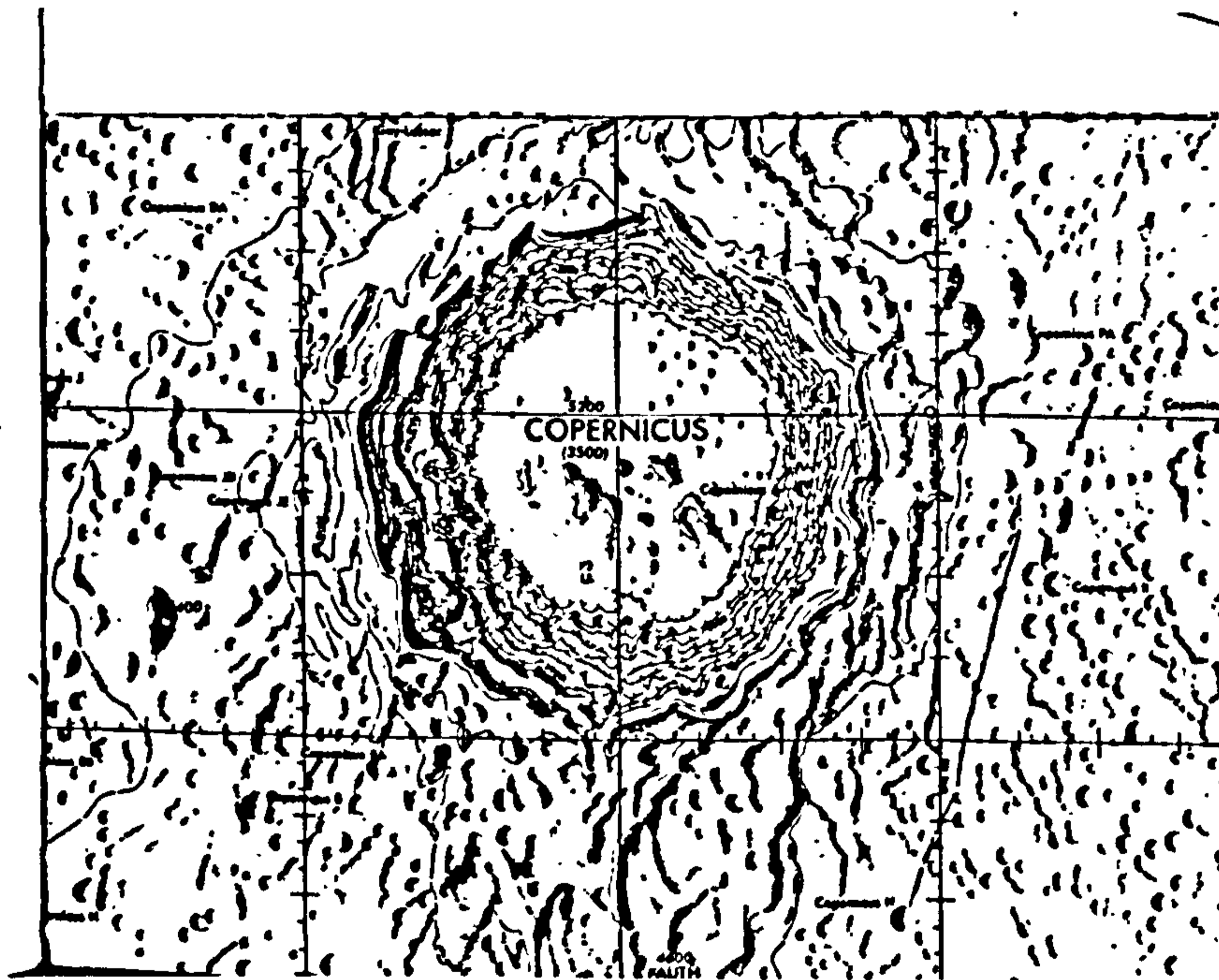


Fig. 4.9: Tim Mitchell, *Scratch Music*, Spread P.

Closely associated with scratch music – and probably indistinguishable from it from an audience perspective – was the category of improvisation rites. Cardew specified in the draft constitution that ‘an improvisation rite is not a musical composition; it does not attempt to influence the music that will be played; at most it may establish a community of feeling, or a communal starting-point, through ritual’ (Cardew, 1969a: 619). Skempton’s *Drum No 1* was included in the appendix as an example of such a rite: ‘Any number of drums. Introduction of the pulse. Continuation of the pulse. Deviation through emphasis, decoration, contradiction’ (ibid).

This understanding of improvisation rites could be equally applied to much of the content of *Scratch Music*, the definition of scratch music being confused by definitions of other modes of music-making as much as its own. A collection of such rites was published in 1971 as *Nature Study Notes*, the distinction from *Scratch Music* being the almost total reliance on text alone. Improvisation rites are *instructions* that initiate musical activity: scratch music requires notations or ‘scores’ that inform musical activity. But, of course, the lines are blurred.

Cardew acknowledged in the publication of *Scratch Music* that its success was limited due partly to his own lack of confidence in conveying the idea and ‘partly because of inherent weaknesses ... its individualistic bias, “doing your own thing” in a public entertainment context, and the resulting alienation’ (Cardew, 1972a: 9). He ultimately concludes that scratch music has served its purpose and is no longer relevant, at least not for the Scratch Orchestra:

Such a need may be felt by other groups passing through a similar stage either now or in the future, and some or all of the basic notions of Scratch Music may again be useful, but for now, as far as the Scratch Orchestra is concerned, Scratch Music is dead.

Cardew, 1972a: 9⁹

⁹ This represents further evidence that the draft constitution was perhaps conceived as a recyclable resource.

The term scratch music, however, is too useful a term to discard simply because of its problematic definition. Perhaps the application of the term needs realigning or simply broadening. A move away from the futility of definition according to the available texts would allow a wider ranging approach to the notion of scratch music. Scratch music in its broader context, as opposed to a single repertory category, could be considered to be music created by a scratch orchestra according to scratch ideals and processes: that is, a music initiated by the members of an ensemble or collective using whatever means of communication are most appropriate. The categories of scratch music, improvisation rites, and the additional repertory of compositions are not mutually exclusive and the boundaries between them inevitably blurred. A broader perspective enables one to make some more insightful judgments as to what differentiates between just two modes of music making crucial to this investigation – the scratch approach and the non-scratch approach. The term ‘scratch’ can, and has, essentially become a byword for any activity informed by the work of the Scratch Orchestra.

The Great Learning

The creation of *The Great Learning* coincides with the formation and development of the Scratch Orchestra in the same manner that *Treatise* partnered Cardew’s work with AMM. Although parts were conceived prior to Scratch, there is no question that the structures and processes within *The Great Learning* are inextricably linked to Cardew’s experience with Scratch. Rod Eley notes its place as key Scratch Orchestra repertoire, performances occurring ‘roughly three times a year’ (Eley, 1974: 16) and the fact that it attracted the largest of the Scratch Orchestra’s audiences.

Rather than being characterized by a specific process and notational or facilitating device, *The Great Learning* is characterized by the sheer range of such processes and

devices. Notations take the form of text (including instructional, aesthetic and political texts), diagrams, conventional staff notation and extended or mutated forms of staff notation, and graphic notations ranging from notations of earlier precedent to forms of greater invention.

Paragraph 1 is for chorus and organ. The organ part requires technical proficiency and notational literacy. The chorus are not required to sing, but rather to play stones and whistles, reading from graphic notations based on the Chinese characters in the original text.¹⁰ Each paragraph occupies its own distinct sound world, the first contrasted by Paragraph 2's voices and drums, and again in Paragraph 3, which relies on 'large instruments' sustaining long low notes in ascending scales. Voices overlay words from the text to specified pitches, or to pitches the singers hear being played by the instruments, a kind of 'network' technique employed elsewhere in *The Great Learning*. This ensures the opportunity to listen and make decisions rather than simply relaying information – a further example of Cardew's characteristic conflict between instruction and freedom.

Paragraph 4 (fig. 4.10) for chorus (shouting and playing ridged or notched instruments, sonorous substances, rattle or jingles) and organ returns to the notations found in Paragraph 1, a relatively conventionally notated organ part underpinning an all-comers chorus sitting in a zigzag formation and performing from Chinese character-based graphics in canon.

¹⁰ See Anderson (2004a) for an analysis of Cardew's use of Chinese characters in *The Great Learning*.

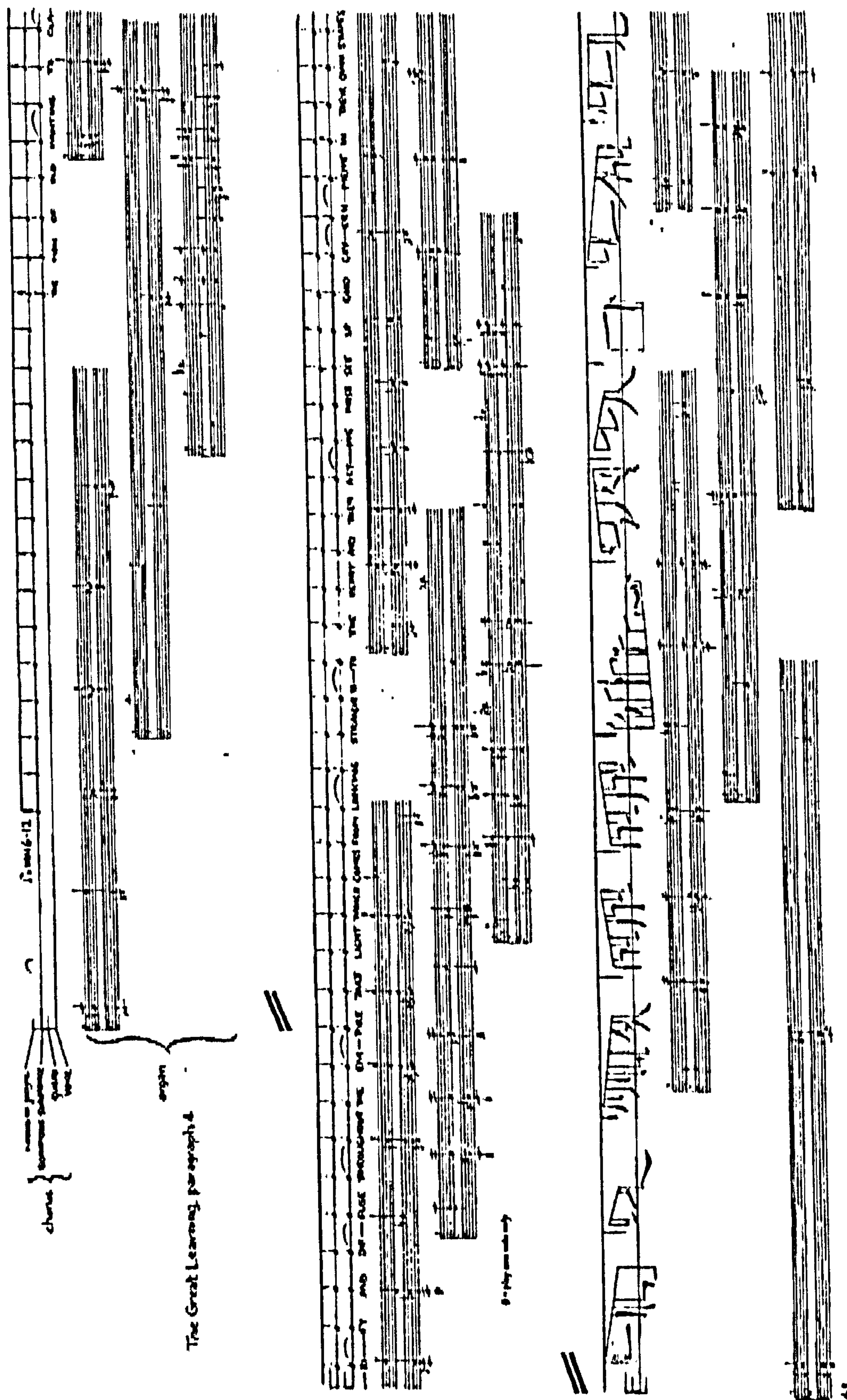


Fig. 4.10: Cardew, *The Great Learning*, Paragraph 4 (1970), Cornelius Cardew Committee.

Paragraph 5 demonstrates a higher level of complexity in its construction, mixing detailed instructions with text, staff and graphic notations. The sound-world is unspecified and diverse with integrated gestures and physical actions and ten optional solo singers singing the 'Ode Machines', a collection of ten settings of poems from the Confucian *Book of Odes*, any number of which may be performed concurrently. Paragraph 6 provides the antithesis to these excesses. Intended for any number of musicians using any sound materials it relies solely on instructional text in its scoring and, while the sound materials are freely chosen, the specified type and number of sounds ensures a sparse and pointillistic evocation.

The final Paragraph 7 (fig. 4.11) uses voices alone – any number of trained or untrained singers. The network technique of listening and responding to each other is revisited providing what Parsons describes as a 'framework within which individual responsibility and choice and the sense of community and interdependence with other participants is made meaningful' (Parsons et al, 1984, in Prévost, 2006: 322).

As previously stated, the role of the score itself deserves investigation. The score is, of course, critical for the instigation of any performance of any paragraph, but the relationship between the score and the performer often differs from that of Cardew's earlier avant-garde works. With works such as *Octet '61* or *Treatise*, for instance, the interaction of score and performer is at the very heart of the musical realization. It is also often the unifying factor between any number of performances that might sonically have little in common. The sonic differences between alternative performances of *The Great Learning* are significantly less – performances of individual paragraphs are recognizably *The Great Learning* to anyone who knows the work. However, and perhaps counter-intuitively, the relationship between score and performers (or at least many performers) is distinctly at odds with the model inherent in *Octet '61*, with some elements

The Great Learning, paragraph 7

→ sing 8 IF
 sing 5 THE ROOT
 sing 13(f3) BE IN CONFUSION
 sing 6 NOTHING
 sing 5 (f1) WILL
 sing 8 BE
 sing 8 WELL
 sing 7 GOVERNED
 hum 7
 → sing 8 THE SOLID
 sing 8 CANNOT BE
 sing 9(f2) SWEEP AWAY
 sing 8 AS
 sing 17(f1) TRIVIAL
 sing 6 AND
 sing 8 NOR
 sing 8 CAN
 sing 17(f1) TRASH
 sing 8 BE ESTABLISHED AS
 sing 9 (f2) SOLID
 sing 5 (f1) IT JUST
 sing 4 DOES NOT
 sing 6 (f1) HAPPEN
 hum 3(f2)
 → speak 1 MISTAKE NOT CLIFF FOR
 MORASS AND TREACHEROUS BRAMBLE

NOTATION
 → The leader gives a signal and all enter concertedly at the same moment. The second of these signals is optional; those wishing to observe it should gather to the leader and choose a new note and enter just as at the beginning (see below).
 "sing 9 (f2) SWEEP AWAY" means: sing the words "SWEEP AWAY" on a length-of-a-breath note (syllables freely disposed) nine times; the same note each time; of the nine notes two (any two) should be loud, the rest soft. After each note take on breath and sing again.
 "hum 7" means: hum a length-of-a-breath note seven times; the same note each time; all soft.
 "speak 1" means: speak the given words in steady tempo all together, in a low voice, once (follow the leader).

PROCEDURE
 Each chorus member chooses his own note (soprano) for the first line (if eight notes). All enter together on the leader's signal. For each subsequent line choose a note that you can hear being sung by a colleague. It may be necessary to move to within earshot of certain notes. The note, once chosen, must be carefully retained. Time may be taken over the chorus. If there is no note, or only the note you have just been singing, or only a note or notes that you are unable to sing, change your note for the next line freely. Do not sing the same note on two consecutive lines.
 Each singer progresses through the text at his own speed. Remain stationary for the duration of a line; move around only between lines. All must have completed "hum 3 (f2)" before the signal for the last line is given. At the leader's discretion this last line may be omitted.

Fig. 4.11: Cardew, *The Great Learning*, Paragraph 7 (1969), Cornelius Cardew Committee.

performable without any reference to the score at the performance stage. The score is a conscious exercise in differentiation and, as such, provides different roles for different performers. There are opportunities for technically demanding solo roles, alongside more freely interpretive graphic notations and elements reminiscent of the categories defined in the Scratch Orchestra draft constitution. For Nyman the range of opportunity is a defining and crowning characteristic:

The range of differentiation of the material [in Paragraph 5], the scope it gives for every and any member of the Scratch Orchestra no matter what their level of development, interest or ability, is an astonishing achievement on Cardew's part.

Because of this range of opportunity, performances have historically, and increasingly in more recent times, taken the form of 'all-comers' events, the premier of Paragraph 2 largely setting the precedent for this. Performances most commonly consist of individual paragraphs, complete performances remaining rare. Most recently, individual paragraphs have typically taken the role of a unifying aspect in a combination or series of connected events and performances, the trend being for Cardew-related conferences or forum-style events to culminate in all-comer performances of paragraphs from *The Great Learning*.¹¹ Interestingly, the marketing and publicity materials for such events, in the UK and overseas, often state the individual who will be leading the realization – the closer the leader's association with Cardew himself perhaps indicating the level of 'authenticity' of any such performance. Original 'scratchers' such as Dave Smith or John Tilbury lend the biggest stamp of authority on such occasions. The role of leader, then, should not be underestimated, this being Cardew's own role in the Scratch Orchestra's performances. *The Great Learning* requires facilitation, if not direction.

The all-comers approach should not be misinterpreted, however, as a reaction against the notion of the 'trained' musician and there are certainly challenges for trained participants. The differentiating elements of the score are more aligned with the Scratch idea of 'pooling resources ... and assembling for action' (Cardew, 1969a: 617). The pool of resources residing in the Scratch Orchestra was inevitably vast and it is the bringing together of two 'breeds' of musical enthusiast who have historically, in western art music at least, been kept apart that defines *The Great Learning*. Whether labelled as professional and amateur, trained and untrained, experienced and inexperienced, *The Great Learning's* central characteristic is the merging of the two in a single musical or artistic or experiential endeavour. Parsons writes in the programme notes to the first

¹¹ In 2006, both a 70th Birthday Anniversary Festival at Cecil Sharpe House, London, and a Cornelius Cardew Conference hosted by Goldsmith's College, University of London, culminated in all-comer performances of Paragraph 3. A celebration of Cardew's music at London's Conway Hall in December 2001 also featured Paragraph 6.

complete performance of *The Great Learning* at The Union Chapel, Islington, London in July 1984:

Cardew's intention was not to replace trained with untrained performers, but to bring them together into a participatory situation in which different abilities and techniques could be fruitfully combined and contrasted, and in which performers from different backgrounds could learn from each other, and so extend the creative capacities of all participants, often in unexpected ways.

Parsons et al, 1984, in Prévost, 2006: 319

Cardew's intention with *The Great Learning* is less about throwing away the rule book, or drawing up new rules, than about a return to some fundamentals of music making – fundamentals that had never entirely disappeared but had perhaps been overshadowed or repressed by the prominence of certain facets of the western classical tradition, notably the divide between 'musicians' and 'non-musicians'. Nyman describes Paragraph 2 as 'one of those rare works of such power and freshness that seem to reinvent music from its very sources by somersaulting musical history' (Nyman, 1971 in Prévost, 2006: 287). A return to a previous age is, of course, impossible, but it seems Cardew recognized that a return to those fundamentals within the context of the current age presented as yet unknown possibilities – the possibilities afforded by the two breeds separated by the classical phenomenon informing each other.

The Great Learning, then, shares its sense of purpose with that of the Scratch Orchestra, the evidence suggesting that the former would not have existed without the latter. The processes at work within the Orchestra, or, at the very least, the existence of the Orchestra as a resource, inform the processes and structures within *The Great Learning*. And with this, we find ourselves revisiting the ongoing relationship between Cardew's compositional output and the modes of music making in which he was actively involved – his performances of Cage and Feldman informing the 'honesty' of the pieces from the mid 1960s; his work with AMM informing the improvisatory freedom of *Treatise*; his work with the Morley College class informing the massed requirements of Paragraph 2.

The distinctions and contradictions of these works are balanced by this ongoing thread, a central facet of Cardew's character as a composer.

The Public Face of Scratch

The study has so far focussed on the experience of Scratch from the perspective of the insider. This experience is crucial, but the Scratch Orchestra was not intended to be an entirely insular creative exercise: it was Cardew's wish from the outset for the Orchestra to 'function in the public sphere' (Cardew, 1969a: 617) as earlier attested by Parsons. The ethos, however, was one of provocation rather than of sharing or entertainment. Parsons goes on to explain that a Scratch event was not intended to take the form of the ornamental cultural enhancement that defines the western concert music tradition, but rather to make people reconsider the role music might actually play within society. Early events took place in town halls and colleges around Greater London, the Orchestra unable to fund travelling much beyond. Instead, venue rather than geography was varied – parks and playgrounds, underground stations, churchyards, village greens.¹² Parsons, Skempton, Tilbury and Smith all stated in my interviews with them that audiences for Scratch events were generally small, though some who initially came to listen ultimately became involved as performers themselves. This was, to an extent, the aim at this point. If a Scratch event was consciously countering the notion of listening as an abstract non-committal act, then active participation is the logical conclusion. It would be disingenuous to suggest that the conventions of western concert performance were abandoned – an audience listened to the performers performing – but the settings were considerably more informal, Parsons noting that the informality of the events was one of the key attractions to audiences:

¹² This approach was very much at the heart of the Cornelius Cardew Ensemble's work in the late 1990s, who took their mini-operas to pubs, railway stations, offices and supermarkets. Their work is discussed in chapter eight.

- TH: John Tilbury has noted that the size of an audience at a Scratch Orchestra event was not as important as the access it provided for the few who were there.
- MP: Yes, people got interested just by coming along and seeing how informal it was. A lot of people who came initially to listen became active members of the Scratch Orchestra and I think that's what we were encouraging at that time – we really wanted people to participate and get involved. We weren't interested in listening as an abstract thing for its own sake, or as an aesthetic experience. We were more interested in people getting involved in both performing and listening to each other and entering into a music dialogue as performers. So, the question of the size of the audience was irrelevant in the early days.

An important shift in this ethos came in the summer of 1970 when Cardew organised the first Scratch Orchestra tour. The Orchestra embarked on a tour of village venues in Cornwall and Anglesey performing in rural village halls, youth clubs, community buildings, and in the open air. Away from the London scene, the Scratch Orchestra encountered a different audience. It is something of a generalization but rural audiences, especially of that era, may have had fewer preconceptions and were perhaps less likely to follow the protocols of audiences in the capital. A Scratch event in Hampstead, for instance would draw from a wide audience base – many perhaps knowing of Cardew, or drawn by the associations with the American and European avant-garde traditions with which they may already be familiar. Those in and around London without this interest are well catered for elsewhere and there is little motivation for them to seek out experiences beyond those with which they feel comfortable. Rural audiences simply do not have the options available to demonstrate the discrimination of their metropolitan counterparts. The first of the concerts was held at Blisland Village Hall in Cornwall, perhaps one of the few musical events happening for some miles, and perhaps the only musical event in Blisford on a summer's evening in 1970. The result was welcoming audiences representative of the community (Anderson, 1983: 62–3; Tilbury 2008: 416–17).¹³

¹³ Although Tilbury does note one exception when children began to throw stones into the Scratch Orchestra.

The tour of village venues was in many ways much closer to the Scratch ideal. Away from London the Orchestra were able to communicate with 'people' in a purer sense – those who happened to reside in the locations chosen for performance rather than those seeking particular types of musical experience. Eley claims that the London audiences were 'the "respectable" and the "intellectual", the bourgeoisie and the petty [sic] bourgeoisie' (Eley, 1974: 20), but that 'in the village hall tour we encouraged a different class, the rural proletariat' (ibid.) This is simplistic, not to say patronising – assuming that the ruling classes live exclusively in the city while the workers occupy the country – but it does identify a very general distinction or explanation for different reactions. Eley also notes that 'people joined in and played with the Scratchers' (Eley, 1974: 20), a hint of a more spontaneous breakdown of the traditional concert-going protocol. For many Scratch members the tour represented a high point of the Scratch Orchestra's achievement – by now they were a group with a shared understanding and experience reaching out to audiences who otherwise would be bereft of such a singular musical spectacle. Eley himself refers to the period up until this point as the 'golden age' of the Scratch Orchestra, a sentiment echoed by Skempton, Parsons, Tilbury and Dave Smith in my interviews with them.

This initial honeymoon was to draw to a close, however. Eley identifies a turning point in the development of the Orchestra with a concert – or 'fiasco' (ibid: 21) – at the Metro Club in Notting Hill in June 1971. The venue was a club for young immigrants and racial tensions in the area were delicate – there had been rioting just days before the Scratch Orchestra's visit. Eley criticizes the repertory decisions made by the Orchestra:

What did the Scratch Orchestra produce? *A Toy Symphony* – a typical Scratch atavism, return to childhood. We experienced at last the true nature of our almost total incompetence and the total irrelevance of the Scratch Orchestra in its present form in the modern world.

Eley, 1974: 21

Tilbury also describes the event, confirming the significance of the experience:

The programme that Jenny Robbins, a working class girl herself, had devised was, in the context, a perfect exemplar of chalk and cheese: her own niminy-piminy *Toy Symphony*, played with toys, musical and otherwise; Alan Brett's *Whoopee*, in which sound are made only when the performers are airbourne; Howards Skempton's *Drum No. 1*; and a selection of pieces by Hugh Shrapnel's Wood and Metal Band. It was not the case that Robbins had misjudged the audience and the occasion; such was her unsullied idealism that she had blithely not given a thought to either. Through the doorway of the Metro Club we had entered into a world in which our profound irrelevance was starkly and painfully exposed.

Tilbury, 2008: 520

Alongside this emerging realization was the growing importance of a number of subgroups from within the Orchestra. Although the term subgroups was employed by Cardew himself, it is somewhat misleading. Anderson notes that 'none of these groups were formed in accordance with the Scratch ethic; they were more an escape from the Orchestra' (Anderson, 1983: 65). These groups included David Jackman's Harmony Band, the Shrapnel Metal Band and the Promenade Theatre Orchestra, all of which operated independently of, rather than through, the Scratch Orchestra. The significance of the existence of such groups was the increasing attention their individual members gave them, Eley identifying this as the beginning of the demise of the Scratch Orchestra as a single entity. In simple terms, the Scratch Orchestra had served its purpose in providing a home for its members, in providing opportunities to explore processes and approaches and to network with the like-minded, but it was no longer able to cater for the sheer range of needs and desires.

The one subgroup truly worthy of the term was the Slippery Merchants. Rather than operating as an independent entity they were a 'small group of the more anarchic members of the Orchestra who had become dissatisfied with the more formalized concert structures and the role Cardew held in the Orchestra' (Anderson, 1983: 70). Their game-plan was to interrupt events and concerts. They would secretly plan such interruptions, moving among the audience, often in 'strange attire' (Eley, 1974: 23) in a

bid to upstage the performers, and at one point even planned to kidnap Cardew (Anderson, 1983: 71). They were to a certain extent successful, entering into important dialogue at Scratch meetings and highlighting contradictions within the Orchestra. Their acts of subversion, however, tended to provide more in terms of sensationalism for the press and critics. The notion of spontaneity and simultaneity were, of course, standard fare within the avant-garde world and their strategy of disruption ultimately came full circle once they found themselves usurped by the Scratch way of doing things and credited in the concert programmes. They disbanded in April 1971.

It is against this backdrop that the Scratch Orchestra set off for a short tour of Newcastle with funding from the Northern Arts Council. This trip, now notorious among Scratch members, marked the turning point Eley foresaw at the Metro Club event just weeks before. The first concert was scheduled at the Newcastle Civic Centre. There was a police presence at the venue due to unsubstantiated reports that disaffected youth gangs were intending to disrupt the concert. Police intervention was reserved for the performers, however. In interpreting a moment from Greg Bright's *Sweet FA* ('act as obscenely as you can until the authorities intervene'), Cardew wrote a series of four-letter words on a toilet roll. The police forced the abandonment of the concert on the grounds of obscenity and banned the Orchestra from the Civic Centre, precluding their later return visit for the fifth and final concert of the tour.

The press relished the opportunity to distort, enhance and wilfully misinterpret and disrupt the work of the Scratch Orchestra. Press reports suggested that toilet paper adorned with obscenities was handed to children by a Royal Academy of Music Professor and that vegetables were thrown. *The Sun* newspaper ran the headline 'Drummed Out – Prof's Toilet-roll Orchestra (Tilbury, 2008: 523). The reports may have bordered on the ridiculous, but the effect on the Orchestra was considerable with a

hounding press disrupting the rest of the tour. Cardew suffered personal attacks in the press. His position at the Royal Academy of Music was called into question, worsened by his employer doing its best to disassociate itself from Cardew: 'An Academy spokesman said: "Mr Cardew is not a professor in the sense that he has a chair and a department. He is simply a part-time teacher of composition. He has only one pupil and I understand she is in hospital"' (Beaumont, 1971).

The events in Newcastle, however, were instructive as well as destructive. Parsons was not part of the Newcastle cohort but comments in retrospect that:

MP: It did make Cornelius and other members of the Scratch Orchestra aware that there was a communication gap between what we were doing and the wider public perception of what musicians could do and might be doing. It was that awareness that the Scratch Orchestra existed in a private world of its own.

The Scratch Orchestra had, to an extent, successfully communicated to sympathetic audiences in and around London. It had successfully taken its music and ideas to its rural cousins in Cornwall and Anglesey. But the experiences in Notting Hill and Newcastle demonstrated a failure of the Orchestra in communicating in these more complex and provocative social contexts. Moreover, Eley identifies that what the Orchestra was experiencing for the first time was oppression. After the Newcastle Civic Centre event the Orchestra were thrown off the land on which they were camping by a landowner who had seen the press coverage. The fact that the press coverage was warped and unfair was irrelevant. The press represented authority and it had labelled the Orchestra as unwanted. The Orchestra, for the first time in its existence, had no voice. As oppression goes, the experience was trivial but its impact on the awareness of the Orchestra of how the world beyond Scratch operates should not be underestimated. As Tilbury notes of this period: 'our belief that by dint of 'good intentions', or of wish fulfilment, we could draw people, any people, into our orbit, was dealt a crippling blow. We were, quite simply, out of our depth' (Tilbury, 2008: 520).

This growing awareness among the Scratch Orchestra that class and social contexts directly affected the dialogue between themselves and their audience, instigated an inevitable move towards a political agenda, as Eley suggests:

A group of genial eccentrics (you might call us) were under attack from established authority. Why? Previously without political awareness as a group, the politicisation of the Scratch Orchestra was begun. From this moment the 'old' Scratch Orchestra was dead; it merely remained to bury it.

Eley, 1974: 26-27

The Summer of Discontent

The Scratch Orchestra was never, of course, entirely apolitical. Members had their own political standpoints and many were open about their Marxist sympathies. The events in the summer of 1971, however, brought what had previously been a relatively benign backdrop to the fore.

As a reaction to the Newcastle experience Cardew opened a 'discontent file' – an invitation to members to voice their concerns regarding the direction of the Scratch Orchestra with a view to achieving some sort of harmony between what were becoming factions. John Tilbury, who describes himself as having been an 'armchair communist' up to this point, was central to the discussions that followed. He spoke at the first of a series of 'discontent meetings', outlining what he described as a 'pathological disunity between theory and practise [sic]' (Eley, 1974: 28), in Tilbury's words 'a contradiction between the aspirations and ideals of the Scratch Orchestra on the one hand, and its actual practice, and the consequences of its practise, on the other' (Tilbury, 2008: 531).

Tilbury describes this as 'the classic anarchist's dilemma' (ibid), whereby the intended effect of an action actually causes its opposite: ¹⁴

In theory we believe in integration and being gregarious. In practise we are isolationists and parochialists.
 In theory we reject the musical establishment. In practise we ask for its support...
 In theory we welcome new members. In practise we drive them away...
 In theory we have no leader. In practise we have.
 In theory we are democratic. In practise we tend towards paternalism and elitism.
 In theory we embrace all activities. In practise we ignore or undermine non-musical activities.
 In theory we are free. In practise we are oppressed.
 And so on.
 Now these contradictions exemplify perfectly our dilemma, which is the dilemma of the bourgeois artist.

Tilbury, 1971: discontent file

Eley reiterates this notion of the dilemma of the bourgeois artist (to be discussed more fully in chapter five) in his recollection of events, though with a sense of defeatism rather than the debate Tilbury provokes. Eley claims that the Orchestra had reached an impasse with a simple decision to make: 'sell your product on the market, or you drop out' (Eley, 1974: p27).

From this point the Scratch Orchestra began to divide into two broad camps – the communists who wished the Orchestra to become actively engaged in the class struggle, and what the communist element called the 'bourgeois idealists' (ibid), whose primary concern was with the musical output, though that is not to suggest they were entirely apolitical. Parsons provided his own account of how the Orchestra changed:

MP: After the crisis which came in 1971, which was triggered by this Newcastle event, there was a move to try and discuss what we were doing more consciously from inside and so people were encouraged to come to meetings and say what they thought and what they were dissatisfied with. There was something called the discontent file – which I think John Tilbury and Keith Rowe initiated¹⁵ – and people would either write or speak in meetings about what they thought was not satisfactory and that led to the more overt political agenda. It was a gradual process, it changed over a period of months and certain

¹⁴ As in the Adornoian theory identified in chapter one in which art 'strengthens the spell of that from which the autonomy of art wants to free itself' (Adorno, 2004: 170).

¹⁵ Tilbury (2008: 525) claims this was initiated solely by Cardew.

members of the Orchestra including John and Keith were interested in Marxism, particularly the Mao Tse-tung kind of Marxism. The writings of Mao were available and talked about quite a lot in those days. It was the era immediately following the movement in Paris and the 1968 student uprisings and so on. And so Maoism was very much in the air¹⁶ and that was the initial political direction that we took – we were all involved in it to a certain extent. But later on that hardened into a more specific party line, when Cornelius and others actually joined this party called the Communist Party of England (Marxist-Leninist) and that's really when the split occurred – those people who wanted to actually join a party and make that their priority and make music something that was, in a sense, secondary to that, and others who wanted to maintain the priority of music making.

Skempton attests that there was a significant change around this time:

HS: People were now joining the Orchestra for political reasons, not for musical reasons, and I found that very difficult.

Although Skempton felt uneasy, the situation was not as antagonistic as it may first appear: as Parsons suggests the 'bourgeois idealists' were not entirely apolitical and all members of the Orchestra were exposed to some fundamental questions after their experiences at Notting Hill and Newcastle. Indeed, it seems that the division in priorities, the combination of the overtly political and the continuing anarchic approach to music making, came to characterize events throughout the next phase of the Orchestra. Skempton notes that:

HS: Cardew again, in his usual way, was pleasing everyone, satisfying both sides.

These two sides set about exploring their discontentment and priorities. The communist element of the Orchestra, to which Cardew himself gravitated, formed the Ideological Study Group¹⁷ which met regularly to study and discuss ideological concerns. As Parsons suggests, the basis for this ideological discussion was in Mao Tse-Tung

¹⁶ This statement is, I assume unintentionally, misleading. The student uprisings of May 1968 in Paris were characterized by revolutionary fervour but there is no evidence to suggest this was based specifically in Maoist Thought. See Singer (2002).

¹⁷ This group seems to have passed into lore under a number of different names, variously the 'Ideological Study Group' (Anderson, 1983), the 'Ideology Group' (Eley, 1974), the 'Id Group' (Tilbury, 2008) and variants in interviews and conversations. I have maintained Ideological Study Group as this seems to best describe their purpose.

Thought, the intention being to start with the study of three important Mao texts: 'On Practice', 'On Contradiction' and 'Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art' (Tilbury, 2008: 538).¹⁸ The 'bourgeois idealists' focussed on expressing their discontent on the mechanics and structures of the Orchestra. Common ground was uncovered in the sense that both the communists and the bourgeois idealists were striving for more control over outcomes – a more conscious approach in the devising and preparation of events in order to achieve the desired goals, whether political or musical. A rotating leadership was introduced, as was a committee to oversee the management of the Orchestra (Anderson, 1983: 97). A Summer School was convened with a view to developing musicianship and compositional technique. Tilbury addressed the Orchestra on Marxism in an open attempt to raise the levels of social and political awareness (Eley, 1974: 29) and it seemed that despite the divisions there was, for a short period, a newly energized commitment centred around a move 'away from randomness and "freedom" towards music organized to express some intended content' (ibid: 29).¹⁹

The latter months of 1971 were dedicated to reflecting on the preceding events and to preparing for the next scheduled concert, taking place in Liverpool in January 1972. The Liverpool concert and events that followed featured works from across both the political and non-political divides and demonstrated the heightened sense of purpose both politically and musically – performances by 'musicians' (or amateurs striving for technical assurance) designed to engage an audience, with a view, for many, to disseminating its political message. The Orchestra had therefore reached a point some way from the intentions of the draft constitution – it had become a vehicle for directing

¹⁸ These texts, especially 'Talks on the Yenan Forum' which had a profound effect on Cardew, are discussed in the subsequent chapters.

¹⁹ This generally positive and re-energized, if as it turned out short-lived, period of the Scratch Orchestra's existence is the impression I have gained through interviews and casual conversations with those involved. Tilbury's more recent account, in a chapter titled 'Scratch Criticism and Self-Destruction 1971-72', is more pessimistic, painting the period following the opening of the discontent file as a more seamless disintegration (see Tilbury, 2008: 517-551). The very recent publication of this has not, as yet, allowed me to investigate this further.

influence beyond its own existence. The old categories of scratch music, improvisation rites and so on were only as relevant as their potential for achieving this influence, which, given their history, was negligible.

The Scratch Orchestra was invited to perform Paragraphs 1 and 2 of *The Great Learning* at the Proms at the Albert Hall in August 1972 – a certain irony befalling the fact that what would usually be considered a highlight of a composer's and ensemble's career came at a time when Cardew was beginning to repudiate the very work they were performing in the talks and writings that led up to the publication of *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism*. Cardew had also uncovered a fascistic slant to the Ezra Pound translation that was at odds with other translations of the Chinese text. The Proms performance, therefore, featured Cardew's own translation of the first two paragraphs following a Maoist line. The Orchestra had intended to display slogan-daubed banners to support their political campaign but this was not in the BBC's plan. The BBC banned the use of any supporting visual elements, along with any political references in the programme notes. Only the actual text of the paragraphs survived censorship, minimizing any statement the Orchestra wished to make through this high profile event.

The censoring of the Proms performance was perhaps the final insult for Cardew. Realizing the limitations of the Scratch Orchestra in its developed form as a vehicle for real change, the more committed communists, Cardew included, took on increasing roles at grassroots level, 'integrating with the workers and fighting alongside them, as opposed to standing on the sidelines and cheering them on' (Cardew, 1974a: 7). For many the Orchestra became 'secondary to the cause' (Anderson, 1983: 109), and while never officially disbanding, activities under the banner of the 'Scratch Orchestra' had all

but ceased by the end of 1972.²⁰ The Morley College class continued for a while until it too eventually closed in September 1973.

'Scratch Music is Dead: Long Live Scratch Music'

These words, penned in Cardew's introductory notes to *Scratch Music*, refer to the notion of scratch music having outlived its useful life. They apply equally to the Scratch Orchestra in its broadest context – its existence fulfilling a 'particular need at a particular time' (Cardew, 1972a: 12). Such an initiative will always be defined by the context in which it finds itself – a modern day Scratch Orchestra, for instance, would find itself working within a different set of parameters. The impact of the Scratch Orchestra is obviously felt considerably by those who were a part of it, but, indirectly, the ripples travelled much further. The difficulty of assessing the legacy of the Scratch Orchestra lies in the fact that its contradictions and difficulties are often as significant as its successes and milestones, an attribute that seemed to come across in my interviews with those involved. For Tilbury, the initial response was the political dimension:

TH: What were the main achievements of the Scratch Orchestra?

JT: The politicization, in the sense that it was so serious.

But, as he continues, it seems much broader than that:

JT: It opened up the whole question of the social function of music. Music for whom? I'm not just talking about Maoism, but the whole political element being raised to something of extreme importance. It affected those people who were very much against the politics as well. It forced them to look at what they were doing, and maybe it affected changes in them in some way. Also, this idea of giving people permission to do what they thought it was right to do – enabling – that was what the Scratch Orchestra gave you. In practice, whatever was proposed, however outrageous, you knew it would be done. Nobody was obliged to do anything but there was a kind of unwritten thing about living in a kind of musical commune with responsibility to each other. You did your best for others. That was very important.

²⁰ Skempton, Parsons, Tilbury and Smith all had difficulty pinpointing exactly when the Scratch Orchestra ceased to function as such. Skempton notes that by the time *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* came out the phenomenon had been 'dead and buried'.

Parsons, in keeping with some of the quotations that open this chapter, talks more of the enduring nature of the Scratch Orchestra's influence:

MP: When one thinks of achievements one looks at monuments and finished works. In a sense they're not achievements, they're more influences or currents which have been set in motion. It set in motion a lot of currents. It got people thinking about music in a different sort of way. Then it went into the London Musicians' Collective and other collectives around the country. It influenced the way people thought about music as a social activity and for me the main influence is that it made me realize that music is always something that involved people doing things together and that's just as important aspect of music as the structures and the abstract aspects which are embodied in the notation, if you're talking about composed music. So I think it was the awareness of the social dimension of music which was most influential at the time, and has remained influential for a lot of us since that time.

The importance of the questioning spirit and the redefining (or reclaiming) of music as a social activity is echoed by Skempton in his response to the same question:

HS: The most important thing is that the Orchestra asked fundamental questions. It forced one to think again about what music making was.

On a practical level the legacy was, and is, felt through a number of related groups or groups that nod in the direction of Scratch. As Parsons claims, the London Musicians Collective picked up many Scratch members whose inclination was towards music rather than politics. The Promenade Theatre Orchestra continued its work, as did the closely associated, though unrelated, Portsmouth Sinfonia. Cardew went on to work with People's Liberation Music, a folk-rock collective providing musical support to political events and rallies. Scratch Orchestra member Philip Dadson started another Scratch Orchestra upon moving to New Zealand, which is still functioning under the name From Scratch. The Great Learning Orchestra currently resides in Stockholm committed to the creation and performance of experimental music and with a strong Scratch ethic. In the UK, CoMA (Contemporary Music Making for Amateurs) provides a national network of accessible ensembles for amateur musicians, many ex-Scratch

members (Skempton, Parsons, Tilbury and Smith included) having been associated with their work over the last 20 years. The Cornelius Cardew Ensemble, formed at University College Bretton Hall in 1995, continued the Scratch ethos of bringing contemporary music to a wider audience through a liberal approach to performance context, venue and participation. And, of course, *The Great Learning* has since taken its place as a 'classic' of the British experimental repertoire. In this sense, the broader understanding of 'scratch music' is still very much alive.

For Cardew, the experience of Scratch was fundamental in channelling his work in the years that followed. Two main factors help to bring this part of the study to a conclusion. Firstly, the political shifts. The events of Scratch awoke a latent politicization in Cardew's thinking – essentially a realization that artists, the very people whose job it is to comment and reflect on the world, are no less oppressed because of their lofty profession. The artist has no voice, or at best the artist has a voice that can be taken away by the authorities as and when they wish – the BBC Proms experience demonstrating this. By remaining in that artistic world one can only continue to contribute to the system of oppressors and the oppressed – very much the sentiments expressed in *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism*. By 1972 Cardew was a member of the Communist Party of England, Marxist-Leninist (CPE-ML) and becoming increasingly active in the party's programme. He was shortly to renounce his earlier work as a bourgeois composer.

The second concluding factor is the role of the Scratch Orchestra as a kind of test-bed. Scratch was born out of Cardew's desire to explore certain modes of working, the Morley College class and early Scratch Orchestra activities being an embodiment of those desires. Many of the aspects of his earlier work that fed into the ethos of the Orchestra – especially the more spontaneous and anarchic aspects – ultimately proved to act as limitations to the new found desire to promote social change. To return to the

logic of *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* these facets are therefore considered 'bad'. Other aspects were advanced through Scratch, the move from the concert hall to informal settings, the breaking down of audience-performer protocols, the inclusiveness and unity of *The Great Learning*. These were all notions that, as they can contribute to the central goal of communicating with 'the people', were recognized as 'good' and continued to prosper. The Scratch Orchestra essentially filtered out the 'impurities' in Cardew's earlier processes and approaches leaving him with the raw resources that would be of use to the cause. In this respect the Scratch Orchestra represents both embodiment and change.

Cardew the Revolutionary

As Marx said of philosophy, 'It is not enough to understand the world, the point is to change it', so we should say to artists, 'It is not enough to decorate the world, the point is to influence it.'

Cardew, 1974a: 82

This quotation is taken from a speech Cardew made at the 'International Symposium on the Problematic of Today's Musical Notation' in Rome, 1972 and it is an appropriate starting point for discussing Cardew's work in the period from about 1972 to his death in 1981. The shift at this point, however, is not concerned with the move from 'decoration' to 'influence' as the quotation might at first suggest. Apart from a small number of much earlier pieces none of Cardew's preceding work was concerned purely with decoration. The very presence, for performers at least, of such a focus on the self, or the interaction with others, means that the music affects participants on a level other than purely decorative. Whether concerned with liberating the performer from the creative stronghold of the composer through his works of the 1960s, or whether striving to achieve what Tilbury describes as the 'perfect balance between individual and collective responsibility'¹ through *The Great Learning*, Cardew had always been concerned with music as an art that went beyond the decorative. The significance of the statement above is more to do with Cardew's reference to *the world*, and his desire to influence people beyond the world of experimental music making. This chapter discusses the shift in Cardew's energies toward an explicitly political end with a particular focus on the relationship between Cardew's formative experiences and these 'new' directions. 'New' remains in inverted commas because the central thrust of the discussion will concentrate on the possibility that Cardew's 'political phase' was less

¹ In my 2003 interview with Tilbury.

about newness and more about the re-direction of facets of his pre-existing world view. The chapter identifies the specific texts and experiences that informed Cardew career and will outline the detail of Cardew's political activity during the final decade of his life, alongside the changing status of the relationships with those around him and the musical establishment.

Art for Whom? The Dilemma of the Bourgeois Artist

While the Scratch Orchestra provided the catalyst for Cardew's move toward the overtly political, it would seem that two key texts particularly informed Cardew: Mao Tse-tung's *Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art*, a text that is referred to throughout *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism*, and an extract from a Marxist critique of D. H. Lawrence by Christopher Caudwell. The Mao Tse-tung talks took place in May 1942 and formed the backdrop to the role the arts played in Maoist China:

Comrades! You have been invited to this forum today to exchange ideas and examine the relationship between work in the literary and artistic fields and revolutionary work in general. Our aim is to ensure that revolutionary literature and art follow the correct path of development and provide better help to other revolutionary work in facilitating the overthrow of our national enemy and the accomplishment of the task of national liberation.

Mao Tse-tung, 2004: online

Although the Scratch Orchestra's Ideological Study Group never explicitly stated its intentions in this manner there are apparent resonances – the idea of discussion about how the musical activities of the Scratch Orchestra might relate to wider ideological concerns – and it is perhaps for this reason that Keith Rowe initially brought this text to the group. Cardew attended these discussions, initially in a fairly passive capacity, but absorbing the debate none the less.²

² Tilbury thinks that Cardew was probably not present at the early meetings but quickly joined in (Tilbury, 2008: 538).

Mao states in his introductory remarks that a military campaign does not in itself suffice in the defence of the Chinese people's liberation and that 'we must also have a cultural army, which is absolutely indispensable for uniting our own ranks and defeating the enemy' (ibid). This is the central premise of Mao's consideration of the arts. Tilbury's interpretation of this focus is of Mao's intention to 'wrest art from the philosophers and aestheticians, to demand its participation in the class struggle, and thereby, in his view, to *elevate* it' (Tilbury, 2008: 538). This understanding of Maoist Thought³ provides a context for the next decade of Cardew's work and perhaps explains the tenacity with which Cardew maintained his musical connections during periods when a complete removal from musical activity would have allowed a greater focus on more direct political activism.

Talks at the Yenan Forum is structured around what Mao identifies as a number of 'problems' that must be solved in order to meet the aims he outlines in his introduction, namely the realization of a cultural army: the problem of class stand, the problem of attitude, the problem of audience, and the problem of study.⁴ For Cardew and his Scratch Orchestra contemporaries the impact of the text lies in two essential quandaries Mao presents and answers in the discussion of these problems – whom do artists serve, and how best could they serve? It is the consideration of these two questions that perhaps demonstrate why Cardew wished to distance himself from his previous work, the Scratch Orchestra included.

The first problem is: literature and art for whom? This problem was solved long ago by Marxists, especially by Lenin. As far back as 1905 Lenin pointed out emphatically that our literature and art should 'serve ... the millions and tens of millions of working people.

Mao Tse-tung, 2004

³ The term most readily applied to denote the teachings of Mao Tse-tung.

⁴ By class stand, Mao simply means class – in this context the proletariat class and the problem of artists deviating from this class. The problem of attitude relates to how class stand informs attitudes. 'Audience' is significant in relation to the intended recipients of artistic products, and 'study' specifically relates to the study of Marxism-Leninism.

Mao is referring here to Lenin's 1905 text 'Party Organisation and Party Literature' (Lenin, 2001: online) though Mao takes some licence with its relationship to art as Lenin writes specifically within the context of printed literature. The essential notion is shared however: that literature should serve the class struggle.

Literature must become *part* of the common cause of the proletariat, "a cog and a screw" of one single Social-Democratic mechanism set in motion by the entire politically-conscious vanguard of the entire working class. Literature must become a component of organised, planned and integrated Social-Democratic Party work.

Lenin, 2001

Lenin goes on to suggest the need to essentially filter out, through disassociation, literature that does not promote the party's stand:

We are discussing party literature and its subordination to party control. Everyone is free to write and say whatever he likes, without any restrictions. But every voluntary association (including the party) is also free to expel members who use the name of the party to advocate anti-party views. Freedom of speech and the press must be complete. But then freedom of association must be complete too. I am bound to accord you, in the name of free speech, the full right to shout, lie and write to your heart's content. But you are bound to grant me, in the name of freedom of association, the right to enter into, or withdraw from, association with people advocating this or that view.

Lenin, 2001

This basic tenet of Marxism-Leninism is deeply embedded within *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* and the idea of disassociation is precisely what Cardew achieves in repudiating Cage, Stockhausen and his former self. If society is to be dominated by the proletariat, any product (in Cardew's case, music) restricted to the edification of an elite or clique (for instance, the avant-garde) opposes proletariat rule. This was felt acutely in Mao's China where the high art of the feudal era still held considerable influence. Mao, as did Lenin, recognized that the existence of this legacy cannot be ignored, though Mao proposes an alternative strategy of subsuming such art within the cause:

We should take over the rich legacy and the good traditions in literature and art that have been handed down from past ages in China and foreign countries, but the aim must still be to serve the masses of the people. Nor do we refuse to utilize the literary and

artistic forms of the past, but in our hands these old forms, remoulded and infused with new content, also become something revolutionary in the service of the people.⁵

Mao Tse-tung, 2004

Subscription to this understanding of the artist's duty to the masses is fundamental if any sympathies to Cardew's cause are to be felt. The question of how best to serve is presented by Mao as: 'should we devote ourselves to raising standards, or should we devote ourselves to popularization?' (ibid). In fact, this quandary comes second to a more fundamental issue: in order for the artist to achieve either of these aims, especially an artist looking to move from serving the bourgeois to serving the masses, then that artist must become sympathetic to the needs and tastes of those masses. Mao refers to this issue repeatedly throughout the text:

Since the audience for our literature and art consists of workers, peasant and soldiers of their cadre, the problem arises of understanding them and knowing them well. A great deal of work has to be done in order to understand them and know them well ...

... after I became a revolutionary and lived with workers and peasants and with soldiers of the revolutionary army, I gradually came to know them well, and they gradually came to know me well too. It was then, and then, that I fundamentally changed the bourgeois and petit bourgeois feelings implanted in me ...

... We must popularize only what is needed and can be readily accepted by the workers, peasants and soldiers themselves. Consequently, prior to the task of educating the workers, peasants and soldiers, there is the task of learning from them. This is even more true of raising standards. There must be a basis from which to raise.

Mao Tse-tung, 2004

This was particularly pertinent to Cardew's own situation – a composer from a middle-class, relatively privileged background who had been largely surrounded by the bourgeoisie and petit bourgeoisie. He needed, in essence, to discover what made the working classes tick – a process that had perhaps already begun through his experiences with the Scratch Orchestra to the extent that he was aware of *how not* to communicate effectively with the working class.

⁵ The influence of this proposal is noticed to some extent in Cardew's decision to provide new translations of the first two paragraphs of *The Great Learning* for the 1972 Proms performance, rather than simply repudiating the work.

A further intrinsic tenet of Mao's rationalization of the artist's role was in the inextricable links between art and the context in which it is created:

What is the source of all literature and art? Works of literature and art, as ideological forms, are products of the reflection in the human brain of the life of a given society. Revolutionary literature and art are the products of the reflection of the life of the people in the brains of revolutionary writers and artists. The life of the people is always a mine of raw materials for literature and art, materials in their natural form, materials that are crude, but most vital rich and fundamental; they make all literature and art seem pallid by comparison; they provide literature and art with an inexhaustible source, their only source. They are the only source, for there can be no other.

Mao Tse-tung, 2004

The notion that there can be no other source for artistic endeavour than the life of the people underpins this philosophy. Even influences from other historical and geographical sources are dismissed as 'not a source but a stream: created by our predecessors and the foreigners out of the literary and artistic raw materials they found in the life and people of their time and place' (ibid). Ultimately the Mao text states that art cannot be detached from politics at all:

In the world today all culture, all literature and art belong to definite classes and are geared to definite political lines. There is in fact no such thing as art for art's sake, art that stands above classes or art that is detached from or independent of politics.

Mao Tse-tung, 2004

Within this context the interpretation of this chapter's epigraph needs to be revisited: 'It is not enough to decorate the world, the point is to influence it.' (Cardew, 1974a: 82). According to the Maoist rationalization, music cannot ever be strictly decorative, it can only ever influence, whether consciously or otherwise. The artist's role or mission, then, according to Mao, is to control the direction of that influence: a conceit also found in the Lenin text that informs the *Talks at the Yen'an Forum*: 'To work, then, comrades! We are faced with a new and difficult task. But it is a noble and grateful one – to organise a broad, multiform and varied literature inseparably linked with the Social-Democratic

working-class movement' (Lenin, 2001). The 'new and difficult task' perhaps defines Cardew's compositional activity as discussed in chapter six.

While the Mao text provided the basis of the Ideological Study Group's political stance, it was the second crucial text that seemed to resonate with the specific context of the Scratch Orchestra – an extract from a 1965 essay by Christopher Caudwell, 'Study of a Bourgeois Artist':

The commercialization of art may revolt the sincere artist, but the tragedy is that he revolts against it still within the limitations of bourgeois culture. He attempts to forget the market completely and concentrate on his relation to the art work, which now becomes still further hypostatized as an entity-in-itself. Because the art work is now completely an end-in-itself, and even the market is forgotten, the art process becomes an extremely individualistic relation. The social values inherent in the art form, such as syntax, tradition, rules, technique, form, accepted tonal scale, now seem to have little value, for the art work more and more exists for the individual alone.

Caudwell, 1965: 12

We are faced here with the 'dilemma of the bourgeois artist' as presented by John Tilbury at the Scratch Orchestra discontent meetings, sentiments that are also expressed by Eley (1974: 27). The artist must either enter the market, in so doing diluting the 'truth' of their work and supporting the market driven culture, or choose to exist in an 'ivory tower' where the truth of an artistic endeavour may survive for the self but has no actual value. There is no alternative for the bourgeois artist. Tilbury suggests that this text had a more profound, and certainly broader impact, than the study of the *Talks at the Yenan Forum*.

The Caudwell piece, in particular, seemed to crystallise the thoughts and feelings of a considerable number of Scratch members, including Cardew, and even some of those who subsequently resisted and bitterly regretted the Marxist 'take-over'.

Tilbury, 2008: 531⁶

⁶ This impact is verified in my conversations with Parsons, Skempton and Smith who all made unprompted reference to the text.

As previously noted, Tilbury identifies Cardew's 'reckless exclusion' of other Marxist perspectives (notably the Frankfurt School) and this accusation is true of Tilbury himself and the Ideological Study Group during this period. The dilemma of the bourgeois artist became a central preoccupation for the Ideological Study Group though the strict adherence to Maoist Thought perhaps closed doors to alternative thinking that, speculatively, might have taken the Scratch Orchestra in a different direction.

Timothy D. Taylor, for instance, in his article 'Moving in Decency: The Music and Radical Politics of Cornelius Cardew' argues, with the aid of reference to Jacques Attali, that their understanding of the bourgeois artist's dilemma is too simple:

One way of regaining power is, in the classic Marxian way, to seize the means of production. Attali cites the free jazz musicians of the 1960s who founded their own recording and publishing company. This is also an option that the English socialist rock musician Billy Bragg has considered. With the advent of cassette recording, producing and marketing one's own music is easier than ever before and is something that the Scratch Orchestra could have considered.

Taylor, 1998: 575

Taylor is referring to Attali's theory of music and economics as detailed in his book *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* (1985). Attali subscribes to the Marxist belief that music is inextricably tied to the dominant ideology of society but additionally states that music could be the very answer to potential liberation from those oppressions: perhaps an alternative to what the Ideological Study Group perceived as the dilemma of the bourgeois artist.

Music is more than an object of study: it is a way of perceiving the world. A tool of understanding. Today, no theorizing accomplished through language or mathematics can suffice any longer; it is incapable of accounting for what is essential in time – the qualitative and the fluid, threats and violence. In the face of the growing ambiguity of the signs being used and exchanged, the most well-established concepts are crumbling and every theory is wavering ... it is thus necessary to imagine new theoretical forms, in order to speak to new realities. Music, the organization of noise is one such form. It reflects the manufacture of society; it constitutes the audible waveband of the vibrations and signs that make up society. An instrument of understanding, it prompts us to decipher a sound form of knowledge.

Attali, 1985: 4⁷

⁷ The notion of the futility of language as a tool for understanding is also apparent in Wittgenstein's writings, with which Cardew did engage. Cardew was perhaps, therefore, tentatively engaging with these ideas through the creation of *Treatise*.

Attali, therefore, presents a theory *through* music rather than *about* music (ibid) identifying four significant stages in the development of music from the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries that demonstrate that music not only reflects its contemporary society but also prophesizes what is to be. The conclusion is that the age of mass production and the dominance of recorded music is a product of the exchange-value dominated age, but also that it signals 'a radically new social and cultural space demolishing the earlier economic constructions of representation' (ibid: 95), something the Scratch Orchestra could have seized as a means of escape. In his foreword to the translated version Fredric Jameson summarizes this suggestion:

[Attali] is the first to have drawn the other possible logical consequence of the 'reciprocal interaction' model⁸ – namely, the possibility of a superstructure to *anticipate* historical developments, to foreshadow new social formations in a prophetic and annunciatory way. The argument of *Noise* is that music, unique among the arts for reasons that are themselves overdetermined, has precisely the annunciatory vocation; and that the music of today stands both as a promise of a new, liberating mode of production, and as the menace of a dystopian possibility which is that mode of production's baleful mirror image.

Jameson, in Attali, 1985: xi⁹

Attali's text was not published until 1977, and not translated until after Cardew's death, but theories that resonate with this were in circulation throughout the mid 1970s. In particular, Marcuse writes in *One Dimensional Man* that the potential for liberation is already apparent in the structures of society – what Marcuse consistently refers to as the 'machine':

The brute fact that the machine's physical (only physical?) power surpasses that of the individual, and of any particular group of individuals, makes the machine the most effective political instrument in any society whose basic organization is that of the machine process. But the political trend may be reversed; essentially the power of the machine is only the stored-up and projected power of man. To the extent to which the work world is conceived of as a machine and mechanized accordingly, it becomes the *potential* basis of a new freedom for man.

Marcuse, 1991: 6

⁸ By which he means the mutual influence or dependence of music and its contemporary society.
⁹ See also Gracyk (2002) for a useful overview of Attali's argument.

The basic thesis that Marcuse presents is that the false consciousness that pervades the prevailing society absorbs all opposition to it, resulting in a one-dimensional existence: 'a comfortable, smooth, reasonable, democratic unfreedom' (ibid: 3), not dissimilar to the dichotomy Tilbury lodged with the Scratch Orchestra's discontent file.¹⁰ The missing dimension is the ability to assess the prevailing ideology against an understanding of the true world (Kolakowski, 2008: 1113). As such, people and things are degraded: everything assumes a functional role in the 'machine', deprived of autonomy. The distinctive tenet of Marcuse's theory is the insistence in the ability to overcome the system, building on Adorno's work in *Negative Dialectics* (Adorno, 1973) in which he asserts that the prevailing system provides the necessary resources to alleviate the problems it perpetuates.¹¹ Marcuse suggests that the false consciousness can be transcended. If the perceived reality is an invented one, then there is no reason why it cannot be deconstructed resulting in genuine democratic freedom. The deconstruction of the system would require individuals to recognise themselves as exchange-value objects – hence the need to transcend the false consciousness that masks this reality:

If the individual were no longer compelled to prove himself on the market, as a free economic subject, the disappearance of this kind of freedom would be one of the greatest achievements of civilisation ... The individual would be free to exert autonomy over a life that would be his own. If the productive apparatus could be organized and directed toward the satisfaction of the vital needs, its control might well be centralized; such control would not prevent individual autonomy but render it possible.

Marcuse, 1991: 4

Again, Marcuse suggests that the prevailing machine is the tool, not the enemy, of the new social order. The problem, as Kolakowski notes, is how this can come about when

¹⁰ See p. 113.

¹¹ This appears to be the general interpretation of Adornoian thought (Jarvis, 1998; Zuidervaart, 1991) though Kolakowski (2008: 1090) states the opposite: 'The last word of Adorno's theory of culture is apparently that we must protest, but that protest will be unavailing. We cannot recapture the values of the past, those of the present are debased and barbarous, and the future offers none'. It is not pertinent to discuss the differences of opinion here and Kolakowski effectively outlines the difficulties of summarizing Adornoian thought (ibid: 1073–82). It is Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man* that expounds this theory in clear and practical terms.

the 'majority of the people, and especially the working class, are absorbed by the system and are not interested in the 'global transcendence' of the existing order' (Kolakowski, 2008: 1116). Marcuse's answer is in the sub-classes and hidden sectors of society that are the very result of the prevailing system: 'the outcasts and outsiders, the exploited and persecuted of other races and other colours, the unemployed and the unemployable' (Marcuse, 1991: 260). The strength of these peoples is that they already, if not consciously, transcend the system, and their circumstances perhaps provoke a necessity for opposition not found in their 'comfortable, smooth, reasonable democratic unfree' counterparts. These people have the power to instigate what Marcuse calls 'the Great Refusal':

Their opposition hits the system from without and is therefore not deflected by the system; it is an elementary force which violates the rules of the game and, in doing so, reveals it as a rigged game. When they get together and go out into the streets, without arms, without protection, in order to ask for the most primitive civil rights, they know that they face dogs, stones, and bombs, jail, concentration camps, even death. Their force is behind every political demonstration for the victims of law and order. The fact that they start refusing to play the game may be the fact which marks the beginning of the end of a period.

Marcuse, 1991: 261

This way of thinking would have been particularly pertinent to the Scratch Orchestra as it was their inability to communicate with the other sectors of society that instigated the discussions. Discussion of Marcuse's work within the Ideological Study Group may have resulted in a different version of the Scratch Orchestra's history with the realization that the 'stored-up and projected' power of the machine that was the Scratch Orchestra was in itself a tool for exploring answers to the questions being asked. But this was not the case and the dilemma of the bourgeois artist persisted: subscribe to the system (that is, perpetuate the Scratch Orchestra's existence in its current form) or drop out (that is, disband). Neither option provided a future for the ideologically aware Orchestra.

The exclusion of such texts was not simply a result of ignorance, however. The most politically motivated and aware members of the group, notably and prominently Keith Rowe, were already supporters of the Communist Party of England (Marxist-Leninists) who were Mao purists. The Party considered Mao's China a working example of pure Marxism and promoted an explicit aversion to lines of thinking they considered as 'revising' this interpretation. The Frankfurt School belonged firmly within this bracket.¹² The Maoist orientation of the Ideological Study Group was no secret though it is unclear whether those members less familiar with the party were aware of the strength of the anti-revisionist stance, and it certainly influenced the nature of the texts and theories being presented. The Party later went as far as keeping an index of revisionist writers and commentators essentially banning its members from engaging with their work. Tilbury describes this as having 'ruinous consequences for the intellectual life of its members, as well as for Cardew's own political development and understanding of Marxism and Marxist tradition' (Tilbury, 2008: 555).

It is easy to assume, then, that the basis for Cardew's political conversion was narrow and naïve, and from an intellectual perspective there is strength in this argument. But focussing overly on the intellectual content of the discussions rather obfuscates the principles that underpinned the next phase of Cardew's work. The role of the Scratch Orchestra is most significant and the influential Mao and Caudwell texts were largely considered against that context, the Orchestra essentially laying the foundations for the interpretation of these texts. Cardew had already become aware that the problems of communication and oppression that had been felt across the Orchestra were not unique to them, but were representative of society as a whole. Cardew had developed a

¹² Additionally, in the case of Adorno, the sometimes impenetrable writing style hardly lends the texts to the particular aims of the Ideological Study Group given the political innocence of some of the participants. Adorno reasons that this obscurity is a result of the limits of language in relation to the concepts exposed. Kolakowski, in reference to *Negative Dialectics*, notes that 'the pretentious obscurity of style and the contempt that it shows for the reader might be endurable if the book were not also devoid of literary form' (Kolakowski, 2008: 1073).

perception that the world was not fair. The exposure to the texts brought to the Ideological Study Group arguably turned this *social* awareness into a *political* awareness and, more importantly, suggested a course of action that could be taken to remedy the unfairness of society. The suggestion here is that the experiences of the Scratch Orchestra and the exposure to these key texts awoke a latent political tendency in Cardew that can be traced back to his earlier work, where it manifested itself as striving to fulfil musicians' social or human needs. Tilbury has noted that 'the Caudwell essay made a profound impression on Cardew, not because it imparted new thoughts, but because it crystallised his own thoughts and feelings' (Tilbury, 1983: 9). As intimated in the opening paragraphs of this chapter the shift at this point was a re-direction of energy rather than any profound changes in Cardew's world view. In my interview with Tilbury I asked him to expand on this:

TH How much of that way of thinking [the notion of the dilemma of the bourgeois artist] grew directly out of the activities of the Scratch Orchestra?

JT: I think quite a lot of it did. That's why this text [Caudwell, 1965] had such an effect, because it was already there. I think it was a kind of revelation. It was something that you somehow already know, it's there inside you and it's been brought out. I think that was the case with this. It stirred people because it was something which we had been dealing with in the Scratch Orchestra. But since there was very little verbalization in the Orchestra we never really talked about it. It was inherently there in the way we played, in the repertoire we performed, the mode of music making. And then here was a sort of intellectualization, verbalization of that which made it easier for people to objectify it and then perhaps take the next step – so now what do we do? That's where the communist proposal/solution project came into being and some members were politicized.

The next step for Cardew was to devote his professional activities to an organization motivated by this approach to Marxism. No doubt considerably influenced by Keith Rowe, whose example Tilbury describes as 'imposing and irresistible' (Tilbury, 2008: 553), Cardew joined the recently formed Communist Party of England (Marxist-Leninist) (CPE-ML). This would come to define the remaining years of Cardew's life.

The Party Line

Within today's context, membership of a communist party would be considered an extreme political stance. During the 1970s sympathy with the far-left was more commonplace and essentially part of the *Zeitgeist*, particularly among students and the academic community. Even within this climate, however, Cardew's commitment to party activity is notable and the extent of that commitment deserves some discussion. A detailed history of the CPE-ML is not particularly pertinent to this discussion but a very brief overview helps to put Cardew's involvement in context. As expressed earlier, the CPE-ML was a devoutly Maoist organization at its inception and this remained the case until 1979. Mao Tse-tung was removed from power only by his death in 1976. An unravelling of Maoist Thought had begun shortly before that date but became increasingly debated in the years immediately after his death.¹³ This was led on the international stage by Enver Hoxha, Leader of the Albanian Party of Labour who condemned Maoism and became a sort of unofficial leader of the international communist movement. It was Hoxha's interpretations of Marxism-Leninism, characterized by a shift from the ideals of a peasant-led society to one led by the revolutionaries themselves, to which the CPE-ML gravitated. The Maoist line was rejected and a new Party (still functioning today) was founded in 1979 to reflect this change: the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) (RCPB-ML) of which Cardew was a founder member and was in the leadership committee.¹⁴

¹³ See Kolakowski (2008: 1199–200) for an assessment of Maoism as 'the application of Marxism to specifically Chinese condition', and how Maoist Thought departs from Marxist tradition. It was not until the mid 1980s that the true extent of the Chinese people's suffering under Mao Tse-tung's rule became widely known to the outside world. The precise nature of events in Mao's China is still contested. Estimates of the total number of deaths ranges from 26–72 million (White, 2005: online).

¹⁴ The details and complexities of these changes are explained in Tilbury (2008: 873–902). They are not discussed further here, as they seem to have had little impact on Cardew's activities or outlook in the final two years of his life.

Cardew was also instrumental in founding the Progressive Cultural Association (PCA), a collective of artists, musicians and actors committed to supporting the Marxist cause through cultural events. Through the PCA he worked closely with Hardial Bains, leader of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) – himself an influential figure in the founding of communist organizations around the globe – and the Canadian Cultural Workers Committee, a contemporaneous group to the PCA. This was work that Chris Coleman, current spokesperson for the RCPB-ML notes as being the most significant of Cardew's active political life (Coleman, 2006: conference speech). Such a cultural event took place in London, 9th August 1980 – an International Youth Concert at which Cardew, as representative of the RCPB-ML, spoke:

The concerts are the beginning of a new culture, a culture fired by the struggles of the working people of all countries against imperialism, social imperialism and reaction; aimed at serving the interests of the working people; and following the line of our ML parties.

Cardew, 1980, in Prévost, 2006: 272

Cardew, in keeping with the Maoist principle of learning from the masses in order to educate the masses, worked tirelessly alongside 'the people'. He supported anti-fascist and anti-capitalist demonstrations, became involved in the Northern Irish nationalists struggle for liberation and any number of other causes as directed by the Party. Cardew's level of involvement provokes comment. For example, Tilbury noted that:

Cardew's commitment to socialism during the last decade of his life is awe-inspiring. His notebooks reveal the depth of his study of Marx and Lenin and, most important, the way in which he applied these principles to every situation. His activity reached heroic proportions: he was involved 24 hours a day, composing, performing, touring, organising, writing, lecturing, analysing, meeting, discussing, demonstrating on the streets (for which he was imprisoned).

Tilbury, 1983: 10

Neither should Cardew's belief in the cause be underestimated. The Party was not acting as the kind of quasi-lobby that fringe political parties often do today. Paris had recently experienced its now iconic uprisings in 1968. The United States was going through a

state of student unrest. The signals from the wider western world suggested that revolution was at least a possibility. For the RCPB-ML, this was high on the agenda and motivational. Tilbury expresses his belief that it was Cardew's instinct for revolutionary action that inspired him perhaps more than the Marxism that underpinned it: 'It was not so much the vaunted "truth" and "invincibility" of Marxism-Leninism that motivated him, it was the explosive and revolutionary potential embodied within its praxis' (Tilbury, 2008: 555). I questioned Parsons on this issue:

TH: What motivated Cardew during the latter part of the 1970s?

MP: I think he genuinely thought the revolution was on the way and that the party was going to be the spearhead of it. They really believed that capitalism was doomed and it would begin to collapse under the pressure of its own contradictions and that the Party would have a crucial role to play in the reforming of the whole social fabric. If not in his lifetime at least in the next generation – he saw it as a cumulative process.

This commitment to the cause was all-pervading and consequently impacted on his relationships with those around him and the status and role he held in certain communities. Many from within the political sphere were unaware of Cardew's historical journey, with some colleagues, Chris Coleman included, only knowing Cardew during the final decade. But for those who had shared Cardew's journey the shift in commitment represented a degree of turmoil. Tilbury, for instance, recalled in my interview with him that the publication of *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism*, was, for many, 'hard to stomach'.

The impact of *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* on those around him was a theme also explored in my interviews with Skempton, Parsons and Smith, and more informally in conversations with other Scratch Orchestra members. Cardew perhaps felt that his position had to be expressed forcefully to avoid his arguments simply being absorbed into the general discussions of the progressive culture of the time: indeed, Tilbury notes that the Party would have initially considered Cardew a 'progressive' rather than 'communist' composer until he was able to prove his credentials. (Tilbury, 2008: 556). If

he was to genuinely integrate – become a ‘real’ communist and subscribe to the cause with integrity – it was necessary to distance himself from the culture and system he was intending to fight. Distancing himself from the recognized cultural establishment required little energy – this process was by now fairly complete through the later experimental works and the public profile of the Scratch Orchestra. The reaction of the RAM to the Newcastle incident provides an example of the arms-length at which such an institution would wish to keep Cardew.¹⁵ More of a problem for Cardew was what might be described as the ‘progressive bourgeoisie’ – those enlightened and questioning individuals who occupied the fringes of the bourgeois culture, for instance, the more politically orientated members of the Scratch Orchestra. It is this group with which Cardew felt he was most closely associated. It is one thing to discuss Caudwell’s dilemma of the bourgeois artist as part of an Ideological Study Group: it is another to take what Tilbury calls ‘the next step’ and remove oneself from such a culture. This perhaps explains the force with which Cardew communicated his position – it was, in effect, an attempt to bring others with him, or at least make it difficult for them to continue in ignorance of the key issues.

Parsons notes that even for those who were not persuaded to embrace the political conversion Cardew was still a force:

TH: What was the effect on yourself and the experimental community as a whole when Cardew repudiated the avant-garde?

MP: There was a certain amount of dismay that he rejected everything, and an attack on his own work as well, the fact he denounced *The Great Learning*. I think people felt a little bit at a loss when that first came out. And it certainly took the impetus out of the enthusiasm for experimentation. I think he continued to be, even for those who hadn’t gone through the political conversion, quite a strong moral influence in the sense that there were certain things they felt they couldn’t do immediately after that. In my case it involved

¹⁵ An anomaly of this establishment suspicion appears to be the 1972 Proms performance, though it did, of course, receive considerable censorship. The relationship with the BBC seems to have centred on Hans Keller of the then BBC Music Section, who commissioned two introductory concert talks from Cardew. One suspects Keller was something of a fly in the ointment for the BBC. The second talk was never broadcast, and ‘punishments were meted out’ (Cardew, 1974: 34) when Keller’s seniors heard the first.

more of a return to so called more accessible kinds of music making. For other people it may have given them more inhibition about the spontaneity of free improvisation.

It is likely that the unease regarding improvisation was more attributable to Keith Rowe, who renounced his work with AMM, but the evidence does suggest that Cardew's repudiation of the progressive bourgeoisie had considerable impact. Tilbury also claims it made people think carefully about what they were doing, recalling the initial effect on people as 'traumatic':

TH: What was the effect of *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* on the experimental music community?

JT: It certainly had a traumatic effect on people in general and, of course, when the book came out with the language that it used – that was very hard to stomach. Although I do think, and I wrote a defence of it quite recently, if you strip that language away what it says is very reasonable. It's hard to disagree with it in a way ... He certainly ruffled feathers and perhaps at least made it difficult for us to carry on what we were doing. We had to take a good hard look at what we were doing. I think that was his aim. I think later on that stopped: he didn't give a damn, he was trying to integrate with working people, trying to do work with ethnic minority groups and the oppressed people, and he was no longer interested in criticizing *The Great Learning* or Rzewski pieces, who was sort of comrade in arms. It was up to them to decide what they wanted to do. He was going to integrate and become a real communist activist not just a progressive bourgeois composer. But at the time when he wrote the book he was still part of it and was saying, wait a minute, let us look at what we're doing and realized, rightly I think, that this had to be expressed in pretty extreme terms otherwise it could just be absorbed. He was saying 'this is the line, I dare you to cross it'.

A number of contemporaries did follow Cardew – Tilbury, Keith Rowe, Michael Chant, Hugh Shrapnel, Bryn Harris, Dave Smith – while others held their ground. Eddie Prévost continued with his commitment to improvisation, though Parsons recalls this may have been uncomfortable:

MP: AMM carried on just with Eddie and one other person.¹⁶ Eddie always remained committed to improvisation as a way of making music but I think he would have felt a little bit isolated and marginalized by it, the fact that both Keith and Cornelius had renounced that way of playing.

¹⁶ The other person was Lou Gare. Evan Parker and Paul Lytton also occasionally joined the group. Prévost rejoined AMM at an unconfirmed date, probably around 1978. See Stubley (1996) for a definitive chronology of the group's existence.

Parsons himself found refuge in other contexts though maintained contact with Cardew and sympathies with his politics:

MP: For me the art schools and the London Musician's Collective provided an alternative, where one got the kind of support and encouragement for continuing the more playful and experimental kind of work. That context became very important for me. It wasn't a complete split, though. We always kept in touch. I was still very interested in the politics, I just didn't want to join a party. My main commitment was as a teacher and as a musician. [The politics] were valuable even within a context where there wasn't an overt revolutionary aim.

Skempton experienced some of the shockwaves of *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* first hand through the continuing Morley College class with which Cardew had entrusted him. Skempton recalls a particular occasion when he was extolling the virtues of improvisation which had, of course, been repudiated by both Cardew and Rowe:

TH: How did these experiences impact upon you?

HS: I found the Morley College experience incredibly instructive and unsettling, upsetting. I remember one Morley college class when I was in charge of the 'music workshop' as it was then called. I was talking about improvising and I was just told it was rubbish though in slightly stronger language than that. I was saying 'improvising is the necessary roughage of the musical diet' and they were saying 'shit, Howard!' The typical criticism was 'you're an individualist' and that really hurt at that time. I wasn't able to cope with that. There was no argument. The worst possible thing to be was an individualist at that time.

Skempton's tenure at Morley was ultimately terminated by the class:

HS: I didn't resign – I was thrown out. Cardew came and had tea with me and he said 'the people in the class want you to leave'. Well, of course, the class folded because there was nobody left to run the class after that.

Despite this bruising experience Skempton reveals a little more caution than others when asked about *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism*. He acknowledges the 'persuasiveness' and the 'uncompromising honesty', writing a favourable review at the time¹⁷, but also recognizes the possibility that people may have dismissed the work, suggesting the

¹⁷ I have unfortunately not been able to trace this review.

impact was more to do with the tone than the message. Also, on a personal level, Skempton had more difficulty in sympathizing with the rhetoric:

TH: What sort of effect did the publication of *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* have on the experimental music community?

HS: I think that it was regarded as a particularly nasty piece of work. I think people were really deeply affected by it because these were personal attacks. One thing we're not used to in this country is polemical writing. It's not so uncommon abroad. What he says about Stockhausen is incredibly powerful. And what he says about Cage too. He says 'I'm taking part in a performance of HPSCHD but I don't encourage anybody to go to it'. He really puts the boot in. I think some people thought he'd just gone off the rails completely.

TH: Do you think *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* was a conscious attempt to make a lot of noise?

HS: It's very rhetorical. Things printed in caps and so on. Rod Eley had written SMASH THE BOURGEOIS CLASS.¹⁸ What I did take against was the violence of it. I felt it was essentially violent. A very violent use of language.

Skempton had no contact with Cardew from about 1976 until shortly before his death. Skempton's music will be examined in more detail in chapter eight but there is perhaps little surprise that his professional activity remains largely, though not completely, at odds with the Cardew of this period.

The discussion in this chapter demonstrates the extent to which Cardew, by 1974, had perhaps already emerged as the 'moral force' of which Feldman spoke (Feldman, 1967: 43), with the ability to shape the activity and priorities of those around him. Through Cardew's influence, experimental music-making in England had changed direction.

¹⁸ The full inscription at the end of chapter one reads: 'SMASH THE DECAYING IDEOLOGICAL SUPERSTRUCTURE! SMASH THE BOURGEOIS CLASS AND ITS CORRUPT CAPITALIST SYSTEM! DOWN WITH IMPERIALISM!' (Eley, 1974: 32).

Music for the Masses

Despite the all-pervasiveness of Cardew's political activity, his role as a composer and performer did not diminish. The music was subsumed into, rather than replaced by, his activism. If the direction of Cardew's music of the final decade is to be summarized it might be described as a compositional quest to discover the role of one's music in a revolutionary communist context. In this respect, there is little wonder that some of the compositional output exists out on an idiosyncratic limb. This chapter examines the changing nature of 'Cardew the musician', with a study of the compositional output, the performance work, and the role of these activities as perceived by Cardew and others, then and now.

The chapter will also deal with the circumstances of Cardew's death, exploring how the timing of this event plays its role in defining the nature of Cardew's legacy, and speculating on directions Cardew may have taken, crucially with respect to a potential reconciliation with previous modes of music-making.

'Tentative Experiments'

I have discontinued composing music in an avant-garde idiom for a number of reasons: the exclusiveness of the avant-garde, its fragmentation, its indifference to the real situation in the world today, its individualistic outlook and not least its class character (its other characteristics are virtually products of this).

Cardew, 1973: programme notes

The rejection of an avant-garde approach¹, as detailed in this programme note Cardew supplied for *Piano Album 1973*, was his starting point for finding a new compositional voice. But what might take its place is not immediately obvious. Cardew was, after all, an avant-garde and experimental composer by trade. Although there were precedents of politically motivated composers – for instance, Hans Werner Henze, Hanns Eisler and the less well known Alan Bush – they hardly inform which approach one might adopt. Henze consciously continued to write music in what would be considered the contemporary bourgeois language, despite his communist connections, convinced he could ultimately transform this style into ‘something that the masses can understand’ (Henze, 1981: 180). Alan Bush, with whom Cardew was known to communicate, similarly continued to compose within the Western art style though often adopting political texts and themes. Bush, however, opposed the Maoist line of the CPE-ML, who dismissed him as a revisionist, putting paid to any significance this relationship may have had.² Eisler perhaps is closer to the direction Cardew ultimately took, adopting accessible styles based in folk and popular music. Cardew was familiar with Eisler’s music (Tilbury, 2008: 182, 680 and elsewhere) though there is little reference made by Cardew himself.³

It would appear that Cardew chose to start his quest without reference to precedent, Taylor suggesting that ‘he was simply asserting his originality as a reflex conditioned by his involvement in a Western tradition that valued it’ (Taylor, 1998: 567). Cardew perhaps even relished the additional reaction and comment his bourgeois association evoked, acknowledging the fact that when launching his attack on Cage and Stockhausen he did so with ‘the advantage of surprise’ (Cardew, 1974: 33). But, while never explicitly admitted, Cardew perhaps also recognized his own inadequacy in

¹ Cardew is, again, employing the term ‘avant-garde’ to include both the avant-garde and experimental traditions with which he was engaged.

² See Tilbury, 2008: 962–3 for an example of an exchange between the two composers.

³ I can find only one reference (Potter, 1975: 24) in relation to Cardew quoting a song of Eisler’s in his own *Thälmann Variations* (1974).

offering any effective alternative. By 1973, popular music had firmly taken root within the mass-market culture. Popular music was at that time perhaps more accurately the music of youth rather than the music of the masses but, nevertheless, had The Beatles or The Rolling Stones undergone a similar political reformation they would have had a mode of dialogue already prepared.⁴ Cardew's tools for the advancing revolution were a RAM training, a catalogue of repudiated 'wiggly lines and wobbly music' (Cardew, 1976a: 247) and an important but, by comparison, quiet and gentlemanly series of revelations in the form of the Scratch Orchestra. Cardew, then, recognized that he was embarking upon something of a voyage of discovery:

In taking this course a number of questions arise: What musical material is available, on what musical sources and traditions should we base our work? And in what style should that material be presented bearing in mind that it must be accessible to the broad masses of so-called 'uncultured' people?

Cardew, 1973

The transition would not come easily, nor quickly, and the dramatic shift in style sometimes implied in the briefer surveys of Cardew's music is misleading.⁵ Indeed, a move towards more song-like and 'accessible' forms was already apparent in the Ode Machines of Paragraph 7 of *The Great Learning*, one of which, *The Turtle Dove* (fig. 6.1), became the third of the *Three Bourgeois Songs* of 1973, piano and voice settings of Confucian poems.

These songs themselves demonstrate a Cardew in stylistic transition, at once removed from earlier incarnations but still clearly in the hand of the trained mid-twentieth-century composer, and hardly fodder for the masses. The voice employs elements of simple extended technique, the piano part is characterized by a certain freedom with the

⁴ John Lennon's *Imagine* is perhaps a good example of this established dialogue.

⁵ For example: Cowley (2001); Fox (2001); Gann (2003); Tilbury (1982a).

THE — E — E — E — E — E TURTLE DO — O — O — O — O — OVE

SITS UP IN THE MULBERRY TREE ITS CHI —

— — — — — ICKS PLAY IN TREE

Fig. 6.1: Cardew, *The Turtle Dove* from *Three Bourgeois Songs* (1973), BMIC Collection.

occasional virtuosic stamp, and the songs follow the structural conventions and explorations of the art-song rather than the pop-song.

Paragraph 2 of *The Great Learning* also indicates a nod in these new directions. The voice parts are based on pentatonic pitch sets, and although stretched out into full breath lengths, they provide graspable folk-like melodies. The drum parts of Paragraph 2, and to a lesser extent the voices of Paragraph 7, also lend themselves more to folk traditions than the western classical or even avant-garde traditions. It is the world of folk and traditional music that Cardew's first conscious forays into the world of populism inhabit, characterized by a collection of songs and arrangements dating from 1971-72.

Ties with Cardew's musical past are not entirely cut, however. *The Proletariat Seeks to Transform the World* of 1971 (fig. 6.2) demonstrates a passing resemblance to elements of *The Great Learning*. With separate scores for both melody (voices) and accompaniment ('any appropriate instruments') it shares the collective responsibilities of Paragraphs 2, 6 and 7, with instruction given for 'instruments [to] start together and proceed independently'. *Soon* (1971), a setting of a text by Mao Tse-tung, is a more dramatic excursion from Cardew's previous modes of scoring. The melody is folk-influenced though the complexity of harmonic shifts, changing time signatures and flexibility of tempo preclude this passing over into a folk performance context. The inclusion of chord symbols demonstrates at least an intention for it to function within inclusive 'popular' settings.

f throughout. Voices enter when the accompaniment has got going.

THE PROLETARIAT SEEKS TO TRANSFORM THE WORLD ACCORDING TO ITS OWN WORLD-OUTLOOK. THE BOURGEOISIE, AND SO DOES

IN THE WORLD TODAY ALL CULTURE ALL WRITING, ALL PAINTING, ALL MUSIC ALL FILM BELONG TO DEFINITE CLASSES

ALL ART IS GEARED TO DEFINITE POLITICAL LINES

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS ART THAT STANDS ABOVE CLASSES

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS ART THAT IS DETACHED FROM POLITICS.

WORKS OF ART AS IDEOLOGICAL FORMS ARE PRODUCTS OF THE REFLECTION IN THE HUMAN BRAIN

OF THE LIFE OF A GIVEN SOCIETY.

THE PROLETARIAT SEEKS TO TRANSFORM THE WORLD

Accompaniment. Any appreciable instruments

1 2 3 4 5 6

The instruments start together & proceed independently. Dynamics to be well balanced & not so loud as to obscure the voices. Avoid gaps in the sound. Durations are long. At the end all the instruments are cut off, whenever they happen to be, simultaneously with the voices.

August 71

Fig. 6.2: Cardew, *The Proletariat Seeks to Transform the World* (1971), BMIC Collection.

Golden Mountain in Peking and *The Red Flag* (fig. 6.3), both from 1972, delve further into traditional music, taking the form of new arrangements of traditional songs for voices and small groups of instruments. *Va Pensiero* (1972), is an arrangement of a chorus from Verdi's *Nabucco*. Cardew's own programme note reads:

When Verdi's 'Chorus of Hebrew Slaves' ... was originally performed the people of Milan took the plight of the Jews in exile as an allegory of their own oppression under the Austrian Empire. I see it now as an allegory of the plight of the modern composer, isolated from the broad masses (whose activity should be his main source of inspiration) in the Establishment's Ivory Tower for New Music.

Cardew, 1972b: programme note

This represents a significant shift in Cardew's thinking – the notion that the context of a given piece of music, its place in history and a specific culture is as important or perhaps more important than the musical content. The implication or the association is the content. The arrangement of *Va Pensiero* is to an extent disposable, and certainly not of any lasting musical merit – an SATB chorus accompanied by strummed chords and preceded by an instrumental trio. Its first performance at the UK premier of Wolff's *Burdocks* in 1972 was enough to draw an audience to this programme note, which in turn was enough for Cardew to justify the (apparently little) energy he expended in its creation.

In answer to Cardew's own question – 'on what musical sources and traditions should we base our work?' – it is apparent that musical material from cultures and contexts related to 'the cause' feature highly. This is formalized in *Piano Album 1973*, a collection of short pieces intended for concert performance. Cardew describes them as 'tentative experiments in a number of different directions, seeking provisional answers' (Cardew,

♩ = 72

THE PEOPLE'S FLAG IS DEEPEST RED IT SHROUDED OFF OUR MARTYRED DEAD BE-
 FORGET THEIR LIMBS GROWN STIFF & COLD THEIR HEARTS BLOODIED ITS EVERY FOLD SO RAISE THE SCARLET
 STANDARD HIGH WITHIN ITS SHADE, WE'LL LIVE OR DIE THOUGH (DOWN)ARDS FLINCH & TRAITORS SHEER HEW!
 KEEP THE RED FLAG FLYING HERE THIS FLYING HERE

26.3.72

The accompaniment is for any of appropriate instruments.

Four times through this 16-bar period as follows:

First time: bass line only.

Second time: bass line & top line of the accompaniment (2 lines only)

Third time: A single voice sings the melody accompanied by the top two and the bottom ~~two~~ of the lines of the accompaniment.

Fourth time: Several voices sing the melody in unison together with the complete accompaniment.

All fairly quiet.

Fig. 6.3: Cardew, *The Red Flag* (1972), BMIC Collection.

1973) to the questions previously asked. The pieces adopt a tonal, quasi-romantic, nostalgic, 'accessible' musical language. Again, association with the origins of the original material is important. Musical material is drawn specifically from China as, Cardew states, it is 'the most advanced socialist country in the world, and for this reason it is attracting the attention and the enthusiasm of more and more progressive artists and people throughout the world' (ibid). Material includes sources from a collection of historical revolutionary Chinese songs, Peking opera, and popular Chinese music of the time. In addition, *The Red Flag* and *Soon* reappear in romantic pianistic form, and, significantly, materials of Irish origin are included, the Irish cause by this point being on the CPE-ML's agenda. *Father Murphy* (fig. 6.4) and *The Croppy Boy* are arrangements of folk-songs and *Four Principles on Ireland* was composed specifically for the Party's campaign, and partly based on an old Irish melody. As with the earlier *Va Pensiero*, attention is drawn to the programme notes that detail these four principles, proclaiming that 'Britain's colonial and neo-colonial hold on Ireland acts as a powerful brake on the working class movement in England, and this brake must be released' (ibid).

Piano Album 1974, another collection of four song arrangements, takes a further departure. The romantic pianistic gestures give way to a more popular-song-influenced style, with rhythms sitting more firmly square to the pulse, and even 'blue' notes making their way into *The East is Red*. Indeed, the third piece in the collection, *Revolution Is The Main Trend* (fig. 4.5), later became a staple of the People's Liberation Music's repertoire performed following the conventions of the rock band.

Other instrumental work from this period includes a virtuosic concert version of *The East is Red* (1972) for violin and piano, numerous pieces for solo instruments, further concert pieces for piano, *BooLavogue* (1981) for two pianos, and two short orchestral pieces, *Consciously* and *Dartmoor* both dated 1978, and both arrangements of songs put to

8. FATHER MURPHY

The musical score for 'Father Murphy' is presented in two systems. The first system consists of three staves: a vocal line and two piano accompaniment staves. The vocal line begins with the instruction 'freely' and 'f' (forte). The piano accompaniment features a 3/4 time signature and includes dynamic markings such as 'p' (piano) and 'f'. The second system also consists of three staves, with the vocal line marked 'f' and 'mp' (mezzo-piano). The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings 'p' and 'f'. The third system continues the vocal and piano parts, with dynamic markings 'p' and 'f'. The fourth system shows the vocal line with the instruction '(rit) slowed' and the piano accompaniment with 'p'. The fifth system concludes the piece, with the vocal line marked 'f' and 'rit' (ritardando), and the piano accompaniment marked 'p' and 'f'. The score is written in a style characteristic of Cardew's experimental music, with complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic contrasts.

Fig. 6.4: Cardew, *Father Murphy* from *Piano Album* (1973), The Cornelius Cardew Foundation.

10

3. Revolution Is The Main Trend

Fast

The musical score is written for piano and consists of five systems of music. The first system is marked 'Fast' and 'p'. The second system is marked '3'. The third system is marked 'p'. The fourth system is marked '13'. The fifth system is marked '18' and contains dynamic markings 'p', 'ff', and 'mf'. The score is in a key signature of one flat and a 3/4 time signature. The music is characterized by a steady, rhythmic accompaniment in the bass clef and a more melodic line in the treble clef.

Fig. 6.5: Cardew, *Revolution is the Main Trend* from *Piano Album* (1974), The Cornelius Cardew Foundation.

further use in other performance situations. All such pieces sit within the stylistic no-mans-land inherent in the piano albums, modern yet not modernist, populist yet not popular, political yet not exactly revolutionary.

Cardew's repudiation of the avant-garde did not, perhaps contradictory to expectation, lead to a complete removal from that scene. In fact, both Cardew and Tilbury were active in performances of these rejected forms at intervals throughout the 1970s. To charges of hypocrisy for such a breach, Cardew more than once cited his need and right to earn a living as the reason for this (Jack, 1975: 32; Potter, 1975: 26). But there was a caveat: Cardew and Tilbury alike would perform such music only if there was room for a discussion or forum on the inherent contradictions of such musical cultures. Cardew also considered their position within the avant-garde world as strategically advantageous: 'If John Tilbury and I got out of the avant-garde musical scene, there would be plenty to take our place. No possible dent would have been made. There would have been no promotion of our ideas. It would just be a ridiculous dream' (Cardew, in Prévost 2006: 240).

For Cardew, this approach proved something of a stop-gap, as for a period there was a dearth of alternative concert music – a void Cardew was energized into filling. In an interview with Keith Potter in 1975 Cardew stated that:

We threw ourselves into it [political music] at the start, had a lot of experiences, made a lot of experiments and had these fierce ideological struggles with audiences and with other musicians, and learnt a lot. What's happened in the intervening period, almost without anybody noticing, is that a repertoire has built up. We now have musical material to put forward; we aren't reliant upon putting forward a Cage piece and having an ideological discussion about it – we actually have some new music.

Cardew in Potter, 1975: 23

At this point we should return to the epigraph of chapter five, and Cardew's belief that 'it is not enough to decorate the world, the point is to influence it' (Cardew, 1974a: 82). If

Cardew's quest was to influence rather than decorate the world during this period then some reflection on his success is necessary. Cardew attempted to create a new repertoire, but the machine within which this new repertoire was communicated had not changed. The new repertoire simply replaced the old. The extent to which the new repertoire 'decorates' the world and the extent to which that decoration influences the listener is a difficult balance to assess. It could be argued that the intellectual and political ramifications of a discussion surrounding Cage's worldview may provide a stronger foundation for influencing an audience than the presentation of a political situation that the audience may or may not be sympathetic towards. It could also be argued that the political content of the new repertoire might attract a different type of audience – an audience already sympathetic to 'the cause', Cardew's 'target' having been driven away by the aggression that Skempton identifies in the language of the revolutionary. In either case, the notion of influence can be eliminated completely by the simple act of an audience deciding to listen to the music but not reading the programme note – it is, after all, the association not the music per se that embodies the political message of these pieces. This is rather simplistic as Cardew, with his informal performance style, would often talk to the audience, but the dichotomy of decoration and influence remains. Additionally, as cited in chapter one, the consensus elsewhere (Adorno, 1992; Williams, 2007) is that Cardew's idea that music has this power at all is unsound. In recreating a repertoire for performance by a revolutionary communist composer and performer, Cardew had only partly answered the dilemma.

People's Liberation Music

If Cardew had answered, at least to his own satisfaction, his self-proposed question of what the source material of the new music should be, then the question of which style to adopt remained elusive, despite his own recognition that 'it must be accessible to the

broad masses of so-called 'uncultured' people?' (Cardew, 1973). Cardew believed that strides had been made, however, especially in comparison with Christian Wolff who had adopted elements of socialist politics but stayed within the experimental musical medium, allowing him to enter into discourse with his particular audience but having little influence beyond. Cardew wished to avoid this limitation:

We made a big switch and came over from doing avant-garde stuff which nobody could understand to doing something which a lot of people can understand. Incidentally, the avant-garde audience can understand it too, even though it's not their usual fare.

Cardew in Potter, 1975:23

The adopted styles of Cardew's concert music throughout the 1970s demonstrated a more inclusive appeal, but it would be disingenuous to suggest it was music for a mass audience. Audiences tended to be small, certainly as small as those for avant-garde concerts and, crucially, lacking in the working class demographic. If the intention was to create a music that would give Cardew access to the masses, then arguments against this repertoire are robust. In that respect the 'tentative experiments in a number of directions' certainly failed. But to disregard the concert music outlined here on this basis is superficial. Cardew was aware of the shortcomings, but these shortcomings are perhaps informed by the context in which Cardew found himself rather than the music itself.

As previously noted there was little precedent for Cardew's position. There was perhaps no musical territory to which he could naturally gravitate. There was equally, therefore, no natural or readymade audience for this new music in the way, for instance, an audience pre-exists in the worlds of the avant-garde, rock music or folk music. These established musical contexts are all supported by their networks of organizations and patronized by the fans. The predicament for Cardew was that, while his intention was to communicate with the masses, his musical context did not easily afford him the

necessary access to the masses, severely limiting his ability to influence them. Taylor notes that straying too far from the 'dominant aesthetic' of the intended audience results in a music that only appeals to the converted and, worse, is potentially 'co-opted by the ideology underlying that aesthetic and hence becoming another commodity of the bourgeois culture industry' (Taylor, 1998: 570).

Cardew was dealing here with the transition between what Walter Benjamin identified in 1936 as the two traditional planes of reception: the polar values of 'cult' and 'exhibition'. The 'cult value' is the intrinsic value of the art work achieved merely through its existence. The exhibition of the art work, Benjamin suggests, is coincidental and does not affect its true value. It could be argued that Cardew's compositional output up to this time relied largely on the 'cult value' of his work: 'What is important ... is that they are present, not that they are seen' (Benjamin, 2008: 25). This is slightly simplistic: what mattered for Cardew is that the work existed primarily for the benefit of the participants, but it is true that their existence as exhibits for an audience does not represent their real 'value'. This model was not appropriate for Cardew's new mission. For instance, *The Great Learning* or *Treatise* might, as discussed later, be appropriate models for *exploring* Cardew's communist beliefs but their basis in cult value, rather than their value as exhibits, limit them in *communicating* Cardew's beliefs. Additionally Benjamin states that:

It is easier to exhibit a portrait bust that can be sent here and there than to exhibit the statue of a divinity that has a fixed place in the interior of a temple. A panel painting can be exhibited more easily than the mosaic or fresco that preceded it.

Benjamin, 2008: 25

The same could also be true of a romantic piano miniature as against a work that requires considerable effort from a group of committed participants for its realization. Benjamin also asserts that the phenomenon of mechanical reproduction and its

requirement of exhibition value have implicitly altered the nature of artistic creation and perception:⁶

The scope for exhibiting the work of art has increased so enormously with the various methods of technologically reproducing it that a quantitative shift between the two poles of the artwork has led to a qualitative transformation in its nature.

Benjamin, 2008: 25

In this respect the old modes that Cardew employed would be considered no longer relevant to his current aims. Cardew, then, attempted to create music that embodied the exhibition value to which the audience he expected to draw would be most receptive. These audiences were most likely to be made up of regular concert goers and students who perhaps wished to witness what a radical and controversial socialist composer/performer was getting up to. That audience, therefore, became his starting point and the instrumental music of the 1970s is perhaps commonly misunderstood in this respect. The music was simply representative of the context in which Cardew found himself: the piano music, in particular, being composed for this specific audience. Indeed, Cardew spoke of how 'some music students were delighted that they could use their traditional performing skills in the *Thälmann Variations*' (Cardew in Jack, 1975: 31).

Cardew alludes to his particular circumstance, and its limitations, in an exchange with Keith Potter in 1975:

KP: Do you think you're succeeding at any level on your terms at the moment? Is your message getting across to the people you want to hear it? You've admitted that the numbers involved are very small.

CC: That's not the main point. If the numbers were great, we'd have to write a different kind of music anyway...

KP: So music for a real mass audience would be different from what you're doing now?

CC: Yes, because the revolutionary culture is really produced by the masses. The people who write the actual notes down are only reflecting the interests of the masses. So for the time being you can say that you're successful if the people who hear you – never mind how many – are interested in the subjects that you bring up and if they think about them

⁶ The essay, published in 1936, discusses mechanical reproduction mostly within the context of photography and film, though by the early 1970s the same could be argued for music.

with a basically correct orientation. In a concert that would be quite an achievement. You can't expect to organize people politically on the basis of a concert.

Potter, 1975: 26

Cardew is essentially asserting that the audience defines the nature of music, and this is also demonstrated by his parallel composing and performing activity with the Peoples' Liberation Music (PLM). PLM was formed in 1973 with a core of ex-Scratch Orchestra members at its heart. They adopted a popular musical idiom – a kind of folk-rock feel pervaded much of their music – though the diversity of musicians and composers contributing, Cardew included, resulted in a mildly arresting fusion of folk, rock, pop and art music. They performed political songs, created by themselves and others, across the UK and overseas at political forums, rallies, demonstrations, socials, universities and colleges. They supported anti-fascist activity, the Irish struggle, working class interests and the trade union movement, and became ubiquitous in providing morale and a focus of attention to such events. For Cardew, PLM represented an antithesis to the concert world he also inhabited and a mode of music-making that fed off a more direct contact with those people he believed the cause benefited the most. His compositional contributions took the form of songs, the raw materials of which often crossing with the concert music – *Four Principles on Ireland*, *Revolution is the Main Trend*, and other pieces exist in both concert and pop-song forms – though, once again, the music mostly reached only those already sympathetic to the causes. In this respect PLM perhaps also decorated rather than influenced the events they supported.

The recordings that exist demonstrate the importance of context on the nature of the music. PLM feeds off the musical tastes and modes of performance most in tune with those it supports, in much the same way that the romanticism of Cardew's piano works feeds off its audience, or at least the musical preferences Cardew assumes of that audience. The limitations of PLM in reaching a broader audience are more to do with technique, skill and celebrity rather than intention. During my interview with Dave

Smith, he noted that while Cardew was a skilled experimental composer and at least trained in the techniques of nineteenth-century harmony and expression, he was not a skilled or well-known popular songwriter in the Lennon/McCartney mould. PLM regularly performed McCartney's *Give Ireland Back To The Irish*, the popularity (and notoriety), and therefore potential influence of that song further emphasizing the limitations of a semi-professional outfit such as PLM. I asked Tilbury for his views on Smith's assessment of Cardew's limited abilities within popular idioms:

- TH:* Dave Smith thinks that maybe the problem was that Cardew was very skilled at writing avant-garde music, but he wasn't skilled at writing pop music.
- JT:* Yes – he arrived at that point a bit too late in life. Although on one level 45 is young, on another level, I go along with Dave. I remember saying this to him [Cardew] once – you've achieved this great skill but after years and years of study, of work. It's going to take at least the same amount of time ... he kind of grimaced! Maybe he would have had to go back to something like *The Great Learning* and ways of involving people. Because let's face it, popular music itself carries so many associations, very bad associations.

Cardew and his critics

The 'very bad associations' to which Tilbury refers are indicative of his anti-capitalist stance: popular music is after all an embodiment of the culture industry identified by Adorno. But Cardew's reluctance, or inability, to engage in the practices of the popular music industry continue to be a source of criticism. For instance, *Four Principles On Ireland and Other Pieces*, a 2001 CD re-issue of recordings Cardew made in the 1970s, received this review on a web-based magazine:

Compared to the vicious outbursts of later 70s punk and the seriously political pronouncements of The Pop Group, this sounds about as threatening as afternoon tea at your granny's ... did he seriously believe his compositional solution, a return to somewhere between late Baroque (he described himself as a "star player of Bach") and Gershwin, complete with twee crushed notes and frilly Liberace glissandi, to be capable of inspiring the masses to take up arms and bring revolution onto the streets of Europe? ... Surely if the goal was to reach the masses, Cardew should have set his sights on the language of rock and pop and set about subverting the cultural imperialism of the record industry by producing hard hitting revolutionary pop, rather than writing what seems to be little more than dreadful pastiche.

Unknown, 2001: online

This assessment represents a typical initial reaction from uninitiated listeners to this music. Given that uninitiated listeners – that is, ‘the people’ – were Cardew’s ultimate audience then such expressions cannot be ignored. The first problem is that the uninitiated are, by definition, unaware of the specific context of which Cardew seemed fully aware:

I think we simply don’t have access to a working class audience. These pieces were written for a definite audience. It is a definite audience which comes to the Purcell Room – or the students in colleges round the country where you might get a gig. It’s not an audience of workers in their work environment or even in their recreation time. It’s music for a consciously culture-orientated youth. I never believe I claimed it was reaching the working classes.

Cardew, in Prévost 2006: 237

But even within the context of a ‘consciously culture-orientated youth’ there remain critical reservations regarding the integrity of the repertoire. Paul Griffiths, in a review from 1985, described *Dartmoor* and *Consciously* as sounding ‘like poorly scored and breathtakingly unimaginative backing tracks for pop songs of the most infantile kind. And I am trying to be generous’ (Griffiths, 1985: 13). Griffiths’ misgivings are longstanding, noting in his review of Cardew’s 1982 memorial concert – an event where one would perhaps expect a greater than usual degree of good will – that Cardew was ‘hardly one of the outstanding composers’ (Griffiths, 1982: 9):

It was much more than sadness at the premature death of Cornelius Cardew that made last night’s retrospective of his music so profoundly depressing ... the second half even more miserable than the first ... seventh-rate pop music given by People’s Liberation Music, a bizarrely misconceived virtuoso set of piano variations, thrown off with great aplomb by Frederic Rzewski, and community songs of touching naivety voicing a bitter condemnation of Soviet imperialism.

Griffiths, 1982: 9

Rzewski has himself expressed surprise at the ferocity of criticism, though he believes it to be more complex than a simple distaste of the music. In conversations with Daniel Varela in 2004 he identified that Cardew’s provocative and public disrespect for the

musical establishment and institutions did little to endear him to those in a position to pass comment and judgement. Indeed, he made 'many enemies in the establishment which someone in his position was expected to serve' (Rzewski in Varela, 2004: 5–6). The result was press coverage of Cardew during this latter period being 'uniformly negative' (ibid: 6), a situation that seemed to be exacerbated immediately after his death:

I found that quite shocking. I'd always thought that when people die, that at least you have to observe some hypocritical forms and try to say something good about them, but in Cardew's case it is quite the opposite. The reaction was even more negative after his death than during his life. They wrote, 'Well, we always knew this composer had no talent, and this concert proved it'.

Rzewski in Varela, 2004: 6

The negative reaction to the music is not restricted to the uninitiated or those that hold a grudge, and criticisms can be found from those closer to home. Keith Rowe, for instance, who has no scores to settle with Cardew, considers that the later pieces entirely fail to achieve their desired effect. He suggests that Cardew unwittingly reinforced his position as an avant-garde composer by continuing to create a music that is rejected by the masses:

What's the most avant-garde thing an avant-garde composer can do? To write music like *BooLavogue!* If you try to make artefacts which are rejected in the sense that Duchamp wanted them to be, Cardew really achieved that with those later compositions. They are totally rejected by everyone. Any music lover would reject them ... For me speaking personally that wasn't his forte. I don't like them.

Rowe, 2001: 7

Of the available sources, a particularly antagonistic exchange between Cardew and Adrian Jack in 1975 provides the most direct challenge to Cardew in this period. Jack sees no point in disguising his sentiments: 'The music you have written recently sounds almost deliberately bad ... why are they not better composed? You could certainly manage better, couldn't you?' (Jack, 1975 in Prévost, 2006: 237). Cardew blames his own disinterest in the nineteenth-century pastiche training on offer at the RAM for his compositional shortcomings and makes no claims for the music, though he notes that

'the advantage of them is that they draw the attention of the listeners to social issues' (ibid), giving the plight of the Irish as an example. Jack is not convinced: 'But the fact is that most of the audience laugh at this music, so that you bring the cause disrepute' (ibid).

Cardew counterclaims that the audience does not laugh at the music in his experience, though he does concede that some consider the music a trivialization of the causes it sets out to champion (ibid). Crucially, Jack goes beyond the rather superficial arguments over the quality of the music to question the roots of Cardew's reasoning. Jack questions the influence of music in its entirety on the basis that Cardew's key communication tool is the political text on which the music is based. Despite Jack's assertion that aesthetic quality and function or text can be decoupled, and therefore rendering Cardew's repudiation of bourgeois music flawed, Cardew is adamant: 'If there is a fantastic building which was the palace of a particularly vicious Renaissance family, you will appreciate its aesthetic qualities but you won't like it, because of what it stands for' (ibid: 236).

It is for this reason, Cardew argues, that 'the working class doesn't like Beethoven or Mozart – because they are the composers of the bourgeoisie' (ibid). Their distaste is founded in the socio-political, rather than the aesthetic. Cardew's rather throwaway remark is a notion later comprehensively explored by Pierre Bourdieu (1984) and his theory of class distinction. Bourdieu argues that an individual's 'taste is an acquired disposition' (Bourdieu, 1984: 466) but that, rather than it being acquired experientially over time, it is embedded within one's need to communicate identity and that this is informed, at an early age, by social and economic factors – factors that are in the control of the dominant class. Essentially, individuals *learn* the appropriate aesthetic disposition

required to associate themselves with their designated type and distance themselves from others. Their choice of music is just one facet of this much deeper phenomenon.

Taste is a practical mastery of distributions which makes it possible to sense or intuit what is likely (or unlikely) to befall — and therefore to befit — an individual occupying a given position in social space. It functions as a sort of social orientation, a 'sense of one's place', guiding the occupants of a given place in social space towards the social positions adjusted to their properties, and towards the practices or goods which befit the occupants of that position.

Bourdieu, 1984: 466

In this respect Cardew's assertion that Beethoven and Mozart are disliked because of social status rather than musical character makes sense and perhaps Cardew's predicament had more to do with this than is commonly assumed. His bourgeois background and relative inexperience in the more accessible musical forms precluded him access to the working classes 'programmed' not to respond to such music, yet his musical offerings lacking the required aesthetic demands of the 'music-lover' as Rowe puts it. Cardew had essentially excluded himself from both the 'high-brow' and the 'low-brow', and, without access to either camp, opportunity for making any sort of impact was restricted. The idiosyncratic nature of his music would corroborate this theory – sitting uneasily outside accepted and pre-existing cultures of the day, not exactly pop music, not exactly folk, not quite art music.

The discussion with Adrian Jack perhaps again illuminates Cardew's 'fatal' reluctance to engage with wider Marxist perspectives of the time (Tilbury, 2008: 118), and his growing relationship with the Party at this point would have increasingly distanced him from such literature and thinking. Sartre had been considering the role of the arts in politics, with particular respect to literature, twenty years previously. In *What is Literature?* Sartre presents the case for writers to engage with the structures and contradictions of society arguing that the 'creative unity' of an artist's work can 'offer solutions' to the pressing societal problems of the day (Sartre, 1949: 296):

There is no guarantee that literature is immortal. Its chance today, its only chance, is the chance of Europe, of socialism, of democracy, and of peace. We must play it. If we writers lose it, too bad for us. But also, too bad for society.

Sartre, 1949: 296–7

This particular text forms the starting point for Adorno's more pertinent discussion on whether Sartre's ideal of a world of artists committed to art as a vehicle for social change is at all possible, noting that even Sartre himself 'confessed that he expects no real changes in the world from literature' (Adorno, 1992: 78). Adorno discusses the concept of 'committed art' against his ongoing preoccupation with the autonomy of art, essentially arguing that the dialectical relationship between the two undermines Sartre's propositions. Particularly relevant to Cardew's situation is the distinction Adorno makes between committed art and art that merely communicates the creator's position:

'Commitment' should be distinguished from 'tendency': Committed art in the proper sense is not intended to generate ameliorative measures, legislative acts or practical institutions – like earlier propagandist (tendency) plays against syphilis, duels, abortion laws or borstals – but to work at the level of fundamental attitudes. For Sartre, its task is to awaken the free choice of the agent, that makes authentic existence possible at all, as opposed to the neutrality of the spectator.

Adorno, 1992: 78

In relation to this, Cardew's music of this period is tendentious rather than committed: music *about* the various causes and struggles he wished to communicate with the 'spectators' rather than tackling, through music, the fundamental attitudes of society. Not that Adorno would have provided Cardew with the answer had he engaged with such texts: Adorno goes on to suggest that truly committed art negates the creator's ability to control the influence it might have: 'what gives commitment its aesthetic advantage over tendentiousness also renders the content to which the artist commits himself inherently ambiguous' (ibid).

The condemnation of Cardew's later music is not universal. Composer and pianist Barry Russell, of the Cornelius Cardew Ensemble, regularly performs the piano works in concerts and I asked him for his perspective during my 2008 interview with him. Russell considers the *Piano Albums* 'perfect little piano miniatures', and, in keeping with Adrian Jack's sentiments, Russell has no qualms about divorcing the musical qualities from the political context.

TH: You're one of the few people who would consider programming Cardew's later piano works in a concert nowadays, and they are often ridiculed. How successful do you consider that music to be?

BR: In terms of what he was trying to make it do, only if you were totally in sympathy with what he was saying could it speak to you as a piece of political music making. That being said, they are beautifully pianistic, they're lovely to play, if you get beyond the politics. I manage to get beyond the fact that composers are anguishing over countesses which I'm told is vital I understand – so what? Let's just listen to the music. It might be being unfair to Cardew, perhaps he wanted you to feel certain things, as many other composers might have wanted you to. At the end of the day it's an arrangement of pitches and rhythms. As a pianist it's fabulous to play, it lies under the fingers, it's 'grateful pianism' as they say, and then the way those pitches and rhythms affect the listener. I'm glad to say we've only had good responses when we've programmed them ... If it was just about the political message it would be a lesser music than it is.

In addition, older recordings, of the piano music in particular, have been recently reissued on CD (see discography). Whether the interest in these recordings is historical, aesthetic or, as I suspect, a combination of the two is difficult to gauge, but there is some demand for access to the material.

While the music itself, with or without its political context, might be considered fair game for critical debate, the argument as to the value of this music solely in terms of its contribution to the concert repertoire is missing the point. Cardew's political music could, of course, be considered a minor musical curiosity – the works of a well-intentioned but misguided composer. The suggestion here, however, is that these pieces represent an important body of work in terms of what drives them: that is, a notion of music as a cultural force for good, music that informs and influences the world rather than decorates it, music that exists because it contributes to and is driven by 'the people'

rather than 'the system'. Tilbury describes Cardew's final decade as striving towards writing a music that challenges the dominant ideology and serves a particular cause, commenting that 'it is part of the tragedy of his death that, in the opinion of many, he was on the brink of achieving a valid and meaningful result' (Tilbury, 1983:10).

The conclusion here is that Cardew set in motion experiments that remained incomplete at the time of his death. Tilbury's words also suggest that the position Cardew found himself in was not an absolute – that there is potential for 'a valid and meaningful result', that there is a solution to how one's music might complement one's world view. In that respect Cardew's political music is less a minor curiosity and more an important starting point, an 'unavoidable reference' (Aharonián, 2001: 15), or a 'moral force' (Feldman, 1967: 42) for continued experimentation, tentative or otherwise.

The avant-garde revisited

In his article *Moving in Decency*, Timothy D. Taylor makes this assessment of Cardew's piano and voice arrangement of *Soon* (fig. 6.6):

The music illustrates clearly Cardew's reliance upon many of the formal aesthetic values of contemporary 'academic' music that Cardew was committed to leaving, especially complexity and virtuosity. What untrained (i.e., proletarian) or even amateur musician could make sense of this song? The metre changes almost every bar. Fermata break up the flow. The key (D flat major) would be difficult for amateurs to read. And the second phrase is a contrapuntal inversion of the first. The complexity of this piece forces a consideration of its intended performers and audience. The difficulty of the music plus the recurring first person would seem to indicate a trained musician.

Taylor, 1998: 564

This assessment is clearly made from a western classical perspective – a number of folk traditions around the globe employ irregular metres and rhythmic quirks that would look equally complex in this sort of notated form. But the basic premise, that this music requires acquired musical skills, especially if learnt from the page, is undoubted. Tilbury

also identified the technically demanding nature of much of the later music in my 2003 interview with him:

JT: [It] can only be played by virtuosi. It can't be played by 'people', not even amateurs. You have to be a professional to play the *Thälmann Variations*.

SOON

$\text{♩} = 144$

Position No. 148 (Wide Range) 12 Staves

SOON THERE WILL BE A HIGH TIDE OF REVOLUTION IN OUR COUNTRY IN OUR

COUNTRY WHEN I SAY SOON THERE WILL BE A HIGH TIDE OF

REVOLUTION IN OUR COUNTRY IN OUR COUNTRY I DO NOT MEAN

Fig. 6.6: Cardew, *Soon* (1971), BMIC Collection.

This represents something of a conundrum. In repudiating his earlier works, including landmarks such as *The Great Learning* and *Treatise*, Cardew essentially eliminated one of the defining characteristics of his work to that point – the notion of the inclusion of, and the interactive equality between, trained and untrained musicians. It is not the case that Cardew wished to eliminate the notion of integration entirely and the songs were intended for community singing – the score for *Soon* indicates that the bars containing the problematic fermata be omitted in cases of community singing, and the inclusion of chord symbols suggest the intention of including flexible combinations of vamping, perhaps amateur, musicians. In this sense Cardew was still committed to uniting people through social music making opportunities but with a superficiality that a score such as *The Great Learning* challenged at a more complex level.

Taylor goes on to question Cardew's integrity in relation to this conundrum:

From a strict revolutionary standpoint, seemingly the *only* alternative to bourgeois art is to give up capitalist conceptions of the individual self and of 'art' and to turn the production of music from a professional to a community activity. Cardew, however talks frequently of 'working musicians' – those who are paid for their services – so it is clear that he does not think that all music-making should be amateur.

Taylor, 1998: 570

The Scratch Orchestra had, of course, been based on the notion of turning the 'production of music from a professional to a community activity'. It is important at this juncture, however, to remember the context of Cardew's mission, and it is exactly the 'revolutionary' aspect of that context that might provide the answer for this apparent paradox. The mission was not simply to find a role for one's music within a communist context, but finding a role for one's music within a *revolutionary* communist context. Revolution was central to the party's agenda, was indeed part of the Zeitgeist of left-wing political activity, and this would inevitably colour judgment and decisions on a range of issues. Most significantly, Cardew and the Party were dedicated to an act of

revolution in the relative short term, a time-span that perhaps relied on the most efficient vehicles for achieving its aims.

With hindsight it is easy to view the advantages of a long-term strategy, *The Great Learning* providing an effective case study. Any social uprising relies on the uniting of the people or a group of people and the development of a collective responsibility for the action being taken. *The Great Learning* provides a model of a piece of music built around this very notion of collective responsibility. Many of the modes of performance are reliant on the way individuals relate to each other and listen to each other, a characteristic that proves pertinent to those Scratch members involved in its performances. Parsons argues that 'a work such as *The Great Learning* is inherently political in the way it breaks down traditional hierarchical structures and explores new musical and social processes' (Parsons, in Prévost, 2006: xv).

A rolling out of this approach through a growing repertoire of such inclusive works would arguably have a greater long-term impact on the people than the approach to community singing that a score such as *Soon* affords. If Cardew was searching for a music that supported his world view he needed to have looked no further than the very music he was repudiating. What better way to attack the bourgeois status of the composer than by relinquishing elements of the composer's power to the performers (as in *Octet '61*, the *Four Works*, the *Schooltime Compositions* or *Treatise*)? I put this idea to Tilbury in my 2003 interview who suggests that this opinion is attested by others.

TH: In many respects a piece like *The Great Learning* has far more potential both politically and socially than the later songs. To what extent did Cardew get it wrong?

JT: It's funny you should bring that up now because this morning I was reading a letter which Stefan Szczelkun⁷ wrote to him in 1977 after a concert at St. Pancras town hall. He said exactly what you've said now almost word for word – that the earlier works are more politically viable than the later works, which he said didn't inspire any

⁷ Szczelkun is a former Scratch Orchestra member who remains committed to the notion of artistic collectives.

revolutionary spirit. I found them, in a way, beautiful but that's not the point. He says towards the end of the letter, don't reject the Scratch. You mentioned in particular *The Great Learning*, these actual modes of playing where you relate to each other, you listen to each other. It's a collective: it's where the individual has extreme responsibility but to the whole. In a way it's a perfect balance between individual and collective responsibility – he gets it absolutely right and it's very difficult to do that.

Taylor ultimately suggests a deep chasm between Cardew's early and late work and argues that the later music is entirely redundant in achieving its aims:

Cardew thus found himself in an ironic situation. Much of his compositional career was invested in freeing the performer from the shackles of conventional notation as he saw it and encouraging everyone to make music. But his political music, in its proselytizing, actually denies the audience the chance to participate unless they are already converted to his message; and in that case no new belief or activity is produced – he is merely reinforcing what his listeners already believe.

Taylor, 1998: 573

Perhaps within the context of the heady sense of impending revolution, the focus on piano miniatures and community sing-songs is little more than evidence of the urgency for this, or any, material – the difference in the time invested in the creation of scores such as *The Great Learning* or *Treatise* and an arrangement of a Chinese protest song speaks for itself. When time is precious the lowest common denominator is perhaps sufficient. Given more time, and perhaps a more realistic assessment of the strength of the system the party were intending to deconstruct, a longer strategic view could have taken hold. Parsons argues that Cardew's repudiation of *The Great Learning* specifically was 'largely external to the music' (Parsons, in Prévost, 2006: xv) and more a result of Ezra Pound's translation of the original Confucian text (which, of course, Cardew had partly replaced by his own for the 1972 Proms performance). There is no reason, then, why Cardew could not have worked to reconcile his political strategy with the inclusive and participatory elements of the earlier works in a bid to achieve a stronger social cohesion alongside a developed understanding of, and sympathy with, the Marxist

ideology – and all through the power of musical activity.⁸ This could well represent the ‘valid and meaningful result’ of which Tilbury talks (Tilbury, 1982a: 12 & Tilbury, 1983: 10). As has already been noted, the inclusion of guitar chords and instrumental extensions indicates a wish for the music to take on a life beyond simply what is on the page. An intertwining of Cardew’s political dimension with opportunities to engage with other people in an actual experience of musical and social liberation is a logical conclusion.

The proposition that Cardew would have returned to earlier forms, or at least re-appraised the value of certain elements of that earlier work, was warmed to by many of his associates in my conversations with them. There is also some additional anecdotal evidence that Cardew was considering working once again with AMM, improvisation being a musical conceit that Cardew had repudiated, and one to which Keith Rowe would himself return. Cardew’s early death, however, leaves only speculation.

Death of a Dissident

Cardew died on 13th December 1981 in circumstances often described as suspicious. The exact turn of events is sketchy, and contributes only marginally to the discussion here, but is not without note.⁹ Cardew was killed by a hit and run driver near his home in the East End of London. The driver was never traced. Given the tensions surrounding Cardew’s politics, and the ongoing sense of drama and colour within his lifetime, it is perhaps inevitable that conspiracy theories might follow. But in this instance there is some basis for such a debate. Both Tilbury and Parsons, for instance, have aired their

⁸ This strategy also resonates with Brecht’s theory of ‘epic theatre’, in which he promotes the ‘refunctioning’ of theatre as a tool for social change as an alternative to repudiation. See Brecht & Willett (1964: 33–42) and Mumford (2009: 76–84).

⁹ See Tilbury, 2008: 1015–26 for the most comprehensive collation of sources and comment relating to these events.

suspicious of the lack of will on behalf of the police to investigate and I asked them about these in my interviews.

TH: Cardew's death: accident or conspiracy?

MP: I suppose when I think about it, it seems very likely that he was murdered. I know from what John [Tilbury] has told me that Sheila, his partner, tried to find more information from the police and came up against a blank wall. They just refused to answer questions, so it seems quite plausible that there was some sort of police cover-up. Maybe he was killed by somebody in some far-right party and the police assisted or colluded or failed to investigate. I have no inside knowledge or firm evidence. It just seems a plausible hypothesis. I suppose one day somebody will investigate that. It remains an open question.

Tilbury accepts that the jury is out, but that suspicions run deeper than simply a conveniently romantic end to a good story:

TH: Was his death an accident or was he murdered?

JT: They were suspicious circumstances. And he could have been assassinated. But on the other hand it could have been an accident. The roads were very icy, somebody may have been joyriding. I think the car had been stolen anyway, it was abandoned immediately afterwards. He was hit and they ran away and that was the end of it. But probably the evidence in the other direction, that he was assassinated, was stronger. The fact that the police weren't forthcoming, the car was stolen, they never found the people. The police were extremely unhelpful, so was the hospital. All kinds of little things, that I'll probably bring out more fully in the book, suggest that it was a political assassination. For example, the police in that area were well known racists – East London where the fascists were quite prominent – and he would have been considered the ultimate traitor to the white people. He would have been a number one target for being a traitor. There's other circumstantial evidence. I think it's an open verdict but more 60:40 in favour of assassination.

It seems that Cardew's political activity would certainly have drawn attention from far-right extremists. Rzewski is the most adamant of Cardew's associates:

I'm quite sure he was murdered and quite sure his murder was connected with his political activity. He went around sticking his nose into things that were really quite dangerous. He led demonstrations in the East End of London, in an area that was infested with Nazis. He was very prominent and visible.

Rzewski, in Varela 2004: 5

It is left to Skempton to balance this opinion. Although he notes that the notorious QC Michael Mansfield has made claims of government agents at work (Fox, 1992), he is more measured in his assessment, questioning the chosen mode of assassination.

TH: What are your thoughts on the circumstances that surround Cardew's death?

HS: I don't see it as a conspiracy and I think even John Tilbury would say that. I remember the weather of that time – it was quite horrendous. You had to walk in the road, you couldn't walk on the pavements. The first time I went out when the snow had fallen I fell over three times. It was treacherous. I wouldn't have been surprised if he'd been walking in the road and at night that would be a dangerous thing to do. A drunken driver who wouldn't have reported it? If somebody had deliberately run into him – it seems an extraordinary, and a rather unreliable, way of disposing of somebody. He's not the only musician to be knocked down, musicians being what they are ... I think an accident seems the most likely answer.

Whatever the actual cause of Cardew's demise we are left presented with a state of incompleteness. The process of writing a thesis such as this serves to exemplify the brevity of Cardew's life, the pace and energy implicit in the relatively short time-span, and the frustrations of investigating what Tilbury ultimately referred to in the title of Cardew's biography, 'a life unfinished'. It is easy, then, to eulogize on what might have been but in the case of assessing the legacy of Cardew, speculation is far from trivial. By the time of his death in 1981 Cardew had laid the foundation for a host of lines of enquiry, many of which lay unexplored. In attempting to assess and define the legacy of Cardew a discussion, in the first instance, of where he may have taken these lines is of some value.

Parsons spoke in my interview with him of 'currents set in motion' and specifically cites Cardew's influence on the improvisation scene in the UK, particularly in London.

TH: What do you consider to be Cardew's legacy?

MP: It wouldn't be in a body of work as one thinks of a legacy traditionally. It's more in a musical practice which is partly transmitted by oral tradition and partly through improvisation – one has to remember that Cardew was very involved with improvisation as well. That's as much part of his work as the notated scores, especially in the 1960s when he joined AMM. He got very involved in improvised music and that remained an important concern right through until the dissolution of the Scratch Orchestra, and then he turned his back on improvisation when he started writing the political music. But from about 1965–72 improvisation was a very important part of his practice. So part of the legacy would be the way that AMM, and through AMM, Cardew has influenced a whole generation of younger improvisers. There's a very active and flourishing improvising scene going on all over the country and particularly in London which is not part of the official musical scene and is not very well documented, but is never-the-less very active and vital, and I think that would have to count as part of what Cardew left through his own example.

Perhaps the underdog status of this scene would have appealed to Cardew and it is no surprise, then, that Parsons considers Cardew's return to AMM very likely. Parsons also corroborates with sentiments outlined earlier and suggests that Cardew would indeed have broadened his acceptance of compositional conceits and returned to aspects of his earlier work.

MP: I think he would have broadened out. He would somehow perhaps have integrated his earlier work into a more ongoing awareness of the breadth of musical possibilities. He was already considering an invitation to play again with AMM at the time of his death.

Parsons believes, however, that Cardew by was, by 1981, too far removed from the mainstream to have ever returned to his position within avant-garde concert culture. Equally, Parsons is adamant that Cardew's political stance would have remained unchanged.

MP: Certainly he would be doing something interesting and surprising, unpredictable. I don't think he would have joined the musical mainstream, he was too far gone for that. He wouldn't have renounced his political ideals although he might have changed the way in which he pursued them.

The barrier to Cardew changing the way in which he pursued his aims is perhaps represented by the 'fatal flaw' Tilbury identified in his relationship with the broader Marxist intellectual literature of the age. Although Parsons remains committed to exploring some of these 'currents set in motion' he is particularly critical of Cardew's Marxist credentials. He accuses Cardew of an uncritical over-reliance on a Maoist interpretation of Marxism that ignores other theories and philosophies of western Marxism, most notably the Frankfurt School, symptomatic of the Party he had chosen to associate with. Parsons describes Cardew writings as 'schematic, anachronistic and

oversimplified', and that they contain 'errors, distortions and misconceptions, some of which he acknowledged' (Parsons in Prévost, 2006: xv-xxvi):

In his enthusiasm for revolutionary change, he ignored the significance of Western Marxist theory in the domain of culture and politics ... His refusal to take account of theoretical work of this kind suggests that he chose to regard Marxism as a fixed and self-justifying doctrine, rather than as a developing tradition of argument and analysis, subject like any other to critical examination and renewal. Cardew's indiscriminate repudiation in the 1970s of avant-garde and experimental music, including his own, can be seen as a direct result of these theoretical limitations.

Parsons in Prévost, 2006: xiv

Parsons appears to be hinting here that should Cardew have discovered alternative routes into a Marxist world view his repudiation of the avant-garde might never have happened. Rzewski, a close personal friend of Cardew, is more vociferous in his assessment of the Party's impact on Cardew. I asked Rzewski at a composer's forum at Birmingham Conservatoire in 2009 for his opinion on Cardew's Marxist stance. Rzewski expressed his sadness at 'the mind of my dear friend being poisoned'.

Tilbury also suggests the possibility of Cardew realizing the contradictions inherent in his repudiation of earlier forms though agrees with Parsons that a significant political shift was not an option. Tilbury also notes that Cardew recognized the importance and power of the political song and would have continued in this vein despite his detractors.

TH: Do you think there would have been another big shift?

JT: No. What could the shift have been? A born-again Christian! I don't think politically he could have [changed]. Musically, that's too difficult to speculate. One can come up with all kinds of feasible ideas probably about finding ways in which some of the earlier modes of music making could be politically viable and useful. On the other hand a really great political song like *The United Front Song* – there are no substitutes for those. They are fantastic for mass singing. I think if he could have come up with something like that ... What he needed to do was find a better lyricist! He was stuck with all those terrible lyrics which his party comrades had come up with. He needed somebody like Brecht who can encapsulate the idea poetically and with power. That would have been a step in the right direction.

One aspect on which there is unanimous agreement is Cardew's continuing involvement with some form of music making. Perhaps surprisingly, given the ferocity of his

commitment to political activism, Cardew's role as a musician and composer does not come into question, Skempton suggesting that he was simply 'too much of a musician to give up music'. This underlies a significant facet of Cardew's character. Skempton expands with reference, once more, to the notion of integrity.

HS: What impressed me was that [Cardew] was identified with his music. Every cell was musical. He once said, introducing a performance of *Treatise*, that the composer is his music. There's a complete integrity. The man identified with the music.

Parsons concurs that Cardew was a 'natural musician' and would have continued to be one. He also notes that Cardew was acutely aware of the power of music as an expressive tool. Parsons suspects he would have continued with his experiments until an appropriate role for his musical abilities was found.

TH: Some think Cardew may have worked his way out of music altogether, realizing he wasn't going to achieve his political aims through the use of music.

MP: Well, that was a conflict for him at the time. But then the fact that he was such a natural musician – it would have been a sort of self denial if he'd not had some outlet for his musical abilities. And the fact that he realized that music could be a very powerful means of expression of those ideas. I don't think he would have renounced it, I think he would have just found a new role for it. It's difficult to imagine him not being involved in music in some way. And after all, there are plenty of ways one could explore these directions further. There's a great need for that. Maybe he would have become involved in music for young people, for deprived people, youth clubs, prisons, immigrant communities, asylum seekers.

Tilbury, however, is of the opinion that Cardew would have remained focussed on the global issues rather than channelling his energies into smaller, shorter term causes.

TH: Other people have suggested he may have spent more time working with smaller and shorter-term causes, rather than the bigger picture.

JT: No. I think he was very much the big picture. That's what they do in America: they've given up on politics basically, they just have lobbies: Fidel, single black women, begging for the rich to help. He wouldn't have got involved in that. Not at all. Sometimes the ongoing party agenda can be concerned with this rather than that – you don't take on everything at the same time – but the agenda is still the same, the strategy is still the same, which is to overthrow the system. He wouldn't have settled for anything less than that.

Ultimately, Tilbury makes reference to words spoken by Rzewski in his assessment of the direction Cardew would have taken:

JT: [Rzewski says] that there's no way we can say what Cornelius would have been doing, but what we can say is that it would be absolutely astonishing to us and it would be something we could never have conceived of. I think he's absolutely right.

Towards a Definition of 'Cardewism'

This thesis has investigated and scrutinized the various incarnations of Cardew and his numerous formative experiences. Through this I have demonstrated the diversity of Cardew's activities during his professional life. I have identified the key events, decisions, discussions and contradictions that shaped Cardew's musical and political direction. But a degree of interpretation of these facts and events is necessary before any judgment as to the impact of his legacy can be made. This chapter, then, aims to draw together the disparate strands with a view to offering a more holistic understanding of what might be considered to be a 'Cardew aesthetic'.

The tendency with any attempt to make sense of a body of work as diverse, and at times contradictory, as Cardew's is perhaps to over-simplify. There is an inclination to hone in on specific works or qualities, usually those that might initially appear defining or of high status, and assume these may be representative of the bigger picture – for example, Cardew the founder of the Scratch Orchestra; Cardew the composer who exploited graphic notation; Cardew the composer who repudiated the avant-garde. Each of these is significant and contributory, but each is equally a misleading example of the whole portrait. Existing perceptions of Cardew's legacy often rely on such over-simplifications, however, and this chapter seeks to identify and challenge these.

I shall be coining the terms 'Cardewism' and 'Cardewist' as catch-all terms to represent all forms of music-making, and those committed to such music-making, that would appear to adhere to what I aim to demonstrate is the 'essence' of a Cardew aesthetic –

that is, the consistent qualities and characteristics that bind *all* of Cardew's work. In a bid to lend these nebulous ideas a degree of pragmatism for use in chapter eight I shall conclude this chapter with my own 'Cardewist Manifesto' – an outline of the basic tenets to which any committed Cardewist might wish to subscribe.

A lack of definition

The first problem in attempting to determine Cardew's legacy is one of precedent. The traditional model, for instance, may define a composer through a series of compositional tendencies. Cardew was an unusual composer in his lack of consistently defining compositional qualities. There are elements of stylistic consistency within certain facets of Cardew music – his more Cage-informed works of the early–mid 1960s sit together comfortably, as do many of the later political instrumental pieces – though these stylistic strands seemingly have little to do with each other. Add to this the Boulez-informed early work and the pop songs composed for the People's Liberation Music and the catalogue may suggest a collective rather than an individual composer. Cardew's legacy cannot therefore be defined in conventional stylistic terms.

Even when examining a single manifestation of Cardew's creative work there is a lack of definition and identity residing in any analysis of the sonic properties alone, as the score is open to such wide interpretation. *Octet '61 for Jasper Johns* readily demonstrates this. The concept of 'identity' is not entirely dismissed by Cardew. This is the piece with the symbol '7' attached to the instruction 'out, away: something completely different'. This, for Cardew, is the identity of the work:

The simple identity of the piece is given for all by the sign '7': the piece will be remembered (if at all) as 'the piece where something peculiar happens in the middle.

Cardew, 1961d: performance notes

To illustrate, I will make reference to two specific realizations of this work. Firstly, a studio recording by cellist Anton Lukoszevieze of the ensemble Apartment House¹, released on CD by Matchless Recordings in 2001. Lukoszevieze has interpreted the score as a piece for multi-tracked solo cello employing the full gamut of extended string techniques and exploring the possibilities in simultaneously interpreting individual graphics. Lukoszevieze writes in the CD sleeve notes:

I have taken Cardew's notation, realized it and doused it with my own spontaneity and improvisatory consciousness, adopting the use of a transistor radio at one point, in an attempt to get to what I perceive to be at the heart of the matter.

Lukoszevieze, 2001: sleeve notes

The result, seven minutes in length, is a brief but intense journey through the world of extended cello technique. Conventional playing techniques are almost consciously avoided, or at least form only part of the backdrop rather than the focus, perhaps representative of the way Cardew corrupts conventional notation in the score. The sonic palette is diverse but constrained by the homogenous sound source that helps to maintain unity.

The second example is one of a series of realizations of the score by the Cornelius Cardew Ensemble² from a concert given at University College Bretton Hall in 1997. The ensemble have regularly used *Octet '61* as a concert opener – a kind of fanfare or overture – a decision explained by Cardew Ensemble founder Jos Zwaanenburg:

We find the piece representative of many of Cardew's underlying principles and the way we operate, the principles upon which the ensemble is founded. We like to make that statement immediately to an audience and build the rest of the concert around those principles.

Zwaanenburg, 2003: personal communication

¹ This group are to be discussed more fully in the following chapter.

² This group will also be discussed more fully in the following chapter.

The duration of this interpretation is similar to Lukoszevieze's at just under six minutes but, by comparison, the sound world of this realization is much extended – soprano voice, piano, percussion (mostly centred around the marimba), flute with electronics, trumpet and cello. Again, many instrumentally idiosyncratic extended techniques are employed, though there is a stronger balance here with conventionally expressive playing. The 'something peculiar' happening in the middle of the performance is the singer leaving the concert hall while her disembodied radio-miked voice remains. The corresponding act in the Lukoszevieze version is not immediately obvious to the listener, though Lukoszevieze revealed in later discussions that this is where the transistor radio is deployed. Listening 'blind' to these two recordings would provide little evidence of a compositional connection, though a listener would, paradoxically, connect the two stylistically. This, it would seem, is much more to do with the performers and the mode of performance than the score itself and shall be dealt with later.

The crucial point is that despite the sonic inconsistencies both performances display at least an intended integrity to producing a justified and honest realization of the score. In the case of Lukoszevieze he is keen to get to 'the heart of the matter'. Zwaanenburg makes reference to the 'underlying principles' of the work. These comments suggest that neither interpretation relies on a complacent surface-level reading of the score, and both artists would perhaps wish to claim themselves 'Cardewists' of some description.

There could be any number of alternative and varied interpretations of *Octet '61*. Over the course of this research I have experienced, either as a listener or performer, versions for solo piano, versions for large ensemble, versions for found sounds and a workshopped version devised by four punk bands where the 'something peculiar' happening in the middle was a two-minute silence. This demonstrates that the work cannot be defined, or even distinguished, by the sonic properties of the performance

alone. Music as interpretatively indeterminate as this cannot possess a definitive sonic personality. Cardew attempts to force a personality onto the piece with the 'out, away' sign and the 'something peculiar happens in the middle' statement, but as this could be either a two minute silence or the singer leaving the room it is not a musically concrete characteristic. *Octet '61* is, of course, just one piece from the catalogue. Many other scores possess the same indeterminate characteristics to a greater or lesser extent, while others indicate timbral shifts or specific technique to an almost absurd degree (for instance *February Pieces*, composed contemporaneously with *Octet '61*). Cardew, then, cannot be defined by any specific sonic universe.

The indeterminate quality of such works is, of course, the central conceit. But the vehicles with which Cardew achieves these levels of indeterminacy – that is, the modes and techniques of scoring – also characterize the pieces. Of all the attributes found in Cardew's scores it is the use of visually inspiring or visually perverse graphics that tend to be seized upon when appraising his compositional stance: they are, after all, one of the more striking features of the physical sources we have to work from. It is no surprise, then, that Cardew's inclusion in a recent anthology of scores intended for study at GCSE took the form of two pages from *Treatise* (Winterson, 2002: 80–82)³ What better introduction to the world of Cardew? The more general articles about and references to Cardew in the non-academic press have also naturally illustrated the text with reproductions of *Treatise*, or if space is limited, details from *Octet '61* (see, for example, Cowley, 2001: 29 and Harris, 2004: 2). Concert publicity and programmes follow suit. It was perhaps a conscious decision to avoid this cliché with the recent publication of Copula Press' *Cornelius Cardew: A Reader* and Tilbury's biography of Cardew, which instead both feature the same image of Cardew himself. The wider portrayal of Cardew

³ *Treatise* was also used as an exemplar of experimental music in my own GCSE *Composition Course* (Russell & Harris, 2004: 18)

perhaps relies disproportionately on his 'signature' graphics and this perhaps warps the wider understanding of Cardew's legacy.

The inherent problem with this over-reliance on the indeterminate scores is the contradictions in Cardew's own dealings with them. There is no doubt that Cardew channelled much energy into devising and exploring methods of scoring that actively engaged the performer in new ways of interacting with a composer's intentions. Informed predominantly by Cage, he attempted to release direct control of the sound from the composer – a concept that directly swims against the tide of what is traditionally considered to be the composer's role. Additionally, Cardew wished to challenge the status quo between composer and performer, challenge the artificial barriers that had grown between improvisatory musicianship and the slavish practice of maintaining fidelity to a composer's text. The methods employed in *Octet '61*, *Four Works*, *Treatise*, *Schooltime Compositions* and *The Great Learning* are central to this campaign. But, as also identified in the preceding chapters, Cardew's emerging ideological awareness led him to becoming equally critical of these approaches. He would ultimately claim that *Treatise* was the embodiment of flawed ideals and that, rather than removing barriers, it actually prevents the establishment of effective communication between the musicians and the audience, the performers finding themselves too preoccupied with the task of interacting with the score. In addition, and more fundamentally, the notion of creating an aesthetic artefact for the delectation of a bourgeois audience, no matter how many barriers it attempts to remove, no longer sat comfortably with his political quest. An article in 1976 stated this position:

I was engaged throughout the 1960s in writing – I should say drawing – and performing so-called 'graphic music'. I also wrote articles which contributed to the speculation that grew up around the genre (on which academics and students are still feeding) and attempted to provide it with theoretical justification or at least interest. Then in 1971 the ripples of a new revolutionary political movement upset this fragile coracle (as far as I was concerned) and tipped me into the maelstrom of the class struggle ... *Treatise* [is] a particularly striking outbreak of what I diagnosed as a disease of notation, namely the

tendency for musical notations to become aesthetic objects in their own right. Today such problems have been largely displaced by more pressing ones, such as how to produce and distribute music that serves the needs of the growing revolutionary movement.

Cardew, 1976a: 247

This should not necessarily detract from any value we may find in the graphically enhanced scores, but in attempting to define the legacy of Cardew, this dismissal is of equal importance to his preoccupation with such techniques throughout the 1960s.

Speculations were made in the preceding chapter of the possibility that Cardew may eventually have returned to elements of indeterminate and graphic technique within the context of the class struggle, but in dealing with the existing body of work it is a fact that up until the time of his death he had eschewed these methods for almost a decade. By this measure alone indeterminacy and graphic scores can only be a contributory rather than a defining characteristic of Cardew's legacy.

Toy Pianos and Squiggly Theremins: Cardew and the Canon

In a short article entitled 'Time for a little experiment' published in *The Guardian* in late 2002, John L. Walters wrote that 'English experimental music has been simmering away quietly for more than three decades' (Walters, 2002: 24). In the article Walters reviews three new CD releases under the banner of 'experimental music' and goes on to exemplify the term 'experimental' as a music that 'tended to involve non-musicians and professional players working together, a more democratic relationship with the audience and messy happenstance' (ibid). One CD, by the Brazilian Jair Oliveira, includes a track 'featuring a toy piano and a squiggly theremin'. Another track, *Minuto de Selencio*, consists of a minute's silence. For Walters this is evidence enough that 'the spirit of composers such as Cage and Cardew lives on' (ibid).

The reductionism to which experimental music is exposed here is partly a result of the brevity required for such a newspaper article, though it does perhaps provide an example of what the contemporary music consumer might understand by the term 'experimental music': a reduction of the 'spirit' of Cardew (and Cage) to a combination of toy pianos, squiggly theremins, a touch of democracy and serendipity.

Almost 30 years previously Michael Parsons was asked to consider the term 'experimental music' in an interview for Contact:

I prefer to regard it as an attitude rather than a particular type of music. When you make an experiment, the literal meaning is that you're trying to find something out ... You make an experiment in order to get some new information about the situation.

Parsons, 1974: 21

In my own 2003 interview with Parsons the question of the experimental label was revisited. Parsons still warms to the idea of it being an attitude rather than a 'type', and is quick to stress his misgivings of assigning labels at all. Parsons still identifies himself as an 'experimental composer', justifying the tag with a number of assumed characteristics of that label:

TH: Do you still consider yourself to be an experimental composer?

MP: Well, I certainly subscribe to a lot of the ideas. I'm not really interested in labelling and pigeon-holing in that sense, but if you ask what the kind of essential characteristics of experimental mean, I would point to ideas like openness, indeterminacy and involving the performer; not necessarily being completely in control of the sound result; being aware of the difference between what the composer proposes and what actually turns out in the live performance. All of those things I'm still interested in.

What is intriguing about this response is that rather than outlining an attitude or a basic set of values this would appear to represent, with a certain clarity, an understanding of characteristics that experimental music *should* contain – a sort of cementing of tangible qualities that 'make' the music experimental.

This is perhaps a symptom of the western musicological tradition. The last ten years has seen something of a climate change with regard to the wider acknowledgment of Cardew and the British experimental movement, a change dramatic enough to have continually reshaped the backbone of this project. The change is partly due to the emerging wealth of information made available electronically, but more fundamentally a result of the broadening historical perspective. Perhaps only the last decade has provided an appropriate distance from the object for it to be viewed in relation to its cause and effects. 1999 saw the 30th anniversary of the Scratch Orchestra; 2001 saw the 20th anniversary of Cardew's death; 2006, the anniversary of his 70th birthday; 2008, the long awaited publication of Tilbury's biography of Cardew. All such occasions have been marked with Cardew-related events - symposiums, discussions, workshops, retrospective-style or portrait concerts (which in some cases offer anything but a portrait by inexplicably chopping off the last 10 years). *The Wire* published its first detailed article on Cardew in 2001, a sort of coming of age in the more commercial music press. The article makes direct reference to 'the future preservation of his memory' (Cowley, 2001: 31), citing Tilbury's forthcoming biography and a work in progress by Virginia Anderson as the centrepieces of this. In addition there is a growing catalogue of recorded materials including the work of Apartment House, Tilbury and Frederic Rzewski alongside re-issues of recordings made by the Scratch Orchestra, AMM, People's Liberation Music and Cardew himself. The world of academe, including this project, further bolsters the information base with a re-emergence of Cardew and experimental music investigation that lay dormant throughout much of the 1980s and 90s.

The crucial point to the discussion here is that Cardew is therefore gradually being subsumed into the historical knowledge base and this presents a number of problems with regard to identifying his legacy or a Cardew aesthetic.

It is an accepted norm of the Western historical tradition to label, order and categorize as a means of making some sort of sense of our heritage. This is no more apparent than in the world of music where the notions of genre and the musical canon help to order not only our understanding of music, but also our libraries, record shops, curricula, examinations and textbooks. The concept of the canon and the processes of canon formation are not, however, simply defined. Citron, in *Gender and the Musical Canon*, identifies two canonic strands, disciplinary and repertorial, that 'interact in flexible and fluid ways' (Citron, 2000: 23) noting, for instance, that the 'disciplinary' canon of preparing editions of manuscripts contributes to the 'repertory' canon of early music. One can equate this with the way Cardew's works have established their place in the repertory canon through their growing reference within musicological circles. Randel (1992) complicates this by suggesting another two key strands: notated music, that is, mostly Western art music studied by musicologists and 'everything else', studied by ethnomusicologists (Randel, 1992: 11–12).

Bergeron and Bohlman (1992) bring together a collection of essays that discuss and challenge notions of canonization resulting in an informed assessment of the phenomenon:

The concept of canon as commonly understood in musicology suggests both an object and the act of determining what that object is. Musicology maintains 'music' as its object, but the different disciplines of musicology come to understand what music is in different ways.

Bohlman, 1992: 201

This is in keeping with Citron's assertion that discipline informs repertory. As for who is responsible for maintaining the canon, Bohlman talks of the 'agents' of canonization: musicologists, institutions, performers, audiences, promoters and the culture created by them.

These agents, in essence, canonize by deciding what will enter canons and by undertaking the representation of canons as text. Just as there was a certain orderliness in the stages necessary for canon formation, so too do we witness a wide array of quite specific agent types – musicologists and significant others – who participate in the canonizing process. From a social-scientific perspective I might even suggest that one way of understanding the field is to interpret it as a community of agents who discipline musicology in such a way as to make a community life orderly and functional.

Bohlman, 1992: 205

Citron concurs that the formation of canons is multi-faceted and also emphasizes the chrono-historical nature of the phenomenon:

Canon formation is not controlled by any one individual or organization, nor does it take place at any one historical moment. Rather, the process of the formation of a canon, whether a repertoire or a disciplinary paradigm, involves a lengthy historical process that engages many cultural variables.

Citron, 2000: 19

The problems Cardew faces with regard to the process of canonization have their roots in the fragmentation of music in the 20th century. Morgan notes that up to this time the Western musical canon assumed a 'proper mode of musical conduct' that gave art music a 'common core, despite its highly unstable and developmental history' (Morgan, 1992: 45):

Underneath the momentarily transient qualities of its variegated surfaces, Western music was considered to preserve a more permanent substructure; despite all stylistic heterogeneity, it was based upon an enduring structural foundation. It had, in short, a grammar ... Although these principles evolved, they did so sufficiently slowly – not unlike those of the grammar of a verbal language – to preserve their underlying integrity.

Morgan, 1992: 45

Morgan goes on to describe how the 'unprecedented scope' of the 20th century challenged this core, firstly through the dominance of atonality, then through references to Busoni, Russolo and others, and ultimately to Cage, who Morgan identifies as the central character in this story. Morgan notes that the diverging range of repertoires is overshadowed by the emergence of a 'range of aesthetic (not to mention social and

political) assumptions this repertory embraces (ibid: 56). The consequence of this disintegration of the dominant 'grammar' is an unravelling of the canon:

Contemporary music reflects historical changes of such overwhelming proportion that we are only beginning to be aware of their implications for such matters as our canonic assumptions. Since these assumptions were in the past firmly tied to a linguistic base, the uprooting of that base has had profound consequences.

Morgan, 1992: 56

Despite the acknowledged disintegration of the canon Morgan is rather conservative in his proposal for the future. He argues that an attempt to dismiss the centrality of the canon is 'self destructive' and that accommodating this inheritance is 'the most realistic response' (ibid: 62):

What is required, then, is not one amorphous, all encompassing canon but a set of multiple canons that, taken individually, are relatively precise in delineation. Of course, such canons would frequently work at cross-purposes with one another; but they would also, and one hopes equally frequently, intersect in complex and fruitful ways. While this arrangement would allow for alternative canonic models for alternative subcultures, it would preserve the core of the notion of canonic authority.

Morgan, 1992: 61

This, perhaps, represents the tenacity that continues to exist for the maintenance of a canonic culture, the strength of the phenomenon being something various commentators seem to agree on. Bohlman asserts that canonicity 'seems to possess a certain immanent power – an imperative and a concomitant ability to ascribe law and order to music – that yields discipline or, better, the discipline' (Bohlman, 1992b: 201). Citron agrees, adding that the power is defined by the canon's capacity for self-perpetuation: 'Like other powerful phenomena, canons have generated internal categories that articulate their behaviour' (Citron 2000: 17) resulting is an ability to 'simultaneously reflect, instigate and perpetuate value systems. They encode ideologies that are further legitimated through being canonized' (ibid: 19).

The relevance of this discussion to Cardew's historical placement is in the value systems encoded within the canon, Citron noting that canon formation 'exerts great power in shaping and perpetuating attitudes toward valuation and hence what gets enshrined as masterpieces' (ibid: 193). Bohlman tackles this characteristic by demonstrating how the emergence of ethnomusicology has exposed the faults of the canonizing process:

Modern ethnomusicology has, then, challenged the very processes of canonization, which it believed hammered a wedge between our music and the Other's. These were the processes of canonization that permitted scholars to be comfortable simply with 'non-Western' music as an object of study, These were the processes of canonization that underscored a methodology that rendered musics in other cultures as normative Western texts. These were the processes of canonization that relied on an analysis that might yield a misreading of other musics and that too often ignored those meanings that were extrinsic to the Western canon. And finally, it was precisely these processes of canonization that emphasized a system of values that had grown from the canon formed by Western cultural history.

Bohlman, 1992a: 133

Bolman is here suggesting Western cultural imperialism and it is perhaps in this respect that Cardew and the traditional notion of the Western classical canon diverge. Citron states that 'the values encoded in a canon affirm a particular cultural group or groups and are not necessarily meaningful for other groups' (Citron, 2000: 21). Green (1988: 110) presents a similar perspective in relation to distinctions in perceived values between classical music and pop music. Green argues that while it is recognized that classical and pop music operate within different aesthetic spheres they are often assessed for 'worth' within the same value system. The result is that pop music has to 'continually justify' itself against the giant of classical music and its assumed greatness, a predicament perhaps similarly faced by Cardew.

The bourgeois aesthetic automatically acclaims as the greatest, that music which appears so transcendent as to speak for itself, to have no need of any acclaim. And it devalues as inferior that music which requires people to point out its transcendent qualities at every turn, which need to be continually justified.

Green, 1988:110

The transcendent qualities of *The Great Learning*, for instance, are more likely to be found in the way his work impacts on the participants of any particular performance, more than the effect on the audience, though this should not be disregarded. The problem is that this is not how 'classical' music of the West is valued, and therefore the value of *The Great Learning* music has to be argued rather than assumed. Green notes that 'What is important here is not the real value of this or that music, but the ways in which music achieves its value' (ibid).

I would argue, then, that Cardew belongs to what Bohlman categorizes as 'Others', but his legacy has begun to be assessed and analysed according to the 'not necessarily meaningful' Western way. Cardew, after all, never quite distanced himself from being a middle-class composer of avant-garde and experimental music. Additionally, Citron notes that 'canonicity has a lot to do with tangible documents' (Citron, 2000: 195), and, as the previous section identified, the extant objects that relate to Cardew are not particularly effective in preserving the legacy of Cardew.

The canonizing process with regard to experimental music perhaps started with Nyman's book of 1974, the first chapter of which aims 'to isolate and identify what experimental music is' (Nyman, 1999: 1) and this desire to isolate, define and order has continued to dominate our understanding of Cardew's legacy. The result is, perhaps, a version of 'Cardew' that has been formalized, simplified, sanitized, reduced, distorted, and indeed exposed to any appropriate mechanism that aids the shoehorning of the legacy into the Western classical canon as defined by Bohlman: essentially according to preconceived notion of how a composer should fit into the wider scheme of things. Anecdotal evidence of this can be found in the previously noted incomplete portrait concerts, or in the over-reliance on Cardew's graphically notated works in a presentation of his compositional achievement. The potential result of this phenomenon was summed

up by Tilbury just a couple of years after Cardew's death: 'Cornelius Cardew was a complex man. If we neglect or ignore aspects of his character because they are uncomfortable, we are in danger of doing both him and ourselves a disservice, and we shall neither understand nor appreciate his life' (Tilbury, 1983: 11).

Wikipedia is not a source to which the academic world is advised to turn, but it provides a useful and contemporary example of how the process of canonization works according to these preconceived notions. Additionally, Wikipedia is representative, if rather crudely, of the multi-faceted community of 'agents' as suggested by both Bohlman (1992) and Citron (2000), being created by multiple contributors informed by a range of cultural and institutional norms. In the entry under Cornelius Cardew (as of June, 2008⁴) Cardew is given the 'composer treatment', factually accurate but based on information of assumed significance that relies more on historical precedents than any serious reflection on his achievements: 'In 1958, Cardew witnessed a series of concerts in Cologne by John Cage and David Tudor which had a considerable influence on him' (Wikipedia, 2008). This provides, in one concise statement, evidence that Cardew is indeed part of the canon for he has been *informed* by his immediate predecessors. Elsewhere the entry notes that 'Cardew's most important scores are *Treatise* (1963-67), a 192-page graphic score which allows for considerable freedom of interpretation, and *The Great Learning*' (ibid). Composers, if they are to be remembered and valued within the Western classical context, must leave behind masterworks. These are Cardew's, his crowning contributions to the canon. In addition: 'The German musician and composer Ekkehard Ehlers published a Cardew-inspired work in 2001, titled *Ekkehard Ehlers plays Cornelius Cardew*, which was released on Staubgold Records' (ibid). A composer's place

⁴ Almost two years later the Wikipedia entry on Cardew was significantly more detailed, the observation of the process of its development having itself been a fascinating insight into the processes of canon formation. The early version of the article critiqued here is particularly useful as it seems to indicate which aspects of Cardew's work were recording first and therefore, it could be assumed, are considered to be of most significance.

in the canon can only, it would appear, be justified with proof of a continuing lineage, no matter how obscure.

My de-coding here is intentionally glib. The article does indeed give more detail of Cardew's work, but it makes no attempt to present Cardew in any context other than according to the rules of the 'classical composer', no attempt to define his attitude or approach to music making, and no attempt to illustrate his influence or impact other than on an individual and effectively unknown composer. Cardew's appearance in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* fares better – it is authored by Tilbury (2001) who draws from his 1983 biographical article – but even this is bound by guidelines, either explicit or implicit, of what a composer biography should look like.

If Cardew, then, has been awarded his place in the pantheon of composers, his music also needs to be inextricably tagged alongside him. The lack of specific sonic definition makes this problematic and perhaps this is the root of the 'toy pianos and squiggly theremins' syndrome. In order for us to make sense of any music according to the precedents of the Western canon we need definitive sonic properties, part of the phenomenon of 'disciplining music' that forms the backbone to Bergeron and Bolhman's text. If those sonic properties do not actually exist perhaps the temptation is simply to seize upon those closest to hand and assimilate them accordingly.

By way of illustration we return to Lukoszevieve and his interpretation of *Octet '61* in which he adopts 'the use of a transistor radio at one point, in order to get to the heart of the matter' (Lukoszevieve, 2001). In an interview with the author, Lukoszevieve was asked about his decision to employ the transistor radio.

- TH: Was the transistor radio a conscious reference to the world of Cage and '60s experimentalism?
 AL: The transistor radio is a vernacular instrument: they are part of the repertoire of instruments in contemporary music. Lots of people working with laptops use radio noise

– it's a very common thing to use material from radios ... Early on in my career I used transistor radios in *Treatise*, but I see that as tradition. AMM used to use them and it does add another spectrum.

Lukoszevieze is very tied to the notion that he is working within a tradition governed by a developed performance practice. It is bound by a context that has developed alongside the repertoire and is something that Lukoszevieze considers inevitable:

TH: So a context has evolved along with the music?

AL: Yes, but that's inevitable. It happens in all walks of life – the way people dress. You wouldn't go to a funeral dressed as a clown – it would be deemed to be offensive. So obviously we have modes of behaviour that are intrinsic to all walks of life. I think it applies to music as well.

The result, then, is a partly received way of approaching Cardew's music, informed by historical precedent, governed by certain contextual codes and observant of a kind of official approach. And according to this process Cardew's music does indeed manifest a certain sonic form that sits comfortably alongside his place in the annals of music history:

AL: I do think there are certain things that are in context and certain things that aren't. I remember once doing *Treatise* in Germany with another group and suddenly the bassoonist started doing Bach, and I said 'you can't do that'. And he said 'why not?' – I had to try and explain myself. So obviously there are things to do with context. I can't remember how I explained it, but I was quite brusque about it. I suppose it's the equivalent of standing in front of a Rothko and putting a cartoon on it or something. If I was conducting *Autumn '60* and someone did a completely ridiculous sound – maybe the pianist played the Tristan chord or something – I would say that's not appropriate.

This, to a degree, accounts for the stylistic connections between Lukoszevieze's and the Cornelius Cardew Ensemble's renditions of *Octet '61*. It is not so much to do with the actual score as the fact that the performers are all coming to the score from a similar place – similar exposure and experiences to a similar range of repertoire, instrumental traditions, and sonic possibilities. British experimental music of the 1960s and 70s is now an established and recognized genre. It exists as a series of events and figures and a series of concrete facts and artifacts that govern experimental music practice to this day;

it occupies a wide-ranging but identifiable sonic universe; it embraces a range of specific compositional traits; it is performed in a particular way. The precedents are perhaps not as rich and exacting as those that govern performance practice of, say, a Haydn string quartet, but there are precedents nonetheless. This is perhaps what Parsons is alluding to when describing what he considers to be an experimental attitude. Parsons, however, seems much more in tune with the process of assimilation that has taken place than Lukoszevics and he suggested an analogy with the working of capitalism when I asked him about the tradition that has grown up around Cardew:

MP: That's one of the ways capitalism works – it incorporates the dissident elements and packages them and sells them as products. In that way it can incorporate all kinds of dissident and oppositional attitudes as we can see with rock music and other sorts of apparently socially deviant behaviour. It gets incorporated and marketed.

Parsons remains hopeful that this has not been the case with Cardew's legacy:

MP: I think the contradictions in Cardew are sufficiently difficult that they couldn't be ironed out by that marketing process. I think he's always going to be seen as a rather difficult or controversial figure.

I would argue that the ironing-out process is already underway. Cardew as a 'brand' has already been 'sold' to a younger generation of musicians whose only contact has been through the media outlets most susceptible to the assimilation process. The result is the distorted perception of the Cardew legacy to which I earlier alluded. Younger artists interviewed in *The Wire*, for instance, will occasionally make casual reference to the influence of Cardew and the experimentalists on their work. Many like to have the stamp of authority from a figure such as Cardew, and similarly Cage, and will claim to pay homage to them through the adoption, for instance, of graphic notations, prepared pianos or transistor radios as demonstrated in Walter's article. But this homage is misjudged. They are paying homage only to the now accepted – or perhaps invented – genre of experimental music as assimilated through the sources most readily available.

They pay homage to an arcane set of sonic properties and compositional traits. What they do not pay homage to is the legacy of Cardew, through no fault of their own, but simply because the channels of information are not yet communicating this.

Diversity United: The 'essence' of Cardew

Outlined here is an alternative approach to assessing and defining Cardew's legacy that takes as its starting points internal indicators of value: characteristics implicit in Cardew and his work, rather than external indicators of determining an individual artist's worth, such as the 'greatness' of his or her music or the extent to which their music has directly informed the continuing canon or a 'school'.

In Parson's 1974 *Contact* interview the discussion turned to the role the audience might play in any understanding of the term 'experimental':

Contact: Do you think it's part of an experimental attitude to question an audience on how they reacted? As, for instance, Cardew did at the *Burdocks* concert in London a couple of years ago?

Parsons: In that particular case he rather interrogated the audience ... I would say that was not an experimental act. Because he was doing it to extract information for his own purposes. But for the audience to question each other, and for there to be a general atmosphere of questioning, I think definitely, yes. The concert is itself a question: a performance of a piece of music and the way people react to it are themselves enough. That's a valid form of communication: question and answer. Other questions arise out of it ... people go to the pub and talk about it later.

Parsons, 1974: 22

Barry Russell, of the Cornelius Cardew Ensemble, picks up on this notion some 30 years later, noting that the level of discussion after a Cardew Ensemble performance is, for him, a more important marker of success than the level of applause.

TH: What would you consider to be the Cardew Ensemble's most significant achievements and how are these evidenced, how are they measured? For instance, the applause at the end of a concert?

BR: More significant than the applause is people coming up to you and talking to you about it. I suppose getting people to talk about new music, contemporary music and

experimental music is one of our achievements ... The concerts were very audience friendly – we actually talked to the audience and had some banter. No fourth wall.

It would appear that the instigation of questioning and discussion is a recurring trait among those claiming influence from Cardew. Parsons cites Cardew's questioning nature as of seminal importance in the development of his own teaching practice:

TH: What about [Cardew's] extra-musical influences [on you]?

MP: Certainly educationally he's very important. He was never didactic in the sense of telling you what to do. His way of doing things was very inspiring and charismatic, his way of listening, his way of being aware of everything that was going on around and seeing the whole thing as part of an organic musical situation. That was certainly something that became an important part of the way I thought of teaching in the art school context ... In that sense my whole attitude to education was deeply influenced by Cardew. I learnt to not to be constantly giving out information to people, not to be telling people what was interesting and what to think but waiting for questions. Giving people the information they ask for but not overloading them with things that they haven't yet wanted to know about. Be available as a source of information when needed ... raising questions was the crucial way of proceeding.

This assertion is supported by Christopher Hobbs, himself a student of Cardew's:

Cardew was a teacher in spite of himself. Although he never imparted any formal knowledge to his students, never analyzed the score of the modern classics, never discussed musical language or theory he taught us nevertheless, almost unknowingly. In those days of verbal, graphic, indeterminate scores his comments were mostly technical: Had we expressed precisely what we meant? Had we foreseen all the possibilities of performance? Were there any loopholes?

Hobbs, 1981: 2

In addition, in my interview with Dave Smith he spoke of Cardew's 'great questioning spirit', and Skempton has on more than one occasion referred to the fact that Cardew himself always stated it was the composer's job to find the right questions to ask. Crucially, implicit in the idea of 'asking the right questions' is the notion that the answer is not necessarily the responsibility of the composer at all. Perhaps the answer is the responsibility of the audience, the performer, or perhaps not a concern at all. Skempton's choice of language also suggests that we are concerned not simply with questioning, but a search for the *right* questions. This is a subtle but significant distinction and perhaps

helps to deconstruct the distorted version of Cardew's legacy discussed in the previous section.

If, by way of illustration, we return to the world of experimental music as implied by Lukoszevieve's concepts of context and tradition, and Walters' reference to specific sound worlds, but alongside the notion of 'asking the right questions' we begin to see an unraveling. The traditions to which Lukoszevieve and Walters allude are firmly based in a questioning attitude. Cardew was asking a series of questions throughout the 1960s and 70s: questions relating to the relationship between the composer and the performer; questions relating to the relationship between musicians and society in general; questions relating to the sonic properties of music and an extended sound-world; questions relating to improvisation and its role; questions relating to how and where music could be performed; questions relating to music education, access to and participation in music; questions relating to social and political organization.

The critical point is that these were questions that responded to the context in which they were being asked – they were inextricably linked to the social, cultural and political conditions of their time. They were, in effect, *relevant*. The argument proposed here is that the validity of experimentalism in music can be assessed according to the *relevance* of the questions it asks. Simply importing the questions of Cardew's times to a modern-day setting is not necessarily an experimental attitude in the Cardew sense. Some of those original questions may still be valid, or could be interpreted within current social, cultural and political conditions. Others may not be. To take one example, the world of music education and community music-making has made considerable strides in the last forty years.⁵ The questions, challenges and statements an experimental composer or musician may wish to make relating to this area would therefore adjust accordingly.

⁵ Partly as a direct consequence of Cardew's legacy, as shall be discussed in the subsequent chapter.

This, after all, is exactly the path Cardew took upon committing himself fully to the Communist cause – the questioning did not cease, but the questions changed.

Against this backdrop, Lukoszevieve's use of the transistor radio perhaps represents a classic, if perhaps trivial, case of 'anti-experimentalism'. By his own admission, the radio is now 'a vernacular instrument'. Its use, therefore, and the questions its use may raise to the listener, is hardly contemporary or relevant. The 'toy pianos and squiggly theremins' and 'Minuto de Silencio' – direct references to experiments of yesteryear rather than the embodiment of a questioning approach relevant to our current world – are in this respect, perhaps, evidence only of a lack of the 'great questioning spirit' rather than the living 'spirit of composers such as Cage and Cardew' (Walters, 2002: 24).

This way of approaching the idea of a Cardew aesthetic brings us much closer to defining the essence of Cardew. It allows us to move away from the conventional vehicles of assessing a composer's legacy and to identify a series of traits that are intrinsic to, or underpin, all or most of Cardew's work. 'Asking the right questions' might, then, be considered the first essential characteristic of Cardew's work, and the umbrella under which a number of other such concerns may reside. Outlined below is a series of character traits I have identified as apparent across the full gamut of Cardew's work: a refusal to compromise, a preoccupation with integrity and honesty, contradictions and dualisms, and an underpinning humanity. I will deal with each in turn.

'Refusal to compromise'

To exist within the western artistic culture without resorting to some level of compromise would be virtually impossible. As soon as one accepts state funding, for

instance, there are external concerns to which one must concede, which, for some, may be contradictory to a personal politic or artistic sensibility. There is the question of whether a refusal to compromise should even be considered a quality to admire. Reluctance to compromise, for instance, can ultimately lead to marginalization. Barry Russell is an individual often described as 'uncompromising'. It is a tag he does little to play down, though as a freelance jobbing musician and composer it is perhaps exaggerated. I challenged him on whether this trait was responsible for the demise of the Cornelius Cardew Ensemble as an active outfit when compared to Apartment House:

TH: Is refusing to compromise a virtue or, as it ultimately disables you, a flaw?

BR: We're all still doing things. Jos [Zwaanenburg] is as anarchic as ever – he's just written an obscene piece for Black Hair.

TH: But Jos is a university guy?

BR: But he's still being anarchic within it. And to an extent I'm being anarchic within the university system – when I teach community, orchestration. Back to the question – for myself I think it's not a bad thing. I don't know whether it's a virtue. It sometimes hasn't stood me in very good stead. And I think I worry people that think that if they employ me then, by association, they will be tarred with the same brush.

Elements of this sentiment are applicable to the position Cardew ultimately found himself in. Lukoszevieveze believes that Cardew 'shot himself in the foot'. Others also believe that had his rejection of the avant-garde not been so singular and uncompromising, a greater number would have been, at least to a degree, sympathetic to his cause. And, of course, the uncompromising Maoist stance informed by the Party, seriously impacted on his ability to reflect on and re-assess his Marxist philosophies.

Cardew was perhaps too savvy, however, to relinquish the notion of compromise entirely. As previously noted, he defended his right to earn a living and was not averse to seeking state funding.⁶ It seems, however, that Cardew would have carefully considered any external concerns likely to compromise or contradict his activities – the importance of the discussions attached to performances of his rejected repertoire serve to

⁶ Such as the grant from Northeast Arts that allowed the Scratch Orchestra to embark on its tour to Newcastle.

illustrate this. If distaste for the occasional need to compromise is apparent in Cardew's character, the notion of refusal embodies itself more thoroughly still in the music. One finds evidence of this in Cardew's almost habitual desire to stamp elements of his own compositional personality on the 101 'snappy items' while working with Stockhausen, though the roots can be traced back to the early works, specifically the *Third Piano Sonata* and *Two Books of Study for Pianists*, both of 1958. These pieces represent something of a crystallization of Cardew's mission to present his own creative personality, and to avoid the compromise of embarking on a particular 'path'. By this time, Cardew had begun to assimilate both the European modernist tradition, as exemplified by Stockhausen and Boulez, and his experiences of Cage, but was refusing to become a disciple of either broad school. Richard Barrett cites Cardew as having 'a virtually negligible sense of indigenous musical tradition' (Barrett, 1987 in Prévost, 2006: 336), and this was perhaps a conscious attempt to avoid the infiltration of impurities into his music that subscribing to a particular tradition may allow. The result is music of uncompromised character, which is as much a mode of performing as a score. The balance of information and opportunity in the score of the *Two Books* (and later in *February Pieces*) serves to ensure not only that the creative voice of the composer is not compromised by relinquishing aspects of sonic organization – as was the 'Cagean line of abstraction from sound during composition' (ibid) – but also that the creative role of the interpreter is not compromised by responding only and slavishly to the composer's demands. Barrett identifies this as a continuing and fundamental component of Cardew's musical language:

The definition of such limits in exact accordance with the performer- and perception-related aspects of the proposed music becomes a more and more important compositional concern for Cardew's music through the 60s, culminating in *The Great Learning* as a supreme example of just enough information to create a musical identity for a work, without compromising the responsibility placed on a performer to think out and contribute his or her own music.

Barrett, 1987 in Prévost, 2006: 338

Issues of compromise are exacerbated further during Cardew's later politicized phase as an increasing number of extra-musical factors begin to impact on decisions and directions that Cardew had to make and take. Aharonián takes an interesting stance on the nature of Cardew's character in his article 'Cardew as a Basis for a Discussion on Ethical Options'. For Aharonián the legacy of Cardew is essentially an ethical legacy noting that he 'was so ethical that he became capable of drastically changing his aesthetics as a result of his discussion with himself about the most appropriate issues in the struggle for the search for a better art on a better society' (Aharonián, 2001: 13).

As discussed in the previous chapters, this drastic change presented something of a conundrum for Cardew. According to Cardew's own Marxist code, the music most familiar to him, and indeed some of the music perhaps most useful to him, was by default inappropriate as either an embodiment of the bourgeoisie or, as with the case of commercial pop music, indirectly supporting the capitalist status quo. The case is not always clear-cut, however, and there is again evidence that Cardew was willing to toy with the idea of compromise if there were longer-term benefits. Towards the end of the previously cited discussion between Cardew and Adrian Jack there is almost a reversal of roles. Reference is made to the links between pop music and the working class, Jack suggesting that pop music is 'entirely manipulated by middle-class exploiters' (Jack, 1975 in Prévost, 2006: 243). Cardew concedes this to be the case, but also that there is a breed of pop music born out of the oppressed and it is partly his mission to influence and encourage that trend:

Jack: But the main reinforcement for pop music surely is its commercial advantages. As soon as your ideas are expressed in pop music to an effective point, promoters won't want to touch it.

Cardew: That's perfectly true. I have no illusions about the bourgeoisie allowing us on the air. But if people (like Paul McCartney) occasionally write progressive songs and these are suppressed, then people see that they are suppressed and they have an incredible influence then. If it is known that they take a stand, this has an influence.

Jack, 1975 in Prévost, 2006: 243-4

Cardew is essentially calling the system's bluff with this remark, demonstrating a willingness to engage in areas that would otherwise be off limits if benefits can be perceived from a wider perspective. One might conclude from this that issues of compromise, confrontation, and the delicate balance between the two was a conscious concern across various aspects of his thinking and creative life. The 'uncompromising' tag, then, is an important part of Cardew's underpinning identity.

'Integrity and honesty'


Cardew's attraction to the notion of honesty in art was previously discussed in chapter three. Cardew's initial discussion of honesty referred specifically to the music of Cage and, perhaps with greater deference, Feldman. Cardew at this point was already demonstrating distaste for the imposed canon and context, considering it an unnecessary compromise of one's compositional honesty:

I see Feldman as the first composer to break free from the dogma and dreary theorizing that has enshrouded new music for so long ... Feldman has evolved a language that is capable of expressing his ideas in all their freshness and intensity, it is not a synthetic language dictated by any lame need to justify atonal music or the serial idea or any other theoretical concept.

Cardew, 1962a, in Prévost, 2006: 48

This conscious avoidance of a 'synthetic language' informed a kind of compositional code in Cardew from the late 1950s onwards. But while chapter three discusses this idea within the context of Cardew's more Cagean works of the 1960s, it is a thread that appears to remain intact throughout the variously diverse compositional and music-making modes. Issues of integrity and honesty are an ongoing battle implicit in *Treatise*, for instance. Any preparation of a performance will involve at least an internal, and usually external, dialogue regarding the integrity, honesty and perhaps authenticity of the interpretation. For Cardew, the very act of committing symbol to page presents a

number of questions of integrity. In the early working notes for *Treatise* Cardew comments:

 is alright if it is exactly what you want (although how interesting is it to want exactly that? Well, that depends on how badly you want it). But it is bad if it is a confession of failure. And that's the point; where is the difference located? Certainly not in the squiggle. Hence for you, dear listener, there is no difference whatever. (Which is why I can never turn to you for advice).

Cardew, 1971a: iii

The notion of honesty is intensified within the realm of improvised music. Cardew considers that improvisation could be viewed as 'the highest form of musical activity' (ibid: xx), chiefly due to the unavoidable focus on music's transient nature, a characteristic Cardew identified as both its 'fatal weakness and essential and most beautiful' (ibid). An improvising musician does not experience the luxury of time in considering the honesty of the sounds being produced. Instead, a heightened sense of one's musical integrity is required. Cardew tackles this directly in 'Towards an Ethic of Improvisation'. Here Cardew considers that the music and the musician are literally integral: 'My attitude is that the musical and the real worlds are one. Musicality is a dimension of perfectly ordinary reality. The musician's pursuit is to recognize the musical composition of the world' (ibid: xx). Cardew considers integrity to be one of a list of 'virtues that a musician can develop' (ibid), the inextricable integration of the sound and the means of producing the sound, that is, the musician: '*Integrity*: What we *do* in the actual event is important – not only what we have in mind. Often what we do is what tells us what we have in mind. The difference between making the sound and being the sound' (ibid).⁷

Tilbury records that it was the human agency at work within improvisational settings that initially drew Cardew into AMM, in which he 'found the embodiment of his ideas

⁷ The complete list of virtues includes Simplicity, Integrity, Selflessness, Forbearance, Preparedness, Identification with nature, and Acceptance of Death (Cardew, 1971: xx).

and feelings about music and freedom taken a stage further' (Tilbury, 1983: 7). As Cardew moved further away from music as simply an aesthetic concern, the underpinning qualities of honesty and integrity of the music with the self held true. Cardew's compositional explorations inherent in *The Great Learning* are, of course, not driven exclusively by aesthetic interests but by an increasing concern with music's social and political function. As Professor at the RAM, and with a considerable reputation around Europe and America, Cardew was perfectly capable of continuing to carve out his position as an avant-garde composer. But this would, of course, have served as the ultimate betrayal of integrity. Cardew noted in an introductory talk to the first performance of Paragraph 1 of *The Great Learning* that 'if music was a purely aesthetic experience I don't think it would occupy the central place it does in our affairs. It must make waves in the environment and have repercussions beyond the concert hall' (Cardew, 1968, in Prévost, 2006: 323).

In a sense, such was Cardew's sense of honesty and integrity that he could *only* have composed a piece such as *The Great Learning* at this point. With hindsight, it is unimaginable that he could have composed works in the mould of *Octet '61* or *Solo with Accompaniment* against this background. The extent of Cardew's integrity is highlighted further, though perhaps initially counter-intuitively, with the stylistically perverse shift to the political works of the 1970s. It could be argued that this music is anything but honest. Indeed, much of the compositional output was, by his own admission, a music he was less than qualified to lend his hand to. But again, the stylistic shifts were driven not by aesthetic considerations but ideological ones. In that respect it was an honest attempt to reconcile the process and activity of composition with his world view. As Tilbury records: 'Cardew did not really begin to write 'different' music in the seventies; it was always his music, which developed and changed inexorably on the basis of his activity as a committed revolutionary' (Tilbury, 1983: 10-11).

This discussion, then, contributes to an interpretation of a Cardew aesthetic. As with any number of composers, Cardew's music can at times be identified as characteristically or idiosyncratically 'Cardew' – a Cardew stamp as it were, a music that *only* Cardew could compose. But, crucially – and this is where Cardew's compositional character departs from the norm – Cardew composed the *only* music he could compose at any given time, determined not by aesthetics or technical developments but by his underpinning world view. Whichever Cardew era you may wish to examine, the music was always integral to, and an honest reaction to, those global and philosophical concerns.

'Contradictions and dualisms'

Contradictions and multiple, at times conflicting, strands of thought are apparent in Cardew's work on a number of different levels. As discussed in chapter three, one such manifestation of this feature is the 'get-out clause' instructions built into so many of the pieces. This in itself is closely linked to issues of integrity and honesty and Cardew's insistence on a specific sound or structure existing only if it is integral to the genuine intention of the piece. The result is a certain duality to many of the pieces, at times a delicate balance between structure and freedom. A work such as *February Pieces* demonstrates this phenomenon most clearly. The musical information is fastidiously detailed, with an obsessive level of dynamic and timbral specificity accompanied by a comprehensive key to any invented or unconventional notations. Yet the structure of the piece is flexible and, furthermore, the instruction page contains a number of statements running counter to the dictatorial style of the notated pages:

This is a skeleton. The given bones may be clothed, decorated or connected in any way the player may consider appropriate ... Tones in brackets may be played or not ... The player may observe such indications as are given until such a time as he has no further need of them and/or grounds for ignoring them ... The duration of each 'quaver' is free or determined by the situation.

BR: I opened the second half of the Altai concert with *Soon* [at the Altai Festival, Spain] and the audience loved it. I did a very Romantic version of it, because I was suddenly aware halfway through that if I looked out to the audience I could see light sparkling on the Med. So I pulled it about a bit – made a Romantic version of it. The music is flexible enough to allow me to do that.

'Humanity'

Cardew demonstrated a number of personal qualities that are worthy of note, and which perhaps find some kind of sub-conscious manifestation in the music. Cardew was, by all accounts, a charismatic and respected figure. Despite his detractors, critics and those who consider Cardew misguided, there is nothing in the available sources that would deny Cardew's intellect and integrity. Individual testimonies of Cardew suggest a figure able to command attention. These personal qualities are not limited to his work within musical fields. Similar tributes to his character were paid at the 70th Birthday Anniversary event by individuals – party colleagues – who were unaware of Cardew's standing within musical and academic circles until relatively recently. The anecdotal evidence suggests that whatever Cardew did, or may have chosen to do, it would have been done with a seriousness of purpose, with integrity, and with what Skempton describes as 'great style':

HS: Everything Cardew did, he did very elegantly and very professionally. I respected that.

Parsons also recalls being impressed by Cardew's individual qualities and cites being influenced on a very personal level in observing the way Cardew interacted calmly with his children, and even observing how Cardew drove his car:

MP: There was something about his very relaxed manner, never getting ruffled, never getting angry, always taking the situation as it came.

Skempton concurs that Cardew's persona commanded notice:

HS: He had an extraordinary grace. He was incredibly charismatic. The most extraordinary thing about him was a sort of serenity, a calm authority.

It is difficult to pinpoint how these personal qualities might begin to manifest themselves in Cardew's music, but there is little question that they would aid his ability to exert influence on others. It is of no coincidence, then, that much of Cardew's creative life centred on working with other people. Whether working with performers such as Tilbury, members of the Scratch Orchestra, AMM, People's Liberation Music, the Progressive Cultural Association, or with political party colleagues, Cardew's creative existence tended to be within a community of other individuals, rather than the more conventional, if illusory, model that composers exist in isolation, reacting to others only once the act of composition is complete. The centrality of people to Cardew's work has remained an implicit thread throughout the survey of his work. It would appear that Cardew's music has rarely existed simply for the sake of the music but that the underlying relationships and interactions the music allows are fundamental concerns. There is a streak of humanity pervading the full gamut of Cardew's creative life – whether dealing with the interactive indeterminate scores of the 1960s, the concept of honesty in one's music, the integration of the self and the music brought about through improvisation, the more explicit social interactions of the Scratch era, the politically motivated music, or the pop songs performed at rallies and conventions, Cardew was motivated mostly by human and social rather than musical desires. The music was an embodiment of human and social needs, rather than an enhancement to it, or decoration of it. The extent to which Cardew achieved this aim is open to debate but the existence of this motivation is perhaps the true essence of a Cardew aesthetic. And the crucial point here in relation to determining the nature of Cardew's legacy, is that this notion is just as relevant and potent today as during Cardew's lifetime. Aharonián sums this concept up most neatly:

The main question is, I believe, this: how a well meaning composer who missed a real solution for his musical language can become, through his ethical commitment and his search for socio-political engagement, an unavoidable reference for all those involved in the discussion of the responsibility of the composer in his/her society.

Aharonián, 2001: 15

To this end, we can return once more to Feldman's description of Cardew as a 'moral force, a moral centre' (Feldman, 1967: 43).

A Cardewist Manifesto

In the notes to his improvisatory piece *Free Soup* of 1968, in which members of the audience are encouraged to bring along instruments and join in, Frederic Rzewski writes that:

Music is a creative process in which we can all share, and the closer we can come to each other in this process, abandoning esoteric categories and professional elitism, the closer we can all come to the ancient idea of music as a universal language.

Rzewski, 1968, in Nyman 1999: 130

Whether music really is a universal language is something of a contention – it can equally be divisive, subjective, and exclusive – though perhaps what Rzewski is alluding to is a language absent of many of the barriers apparent in the spoken word. Rzewski goes a step further and outlines his vision for how this universalism may be achieved:

The musician takes on a new function: he is no longer the mythical star, elevated to a sham glory and authority, but rather an unseen worker, using his skill to help others less prepared than he to experience the miracle, to become great artists in a few minutes ... His role is that of organizer and redistributor of energies: he draws upon the raw human resources at hand and reshapes them, combining loose random threads of sound into a solid web on which the unskilled person is able to stand, and then take flight.

Rzewski, 1968, in Nyman, 1999: 130

The language is rather prophetic but it effectively describes the sort of transformation apparent in Cardew's own perceptions of the musician, and perhaps pre-empted the role Cardew strived to establish for himself in the Scratch Orchestra and beyond. The previous chapters have outlined the course of this transformation and this chapter has attempted to identify the recurring traits and characteristics that might define a Cardew aesthetic and therefore the legacy left by Cardew. To conclude I will here make one last interpretation of that aesthetic based on the discussions to this point. What follows is a 'Cardewist Manifesto', a collection of essential 'Cardewist' tenets, though by no means finite, that an individual or community might subscribe to, or demonstrate sympathies with, should they adopt a similar aesthetic. This is not to suggest that a Cardewist would need to 'sign up' to a predetermined cultish list of aims and qualities, but rather a selection of prominent features that are likely to characterize the work of those who might associate themselves with Cardewism. The manifesto might likewise further exemplify earlier arguments – identifying individuals or groups whose work has only a superficial relationship to a Cardew aesthetic.

A Cardewist approach to music is characterized by:

- a belief that music, and the act of creating music, is fundamentally a social activity;
- a belief that music, and the act of creating music, is an entitlement for all and can enhance the lives of all;
- a belief that music, and the act of creating music, can act as a force for allowing people to think, to reconsider and to access ideas previously inaccessible or remote;
- a belief that music, and the act of creating music can take a role within society beyond the decorative and aesthetic;

- a belief that music, and the act of creating music, can and should be honest and integral to one's worldview, to a way of life, to the self.

And ultimately:

- a belief that the composer is someone who has the skills, ability, commitment, and ethical duty to provide opportunities for this Manifesto to be realized and maximized.

The suggestion here is not that these particular tenets are unique to Cardew – composers and performers throughout history have demonstrated all of these assertions to greater or lesser extents – but that they came to embody Cardew's work to the extent that he is *characterized* by these tenets, rather than by those traits traditionally associated with defining a composer. Perhaps the most striking feature of this interpretation is the fact that, as a basic set of values, it might be shared by those who have no particular or direct connection with Cardew. Any number of music teachers, for instance, might subscribe to all or some of the above. Indeed, a National Curriculum Council report of 1989 identified the varying roles of the arts teacher as facilitator, mediator, assessor, partner, questioner, instructor and artist (NCC Arts in Schools Project Team, 1989: 19). The definitions of these categories resonate with a number of tenets in my Cardewist manifesto, and within the contemporary music education context much of what underpins current approaches is found here, especially within the first two statements. This will be explored in the subsequent chapter. However, as noted earlier, Cardew has entered the canon as a 'composer' not a 'teacher', and this is what makes this particular interpretation of his legacy unique. Here is a 'composer' whose legacy and impact on any sort of continuing canon has its basis not in a catalogue of scores, compositional

techniques or sonic identity, but in a set of essential values that inform an approach or attitude toward music making.

'Well, Well, Cornelius'

'Well, well, Cornelius, your life is ended. It's over, but your work goes on as before.'¹

Michael Parsons claims that the work of Cardew, and specifically the Scratch Orchestra, 'set in motion a lot of currents'.² In order to investigate this claim, the following chapter takes the form of a series of investigations into ensembles, organizations and individuals who have in some way been informed by Cardew's work or music, either directly or by association. The chapter does not intend to suggest that those chosen are a representative cross-section of Cardew-related activity in the UK. Each group or individual, however, displays personal or conscious links back to Cardew and would regard themselves advocates of Cardew to one extent or another, or to having been influenced and shaped by Cardew's work. Some may be self-proclaimed Cardewists according to the criteria outlined in the previous chapter.

The field of music education is the one area in which the influence of Cardew is perhaps most visibly documented, and the first study focuses on this. Paynter and Aston's *Sound and Silence*, published in 1970, was among the first works to make reference to Cardew within an educational context and it sparked a movement of classroom music-making that drew on a number of ideas that could be considered Cardew-esque, and which has gone on to influence classroom practice to this day.

The next study is of two composers with perhaps the most direct and personal association with Cardew during his lifetime: Scratch Orchestra founders Howard

¹ These words are inscribed above the stave of Howard Skempton's *Well, well, Cornelius*, a piano miniature of June 1982.

² See p. 118.

Skempton and Michael Parsons. As individuals who were personally immersed in the world of Scratch and the experimental scene of the 1960s and 70s their music could be considered the most direct continuation of that phenomenon. It is, of course, not possible to provide the comprehensive overview that their music deserves, but this study will briefly examine how their own music is influenced and shaped by those formative experiences, which elements of Cardew's work are residual in their compositional output, and how their chosen creative paths have diverged from Cardew's.

The next two studies are of ensembles, both formed in 1995, and primarily committed to the performance of contemporary and experimental music: The Cornelius Cardew Ensemble who, between 1995 and 2004, took their interpretation of the Cardew aesthetic into a range of formal and informal music settings, and Apartment House, a high profile ensemble and familiar name in the contemporary music concert and broadcast world. In some respects the ensembles are similar, sharing repertoire and, at times, instrumentation, but the studies reveal crucial differences in their approach to the notion of Cardewism.

The final study focuses on the UK organization 'Contemporary Music Making for Amateurs' (CoMA). This is a unique organization that operates across the country providing opportunities for amateurs and professionals alike. The study here investigates some of the parallels between CoMA and the work of Cardew and, specifically, the Scratch Orchestra, to what extent that work has impacted on or informed the ethos of CoMA, and to what extent CoMA is continuing work left undone by Cardew.

Sound and Silence: The Creative Music Movement

The world of avant-garde and experimental music that Cardew inhabited during the 1960s and early 1970s coincided with developing trends in the world of education: so-called 'progressive' methods that put the child's individual needs at the centre of the learning process and a more explicitly inclusive ethos (Green, 2008a: 11). George Self, then a teacher at a comprehensive school in London, was amongst the first to recognise the value of experimental music as a classroom tool.³ Most significantly Self drew on the potentially inclusive nature of the notational ideas found in experimental music to 'provide opportunities for *all* children to experience ensemble music-making without having to wait until they had acquired either musical literacy or elaborate performing techniques' (Rainbow with Cox, 2006: 316). Self devised a range of variously complex graphic- and grid-based scores for his pupils to play, employing invented or found instruments alongside a range of typical classroom tuned and untuned percussion.

The application of such ideas was not only a means to an inclusive end. The rationale that pervades Self's limited published output is that of the importance of drawing on contemporary trends in music in the instrumental work of the classroom. Self argues that in 'the plastic arts and science, pupils are learning to recognize and use the language of their time', but that 'musical education seems to lag far behind' (Self, 1967:1). He specifically draws the teachers' attention to the graphic work of Cardew, alongside that of Cage, Feldman, Roman Haubenstock-Ramati and Boguslaw Schäffer. As Rainbow notes, these suggestions and ideas were 'startlingly unorthodox at a time when most teachers were unaware of the music of Cage or Stockhausen' (Rainbow with Cox, 2006: 317).

³ Rainbow with Cox (2006: 314–316), Pitts (2000: 73–6) and Winterson (1998: 26–7) also identify and describe the work of Peter Maxwell Davies as a precursor to this. Self was perhaps spurred by Davies' evidence that young people were not, as had been assumed, resistant to modern music.

Elsewhere, similarly unorthodox ideas were being used by Canadian composer and teacher R. Murray Schafer. Schafer was particularly informed by his interest in the nature of sound within the environment and his study of 'acoustic ecology' (see Schafer 1968 and 1977).⁴ Schafer developed a series of distinctive and idiosyncratic guides for teachers underpinned by his notion of what he called 'ear cleaning': the development of sensitivity towards sound and the sonic environment.

Before we train a surgeon to perform delicate operations we first ask him to get into the habit of washing his hands. Ears also perform delicate operations, and therefore ear cleanliness is an important prerequisite for all music listening and music playing.

Schafer, 1967: 1

Schafer gives as an example the idea of encouraging children to tape-record a conversation and listen back concentrating on the sounds that they had *not* intended to record. There are apparent crossovers with the world of Cage in this approach (for instance 4'33'') and, while not making any reference to Cardew specifically, it also resonates with the 'totality' and 'transience' of sound of which Cardew talks about in 'Towards an Ethic of Improvisation' (Cardew, 1968a).

Rainbow (2006: 317-8) notes that these ideas gathered some momentum in urban UK schools in the late 1960s with varying success. Self, along with colleague David Bedford, who had performed many of Cardew's earlier works, produced a popular series of experimental scores for use in the classroom published by Universal Edition as *Music For Young Players*. Brian Dennis, who was a member of the Scratch Orchestra, was another exponent of the approach. It was 'the highly articulate, anarchic activity within that orchestra' (Rainbow with Cox, 2006: 334) that informed Dennis' practice in schools:

⁴ See also Truax (n.d): <http://www.sfu.ca/~truax/wsp.html> for a brief overview of *The World Soundscape Project*, a research group established by Schafer in the late 1960s.

For Dennis the 1970s in schools were associated with words like 'learning' and 'achievement' whereas the key word in the 1960s had been 'enjoyment', and for him that was achieved in classrooms through improvising creatively, using aleatoric principles, and experimenting with electronic sounds.⁵

Rainbow with Cox, 2006: 334

Like Self, Dennis underpinned his work with the argument that the arts in schools should represent the most current developments in the arts beyond school. He opened his 1970 book *Experimental Music in Schools* with:

The health of an art is in danger if those who teach it fall too far beyond those who practise it. This book is written to help teachers who would like to introduce truly modern music to their classes. It is designed to help them in the most practical way: by encouraging them actually to make music, contemporary music, in the classroom. This is the way other subjects are kept alive and vital.

Dennis, 1970: 1

Dennis, however, seemed to broaden the scope of Self's work. Pitts (2000: 77) describes Self's approach as 'didactic', noting that his scores required 'a degree of interpretation which is undoubtedly creative, but the exploration of sound is carefully controlled and the teacher retains a directing role' (ibid: 78). Dennis' book features a range of Self-like graphic and grid-based scores (fig. 8.1) but with a stronger focus on strategies for engaging the pupils in improvising, creating new pieces, using found sounds, performing from a range of notations and the use of electronics.

Cox (Rainbow with Cox, 2006: 334) notes that both Self (1967) and Dennis (1970) became influential texts for some teachers, as did Bedford *Music For Young Players*. By 1975 Dennis felt able to state:

⁵ The idea that 'achievement' and 'enjoyability' are mutually exclusive is now a rather outmoded attitude, as any number of pedagogic texts would demonstrate (see specifically Green, 2008 and Mills, 2005). Furthermore, the UK government's Every Child Matters agenda, introduced in 2003, which now underpins the aims and objectives of all children's services in England and Wales maintains 'enjoy and achieve' as one of its five central outcomes, the implication being that one rarely occurs without the other.

There is little doubt that experimental music has been rapidly gaining ground in recent years. From the early pieces of George Self and the thought provoking activities of R Murray Schafer ... teachers have been showing an increasing willingness to try out ideas.

Dennis, 1975: vii

Material No. 6

Duration 2'0"

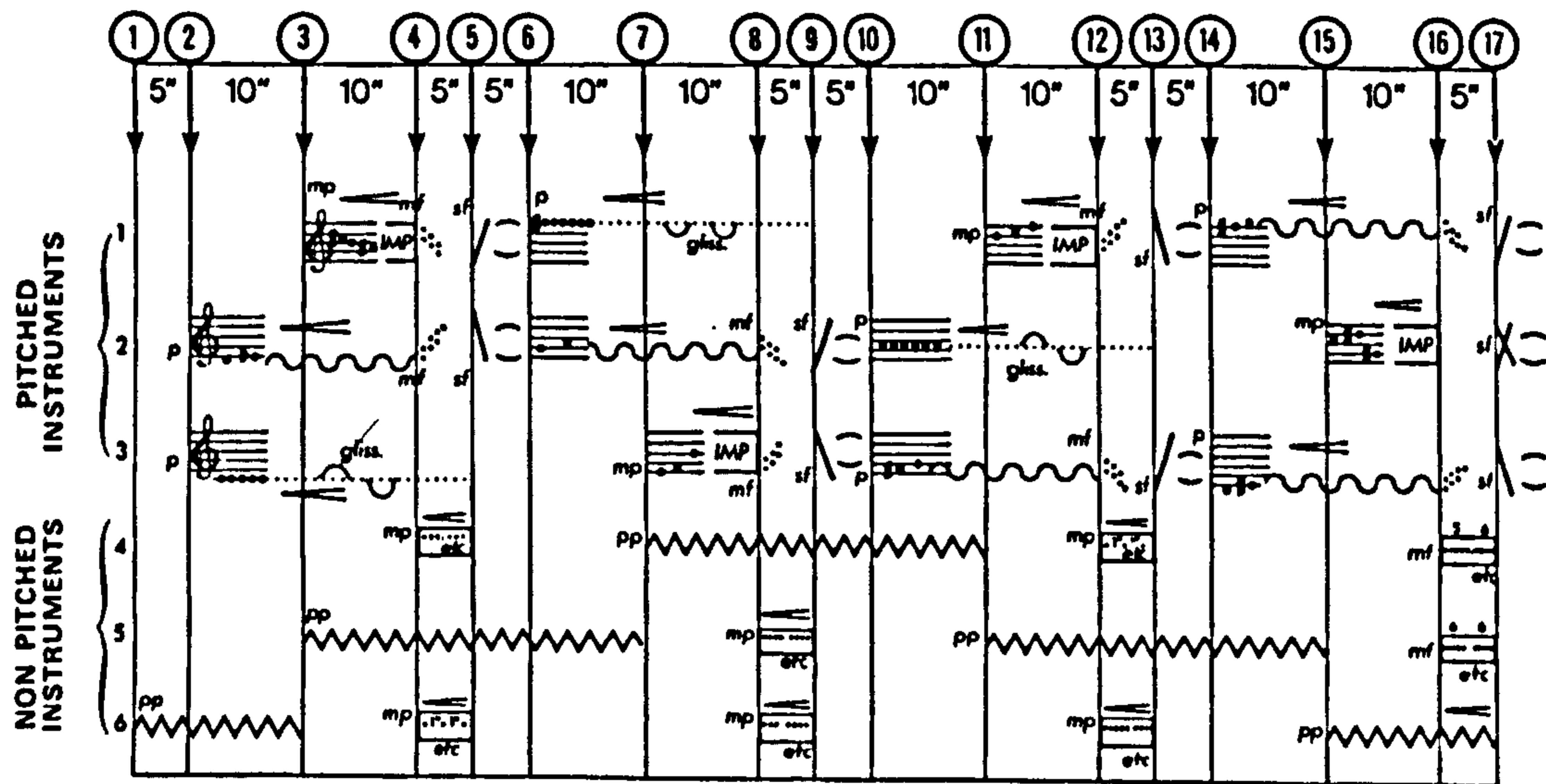
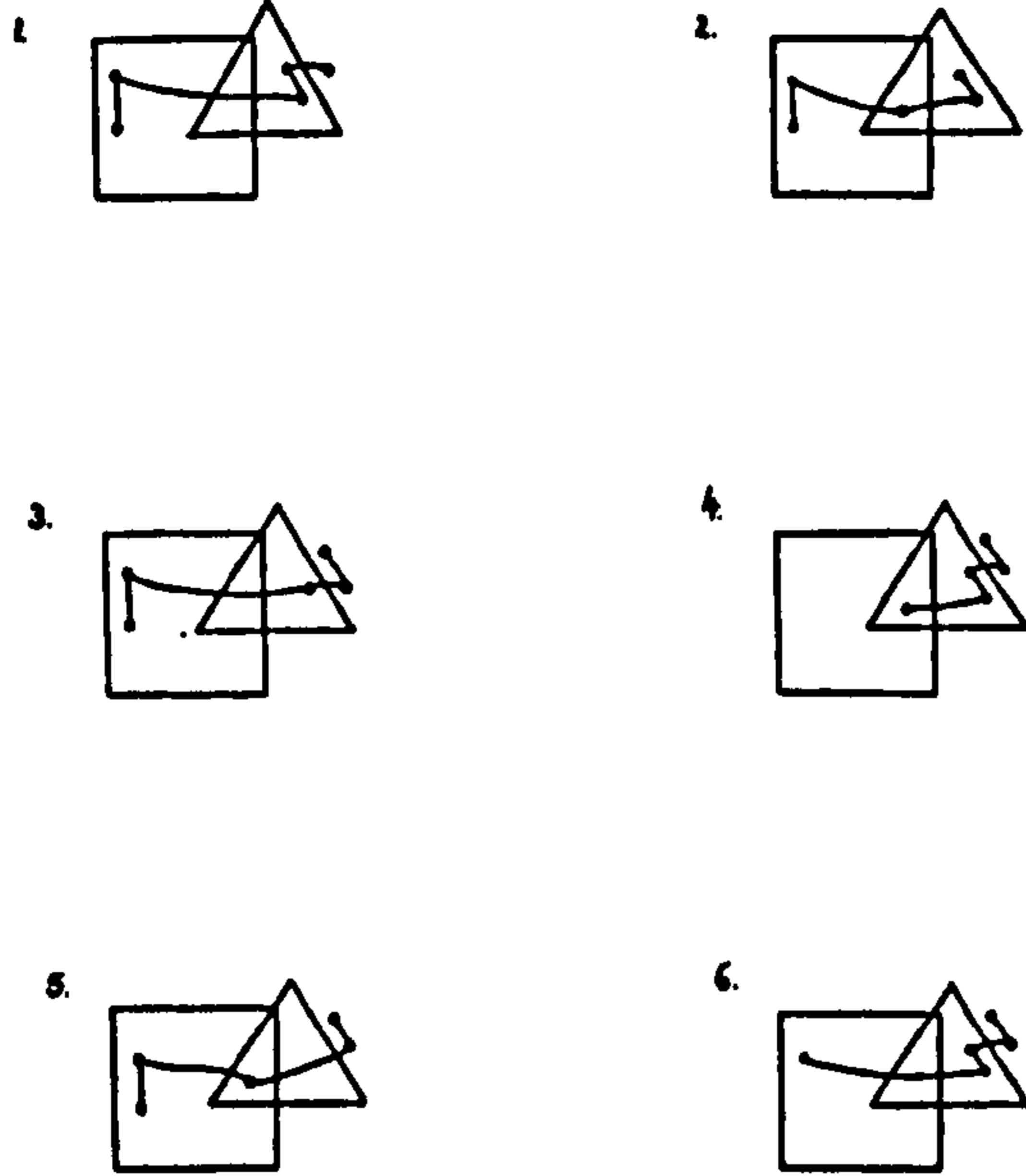


Fig. 8.1: 'Material No. 6' from Dennis, 1970: 29.

The second of Dennis' publications for teacher, *Projects in Sound* (1975), included graphic pieces redolent of ideas found in *Scratch Music* (Cardew, 1972) by fellow former Scratch members Hugh Shrapnel, John White and Howard Skempton (fig. 8.2), demonstrating that, by now, the musical training of some school children was not just informed by their teachers' formative experiences but that scratch music was appearing in the classroom.

ISLANDS
Howard Skempton



CAVES
Howard Skempton

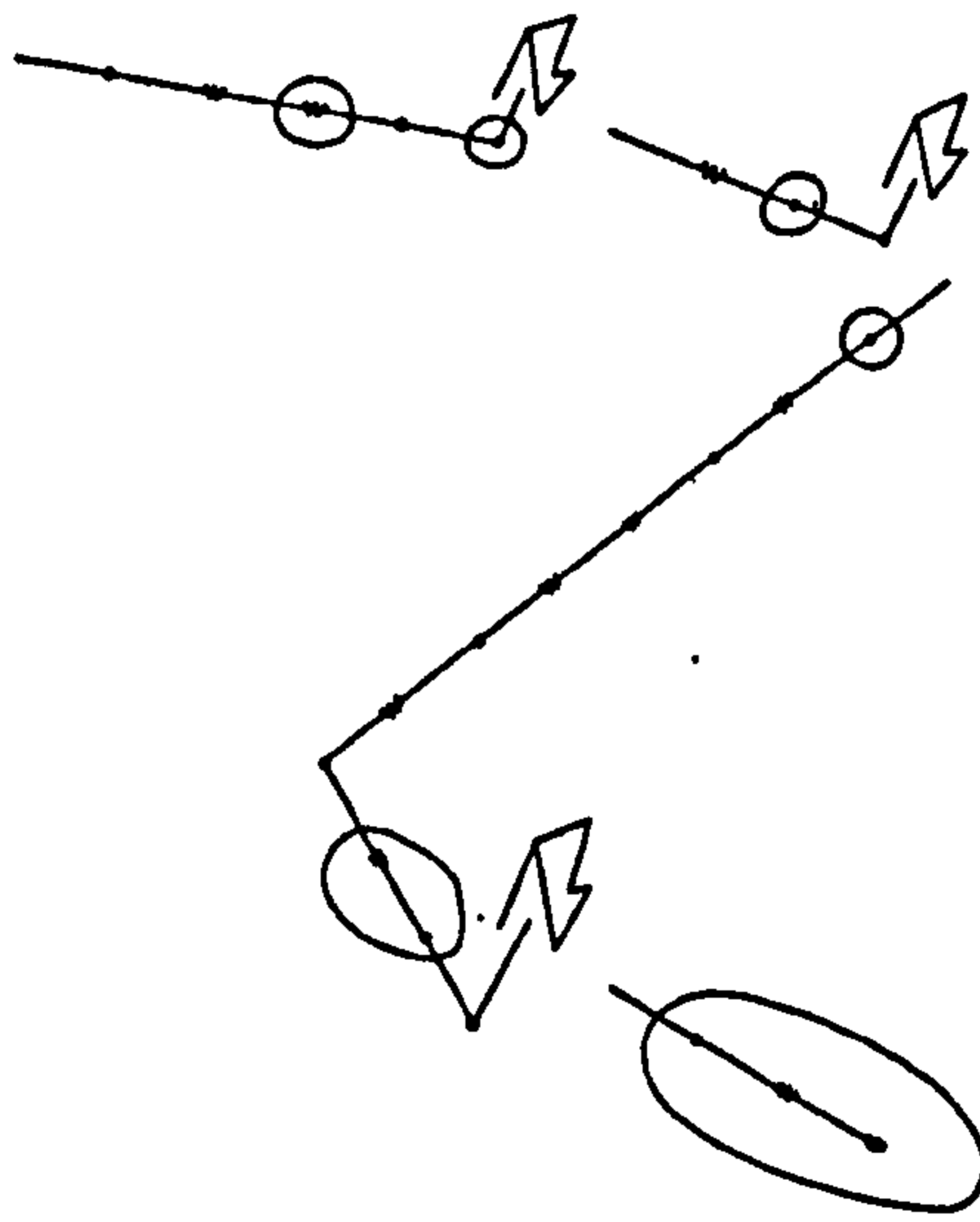


Fig. 8.2: Skempton, *Islands* and *Caves* (1975), reproduced in Dennis 1975: 7 and 11.

Perhaps the most significant contributor to this movement was John Paynter whose book, co-authored with Peter Aston, *Sound and Silence* (1970), remains a classic text. *Sound and Silence* takes the form of a series of 'classroom projects in creative music' and, as Cox notes, it was this text and the subsequent *Hear and Now: An Introduction to Modern Music in Schools* (1972) that 'fundamentally related creative music making in schools to trends in twentieth-century music' (Rainbow with Cox, 2006: 334). The particular significance of Paynter and Aston is the explicit focus not just on children playing experimental music, but using experimental scores as models for their own composition through collaborative group work. Pitts (2000) links this preoccupation with composition to John Cage, and perhaps by association, Cardew.⁶

Cage's writing, like his music, made an important contribution to thinking about music education, echoing as it did the ideas about the nature of music which supported the greater dominance of composition in the classroom. Paynter recalls the 'spirit of adventure' that the Americans of Cage's generation brought to Britain.

Pitts, 2000: 76–7

Paynter and Aston's approach initially builds on the Schafer-like development of a sensitive response to the minutiae of sound. The first project of *Sound and Silence*, for instance, relies entirely on the use of cymbals, firstly encouraging the participants to explore the sound-world of a single cymbal by playing it in every conceivable way. Then, through a process of improvisation, decision making, tape recording and refining, a piece for cymbals is created. Lastly, teachers are directed to a range of repertoire that employs distinctive use of the cymbal from Gerhard, Bartók, Chávez, Stockhausen and Messiaen. The book similarly leads teachers and children through a range of projects exploring a plethora of specific ideas each employing the Scratch-like approach of taking a starting point and exploring it through improvising, composing, performing and listening.

⁶ As previously noted, it was Cardew and his contemporaries who were largely responsible for the introduction of Cage's work to the UK.

Within this, Paynter and Aston make limited but direct reference to Cardew, for instance in encouraging participants to attempt a performance of *The Tiger's Mind* (1967) (Paynter and Aston, 1970: 331). They also allude to specific ideas and notational traits. In a project entitled 'shapes into music' they suggest that participants map the shape of a piece of furniture onto staves on a music chalk-board. The example given, of a music stand (fig. 8.3), bares a visual resemblance to elements of *Treatise* and is followed by a list of questions that *Treatise* itself imposed on its performers:

Does it suggest a procedure for improvisation? How many instruments should play? Do they all play at once? Does the shape suggest divisions of the music content? (i.e. are there points at which new things happen?) Is there a point of climax?

Paynter and Aston, 1970: 127

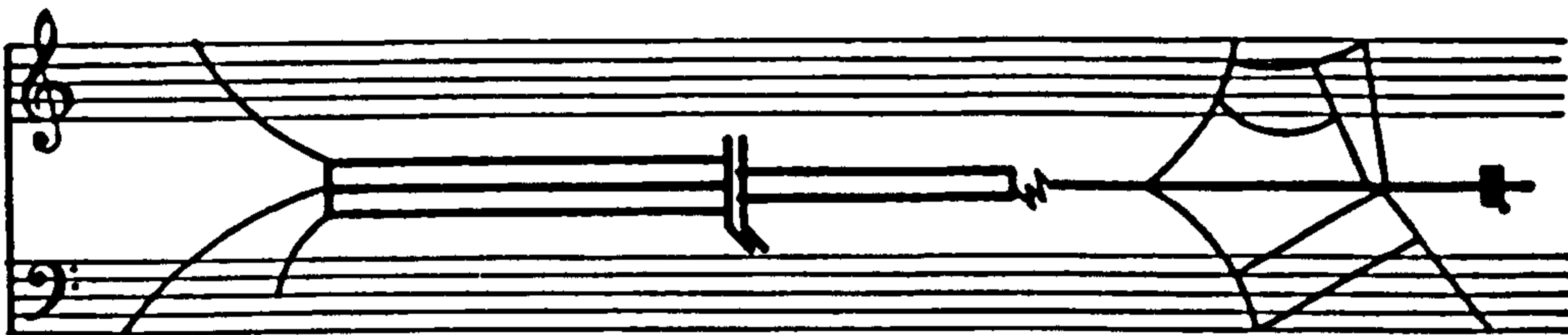


Fig. 8.3: 'Shapes into Music', from Paynter and Aston, 1970: 127.

Later in the project Paynter and Aston draw explicitly from Cardew's catalogue using *Octet' 61* as a model composition:

For those with a reasonable knowledge of conventional notation: Look at the shapes in Cardew's *Octet 61 for Jasper Johns*. Most of them stem from traditional notation symbols. Cardew seems to be interested in calligraphy: try something like this for yourself. Start with notes, clefs, time-signatures, key-signature, and construct a 'score' for interpretation. Give it to a group of players and let them use it as the basis for a piece of music.

Paynter and Aston, 1970: 128

Both *Sound and Silence* and *Hear and Now* were closely related to the Schools Council Project *Music in the Secondary School Curriculum*. Established in 1973 and directed by Paynter the project worked with approximately 200 schools to trial approaches and materials based on the ideas of *Sound and Silence* and the related literature. Paynter's resulting book that shared the project's name (Paynter, 1982) was perhaps the culmination of this era, drawing together the findings of the project into what could be considered a pedagogy of music, described by Green (2008) as the 'creative music movement'. Significantly, elements of the 'guiding principles' that open the text demonstrates sympathies with the Cardewist Manifesto as outlined in chapter seven. Paynter talks of the need for music to 'be available to *all* pupils'; that it enhances lives by offering 'unparalleled opportunities for the development of imagination, sensitivity, inventiveness and delight'; that music 'requires creative thought' (Paynter, 1982: xiii).

Music in the Secondary School Curriculum deserves one last interesting observation in relation to Cardew. Appendix 1 of the book (ibid: 187–210) provides plans for four 'programmes of work' devised by the teachers involved in the project. This includes an extensive selection of related listening materials from across the western classical tradition with a predominance of twentieth century and avant-garde work. Nowhere in this list is a work by Cardew mentioned. Given the importance of Cardew and the British experimental scene in instigating and informing elements of this work this initially appears rather strange. It is, of course, partly explained by the then lack (though not complete absence) of recorded examples of Cardew in comparison to Cage, Stockhausen, Berio, Crumb, Penderecki, Ligeti and others. But it is perhaps also representative of my earlier assertion that the legacy of Cardew has little to do with those elements that define other composers' legacies because Cardew belongs in the 'Others' camp of which Bohlman talks (1992a: 133). Cardew and his contemporaries within the Scratch Orchestra informed the creative music movement through their

attitude to music-making and their *modes* of music-making. The actual music is a by-product of this and, as a result, of less significance. Simply listening to *Octet '61* would not help engage young musicians in the processes of musical interpretation that characterize the work.

While Paynter always promoted the importance of children being given the chance to hear and take part in music by contemporary composers his rationale seems broader than that earlier expounded by Self and Dennis: that is, the need for a musical education that reflects contemporary music. For Paynter, the argument focused more keenly on the needs of the participants, not the need to, as Dennis suggests, keep music 'alive and vital' (Dennis, 1970: 1):

The rationale behind all this kind of work was that it opened children's ears, it educated the feelings, it allowed for an imaginative creative response, involving players, challenging them. Excitement and a sense of adventure were present for children.

Rainbow with Cox, 2006: 338

But, of course, it is not only contemporary or experimental music that is able to 'open children's ear' and 'educate the feelings', and it was the realization of this that saw this period of creative music in schools develop into a more pluralistic approach. To return to Dennis: 'The health of an art is in danger if those who teach it fall too far beyond those who practise it' (Dennis, 1970: 1). What Dennis fails to take into account with this statement is the obvious fact that many of 'those who practise' are not performers or composers of experimental music or even 'classical' music, but working within pop and rock, jazz, electronic, folk, and indigenous music from around the world (although 'world music' was not particularly prevalent in the UK at that time). Paynter himself recognized that the creative music movement had adopted a rather exclusive identity that manifested itself as 'a dichotomy between these activities and other aspects of school music making' (Paynter, 1982: 137). Paynter considered this 'regrettable', his

intention having been to establish a 'fresh and possibly wider view of music in education that could be both forward-looking *and* embrace the best of traditional attitudes' (ibid). A second series of classroom projects, *Sound and Structure* (Paynter, 1992), built further on the ideas of *Sound and Silence*, broadening the palette of starting points and references to include popular music and music from around the world, though it remained predominantly informed by contemporary Western art music.

The potential value of popular music forms in the classroom was something that Keith Swanwick identified as early as 1968 in *Popular Music and the Teacher* but the idea failed to gather momentum. Vulliamy and Lee (1976) furthered the cause, and again in 1982 with *Pop, Rock and Ethnic Music in School*, which included chapters not just on popular music but also African drumming, gamelan, steel pans and Indian music. It was not until the 1980s and 90s that a broadening of the 'types' of music informing classroom practice seemed to gather pace. These developments, alongside the impact on music education of the General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) and the National Curriculum, introduced in 1986 and 1988 respectively, are comprehensively described in Pitts (2000: 126–173) and Rainbow with Cox (2006: 345–85). Both the GCSE and National Curriculum are characterized by the integration of composing, performing and listening, and the collaborative way of working that was first established in Paynter's work and continues to thrive.⁷

By the first decade of the 21st century the perceived barriers between popular music, world music and the traditional classical approaches to music learning have finally been eroded. Vocational qualifications in music (most notably, Edexcel's BTEC First and

⁷ Elements of the Paynter's approach have also continued to thrive beyond the UK. Australian composer and educator Richard Vella (2000), informed by *Sound and Silence*, revisits a number of Self and Dennis-like scores and Schafer's 'ear-cleaning' style ideas but with specific reference to the additional possibilities afforded through the rapidly developing software of the time. Musical examples are abundant and diverse but include Cage, Feldman, Stockhausen and Gavin Bryars. Vella also points to the sort of 'people processes' found in *The Great Learning* (Vella, 2000: 232).

National Diplomas) are established programmes in the post-compulsory education sector and increasingly so in schools. Green (2001) identifies, through the analysis of how popular musicians learn and develop, an alternative understanding of what it is to be 'musically educated' and whether the informal nature of this musical education 'may or may not be reasonably adapted and included within formal music education, in a move to help re-invigorate the musical involvement of the populace at large' (Green, 2001: 18): an aim with strong resonances of the Cardewist spirit. Green proposes not simply that popular music should be an integrated part of the music curriculum but that it can inform and shape the approaches and attitudes towards music learning. Green (2008) then goes on to describe and evaluate this approach in action through one of three 'path-finder' projects of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation's Musical Futures initiative.⁸

The project Green dissects is based around the application of five identified characteristics of informal music learning, informed by Green's earlier research:

Using music that pupils choose, like and identify with; learning by listening and copying recordings; learning with friends; engaging in personal, often haphazard learning without structured guidance; integrating listening, performing, improvising and composing in all aspects of the learning process.

Green, 2008: 23

Green notes that elements of this invite comparisons with Paynter and the associated creative music movement, specifically the creation of music in small groups. Green explains, however, that the approaches diverge in two fundamental ways. Firstly, the informal learning model is not governed by ideas found in contemporary Western art

⁸ The Musical Futures project was established in 2003 with the aim of devising 'new and imaginative ways of engaging young people in music activities' (Price, 2005: 3). Three 'pathfinder' projects were commissioned to be led by music services. Nottingham, with which I was involved, developed a new Key Stage 3 curriculum alongside an integrated initial teacher training programme. Leeds explored online technologies as a means of engaging learners beyond the classroom. Hertfordshire introduced the notion on informal music learning as exemplified in Green (2002 and 2008). See Price (2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2007), Renshaw (2005) and Ashworth (2007) for information and reports in the projects. The Musical Futures website (www.musicafutures.org) also includes a wealth of teacher support materials and multimedia resources.

music. Secondly, Green's understanding of 'child-centredness' is focused not only on the autonomy of the participants' actions but also on the musical materials that instigate that action. Green encourages the participants to choose music they 'like and identify with' whereas Paynter imposed stimuli and listening materials on the participants – no doubt with the view to participants developing a taste for and identity with it, but imposed nonetheless. Paynter himself recognized the value of learners' existing musical interests and prior informal learning:

Because most pupils already have an interest in music of one kind or another, a variety of musical activities are possible which are not dependent upon formal musical training. These are starting points, and appropriate training should then follow from identification of the pupil's musical interests.

Paynter, 1982: xiii

While this statement forms part of the guiding aims of the *Music in the Secondary School Curriculum* project it was perhaps not fully realized at that time and Green notes that 'whilst there are both similarities and differences between the creative music movement and the project, the teachers in the project were in agreement that the differences overrode the similarities' (Green, 2008: 12). This may be so, but there remain unavoidable references to music education's Cardew-informed past: the centrality of individual and group ownership, social interaction, unstructured progression and performing-improvising-composing as an integrated notion all nod in the direction of the Scratch mentality that informed the creative music movement. It could be argued that without the injection of the anarchic and anti-establishment work of Cardew and the Scratch Orchestra, and the key individuals who expounded its potential within music education, the developments of the last 40 years would have been significantly slower. The fact that Green's work and that of the three Musical Futures pathways projects have met with little resistance and are increasingly commonplace in schools⁹ is

⁹ See Price (2007: 18) for information on the participative impact in this work. It can be assumed that these figures have grown considerably since its publication and I am anecdotally aware of the increasingly significant impact the Nottingham project has had across the region and beyond.

perhaps representative of a process of normalization: notions such as those stated in my Cardewist Manifesto that at one time challenged the orthodoxy and informed an 'experimental' approach are now considered 'normal' and examples of the best practice of music, certainly within education settings.

Founders of Scratch: Howard Skempton and Michael Parsons

Skempton and Parsons are perhaps the natural choice of composers to consider in relation to Cardew. Skempton studied privately with Cardew in 1967, Parsons was an admirer of his work. Both were essentially disciples of Cardew during the experimental years, jointly forming the Scratch Orchestra with him, and both have continued to consider themselves primarily as composers to the present day. Their music, however, does not necessarily speak of Cardew in the first instance, both composers having developed their own distinct compositional voices.

The most immediate common ground between Cardew, Skempton and Parsons is the debt afforded to Feldman. Even before the intervention of Cardew, Skempton was drawn to the pared-down style of Feldman, as apparent in *A Humming Song* of 1967 (fig. 8.4), which demonstrates a static quality that Skempton continued to explore throughout the 1970s and beyond through a growing series of piano miniatures and pieces for solo accordion.

In very simple terms Anderson, in her 1983 survey of British experimental music, noted that '[Skempton] would choose several combinations of single notes and two, three or four note chords, then would use chance operations to determine their placement' (Anderson, 1983: 244-5). Skempton's music of this period is distinctive in its employment of mostly sonorous tonal harmonies but, unlike his minimalist contemporaries, a

conscious aversion to process techniques. Skempton states that he was, and still is, more interested in 'a combination of immediacy and timelessness' (Skempton, 2003: email discussion) than linear development, the music demonstrating repeated ideas but not being defined by repetitiveness. Nyman describes Skempton as being occupied with 'the captured moment, potential rather than actual recurrence' (Nyman, 1999: 167). Indeed, he makes claims that Skempton's *Waltz* of 1970 was 'the first experimental tonal piece to be conceived in terms of a connected melodic and harmonic sequence – a new "tonal" language' (ibid). Any number of Skempton's piano pieces of the 1970s demonstrate similar qualities, figure 8.5 being one example.

As slowly and quietly as possible

HOWARD SKEMPTON

Black notes should be hummed as well as played.

April 1967

Fig. 8.4: Skempton, *A Humming Song* (1967), Oxford University Press.



Fig. 8.5: Skempton *Saltaire Melody* (1977), Oxford University Press.

Parsons, in his writing on Skempton's music, notes that Skempton appears to have consciously removed many of the expected contexts of tonality. No longer a tool of expression, structure or pace, the tonal elements are allowed to exist on their own terms:

Skempton's music takes a fresh look at some of the basic elements of musical language; scales, familiar melodic shapes and chords often freed from their traditional associations and presented in a new light. A good example is the chromatic scale in the *Waltz for piano* ... which has none of the expressive implications of chromaticism in classical music.

Parsons, 1980: 14

The tonal nature of this music is an obvious departure from Cardew's pre-political work though Skempton also identifies direct threads, citing Cardew's *Unintended Piano Music* of 1970 as being 'very close' to what he does. Feldman remains the fundamental connection, though Skempton believes it was Cardew who bridged the gap between Feldman, himself and perhaps Parsons. Cardew was drawn to the lack of system in Feldman's music and, crucially, the richness he perceived as a result:

HS: Cardew was really very impressed by Feldman's lack of system, the fact that you could just do a rest, a fermata or something. You could have a single note with a fermata, then a long rest, then another note. And this is so rich. He said this is fantastically rich and complex music and there's so little there – the richness of a decision, a single decision. Feldman said at one time the sound is the experience. Cardew talked about informal sound, about noise. He was very interested in sounds that couldn't be pinned down. The sort of sounds that can't be notated.

Skempton believes that it was perhaps the improviser in Cardew that drew him to these qualities of Feldman's music, and it is exactly that element of Cardew's own music that manifests itself in Skempton's music – the pared-down musical material serving to further amplify the importance of the individual decisions made, whether that be a tonal shift, a repeated idea or simply the placement of a chord or note. *Of Late* (fig. 8.6) demonstrates this quality, each new chord representing a single musical decision. The piece is in essence a simple sequence of such simple but rich decisions. Cardew's *February Pieces* occupies an entirely different sonic universe but is curiously characterized by the same vitality of decision-making, only here delegated to the performer who must order the sequence of events and finer details of those events.

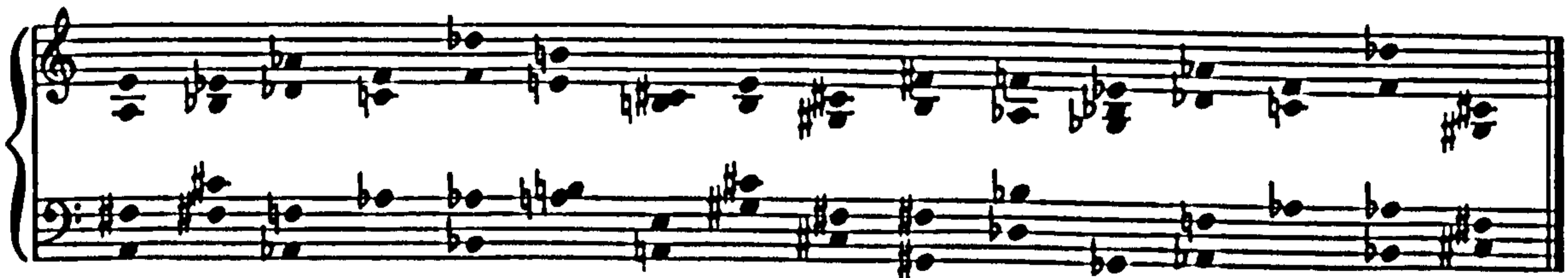


Fig. 8.6: Skempton, *Of Late* (1992), Oxford University Press.

Both Skempton and Parsons had been prolific providers of Scratch Music and Parsons was also responsible for works of longer duration for the Scratch Orchestra, demonstrating a particular interest in the use of prose scores as in *Walk* of 1969 (fig. 8.7).

WALK

for any number of people walking in a large open space

Each person chooses 3, 4 or 5 points, of roughly equal distance from each other, and walks from one to another of these points, using pairs of randomly chosen numbers to determine:

- i) speed of walking from one point to the next
- ii) length of time spent standing still at the point reached

All begin together. Standing at one of your chosen points, read your first pair of figures. The first figure tells you how fast to move to get to the next point (0=very fast, 9=very slowly): the second figure tells you how long to stay at the point reached (0=no time at all, 9=a very long time). Then set off, at the determined speed, for another of your chosen points; having arrived and waited there for the indicated length of time, read your second pair of figures, and set off accordingly for another point (or back to the first point: choice of which of the 3, 4 or 5 points to move to for each journey is free). Always go from one point to the next by the most direct route. Continue until all have completed an agreed number of journeys.

Fig. 8.7: Parsons, *Walk* (1969), reproduced in Nyman (1999: 137).

Whereas Skempton continued to be drawn to a lack of system, Parsons warmed to the processes of minimalism citing his involvement in early performances of Terry Riley's *In C* (1964) as of seminal interest. The resulting series of pieces *Rhythm Studies* (1970), *Rhythm Studies I and II* (1971) and *Rhythmic Studies 3 and 4* (1972) attempted to reconcile the process derived repetition of Terry Riley and Steve Reich with a more consciously composer-controlled structure. This delicate balance between maintaining and relinquishing control appears to have been a fundamental concern at this time. In speaking about *Rhythmic Study No 4* in 1974 Parsons states:

All the music is fully controlled and notated – with the reservation that, having been through this experimental period, all of us having developed what I've tried to define as an experimental attitude to music, we recognize that control doesn't mean complete control over everything that's going to happen. It means that you establish certain controls, but that you're also interested in what departs from the controls ... And this is, I think, the essential thing about experimental music...the more you control, the more you become aware of elements which you're not controlling.

Parsons, 1974: 23

This is similar to my earlier assertion that Cardew himself was characterized by a certain duality and tension between instruction and freedom, perhaps also apparent in the skeletal qualities of many of Skempton's scores.

As suggested by *Walk*, Parsons was also interested in the integration of music with the physical environment in which it is created, a situation that further exacerbates the conflict between elements controllable by a composer and those beyond even human intervention. One such example is *Echo Piece* originally devised in 1974 but reworked for a 1976 cliff-top performance in Finland where 'Parsons and Skempton, clapping small logs of pine and birch together, walked away from the cliff according to specific instructions by Parsons' (Anderson, 1983: 252) in doing so shaping the duration and tone of the natural reverberations. Such environmental pieces would sometimes be created through a more Scratch influenced workshop approach, as Anderson recalls of a later piece in 1982:

In [*Pendulums and Pulses*], pendulums made of string and various heavy objects such as bricks, rocks and piano tuning keys were suspended from a bridge over a canal. Each performer was given an organ pipe with which he played a self-determined pulse based on the swing of the pendulum he was watching (once every three swings, for instance). After a time the players left the pendulum to improvise while walking along the canal, through the zoo and a park, and then back to the building which houses the Collective.¹⁰

Anderson, 1983: 253-4

Both Skempton and Parson are among those Scratchers who did not follow Cardew into the Communist Party of England. Parsons felt that he could not subscribe to the all-pervasiveness of joining the party and the fight – his commitment to teaching and music remaining his primary concern. Parsons taught at Portsmouth Art College throughout the 1970s, an environment where Marxist politics and thinking, however, were not to be

¹⁰ Anderson is here referring to the London Musician's Collective with which Parsons worked from about 1978 and throughout the 1980s.

avoided. As previously noted, he therefore maintained an interest in Marxism and through this a continuing link with Cardew:

MP: There was a lot of discussion and critical activity with regard to mainstream culture. That was always very important, in Portsmouth particularly during the 1970s. Cornelius himself came down to Portsmouth and talked to students there on several occasions. So we kept in touch.

For Skempton, the split with Cardew was more defined, the pair having little contact from about 1976 until 1981, shortly before Cardew's death. This was due to circumstance rather than any particularly ideological clash, though Skempton is reserved in his sentiments about music as a political tool. Indeed, there is a sense of resentment over some of the criticisms made by those who followed Cardew into the political realms. Skempton recalls an episode at a CoMA Summer School when Tilbury had presented an open challenge to composers who were not more politically engaged. Skempton argues the case for such composers:

HS: Why do composers get it in the neck all the time? More often than not they're getting absolutely no money out of this. There's no glory in it, it's hard work, and they're getting it in the neck because they're not politically engaging. What about the performers? It seems OK for performers not to be political. And there are so many reasons for writing music. You might want to write music for educational reasons. If you're writing a primer for seven year olds you shouldn't be criticized if it isn't political. I felt that very strongly.

As for Cardew's music of that later period, Skempton cites its limitation in the lack of appeal to those very people Cardew wished to influence:

HS: It appealed to the party members and they sang the songs with gusto but it would never have the appeal of the best pop music.

Interestingly, however, Skempton does not ever dismiss the work of this period as others have and continue to do so. Despite his refusal to become a political motivated composer he holds a respectful regard for what he sees as a positive trait of Cardew:

HS: The point is I do see something very positive. I benefited from it as well – and that is the need, as Cardew said about Cage, of shuffling over to the working class. I see it very much as a class conflict and can understand the politics in that. There are people who work and are exploited and there are people who exploit them. People who benefit and people who are exploited. And the great enemy I would say is complacency.

In this respect, elements of Skempton's work continued to be informed by Cardew despite his physical absence. Skempton takes a certain pride in the fact that he considers much of his music – particularly the piano and accordion pieces – to have a wider appeal than the tradition from which they grew. Skempton performed during the 1980s at miner's strike concerts, meeting and talking with miners. He has performed the accordion pieces to folk audiences and in pubs. In sympathy with Cardew's politically motivated music, he also used folk melodies as source material in pieces commemorating specific incidents of working class action: *The Mold Riots* (1986) and *The Durham Strike* (1985) (fig. 8.8) which is based on a traditional melody from the North East of England.



Fig. 8.8: Skempton, *The Durham Strike* (1985), Oxford University Press.

For Parsons, the political activities of Cardew had a more conscious impact on his compositional style. Although Parsons continued to pursue elements of experimental exploration in his art school context he states that the influence of the political ideas resulted in a certain discouragement from engaging in experimentalism within the

public sphere. He felt that even those not directly involved in political actions felt an imperative to make music in a more accessible style. As a result Parsons abandoned the use of indeterminate scores and focussed on music that obeyed more traditionally accepted stylistic norms:

MP: I wrote a lot of pieces based on traditional folk music as well. Although they weren't specifically political in the Cardew sense, they were still motivated by the idea that they should be accessible to ordinary listeners without any special knowledge of twentieth-century music. So I did some pieces based on Greek traditional folk music, some pieces based on Scottish melodies, arrangements of Macedonian traditional melodies, alongside other more abstract pieces. They were social in that broader sense of being accessible.

In recent years Parsons has returned once more to some of the ideas explored before Cardew's political phase. This revival of sorts coincided, and to an extent is informed by, his work with Anton Lukoszevieve and Apartment House, to be discussed in due course. During the 1990s Parsons also found himself engaging with Cardew's earlier music through a number of recording and performing projects. It seems that this combination of activity has facilitated Parsons in assessing the Cardew legacy from a more holistic perspective and provided an impetus to re-visit certain areas.

MP: I began to realize there are certain things that could have happened with this music if things had gone differently. There are sort of open ends which could still be developed and so I started to work on those. Since about 1995 I think the things I've been doing are closer to the things we were doing in the 60s and 70s than anything in between. Cardew was a big influence on my work at the time of course, but retrospectively, he's become an important influence again.

The importance of Feldman also seems to have returned as exemplified in Parson's more recent pieces for piano (fig. 8.6). Here Parsons is re-engaging with elements of indeterminacy and time-space notation. Indeterminate techniques also characterize the two *Apartment House Suites* of 1998 and 1999. The suites are for non-specific instrumentation and explore a range of indeterminate elements such as pitch, rhythm, structure and placement of sonic events. I asked Lukoszevieve for his thoughts on Parson's music during my 2008 interview with him:

AL: Michael's music is in a way a synthesis of Christian Wolff and early Cardew – *The Great Learning* as well as the more complex earlier Cardew pieces. And, of course, his own explorations of things like canons and more traditional models.

In this respect, Parsons is almost literally continuing the compositional work of the Cardew of that era, a sentiment with which Lukoszevieve concurs.

AL: I think Michael's music is the clearest extension and continuation of Cardew's music. There are elements in Michael's music, especially these suites, which refer to *The Great Learning* as well as some of the more complex earlier Cardew pieces.

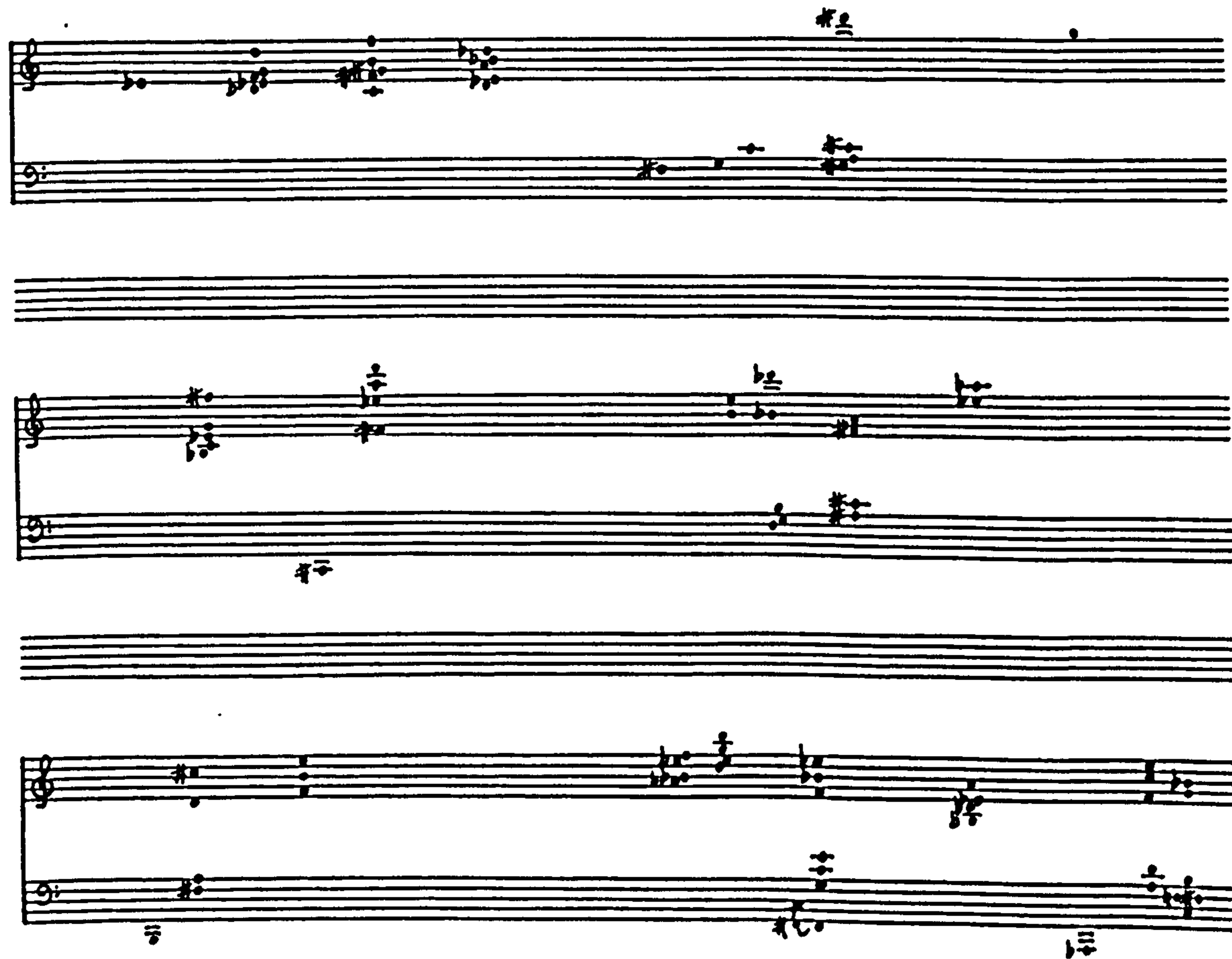


Fig. 8.9: Parsons, *Piano Piece May 2003*, unpublished.

AL: Michael's music is in a way a synthesis of Christian Wolff and early Cardew – *The Great Learning* as well as the more complex earlier Cardew pieces. And, of course, his own explorations of things like canons and more traditional models.

In this respect, Parsons is almost literally continuing the compositional work of the Cardew of that era, a sentiment with which Lukoszevieze concurs.

AL: I think Michael's music is the clearest extension and continuation of Cardew's music. There are elements in Michael's music, especially these suites, which refer to *The Great Learning* as well as some of the more complex earlier Cardew pieces.



Fig. 8.9: Parsons, *Piano Piece May 2003*, unpublished.

Skempton has been less fragmentary in the way he has continued to develop his idiosyncratic style, which has been much more in keeping with the conventional mode of linear stylistic development. The piano and accordion miniatures have remained a central part of Skempton's creative output but an increasing number of commissions over the last 20 years has seen the steady growth of a catalogue of chamber, orchestral and, most recently, choral works, many still characterized by his now trademark sense of timelessness, simplicity and directness of execution, but dressed in the additional expanse of colours afforded by the larger ensemble. By any conventional measure of success, it is Skempton rather than Parsons who would be considered the 'greater' composer. He is published extensively by Oxford University Press, regularly recorded and broadcast and boasts an impressive résumé of commissions from high profile orchestras, choruses and ensembles. Skempton is in every sense a professional composer, composing almost exclusively to commission – intriguingly a path that Parsons appears to have an inclination to avoid, perceiving the Cardew approach as anti-professional.

MP: It's still to me the most interesting approach to music. There's a sort of aliveness about Cardew's understanding of sound which I don't find very often in the more competitive professional music making. It seems to lose something in the process of becoming professional and highly pressurized. It seems to lose a certain kind of spaciousness about the feeling for sound which he had.

This is the clearest distinction between Skempton and Parsons, demonstrating that it is perhaps Parsons who is more in tune with the Cardew aesthetic outlined in the previous chapter. We partly return to the problem of definitions and what we might understand by the term 'composer'. Skempton, by his own admission, is not the same type of composer as Cardew: 'Cardew was infuriated by my fastidiousness ... He thought that I was too careful, too concerned with perfection and probably unwilling to get my hands dirty as a composer' (Skempton, 2003). Skempton could not imagine Cardew inhabiting the professional world of the commissioned composer in the way he does himself. In

fact, in this respect Skempton reported to me that 'in a curious sort of way I always felt I was more of a composer than he was. I always thought he was really a critic rather than a composer'.

Skempton, then, is an anomalous and contradictory figure in the Cardew story. Stylistically divergent, uneasy with aspects of Cardew's politics, and conforming to a model of composer that Cardew attacked so vociferously in *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism*. Despite the social awareness Skempton developed through his observation of Cardew's activity, he is in most respects what Cardew would consider to be a bourgeois composer. Yet, he remains sympathetic and respectful to Cardew's political causes, regards Cardew's music as one of honesty, integrity and the utmost professionalism, sought Cardew out as a teacher, and maintains Cardew as a seminal influence on his work as a composer. But this should perhaps not be a surprise. If anything, the common ground this anomalous and contradictory figure shares with Cardew can be found in those very anomalous and contradictory qualities.

The Cornelius Cardew Ensemble

The Cornelius Cardew Ensemble was formed in 1995 as the ensemble-in-residence at the now defunct University College Bretton Hall, a faculty of the University of Leeds. Bretton Hall offered a BA(Hons) in Contemporary Musics, one of only a handful of UK institutions offering a music degree with an explicit focus on contemporary music. Jos Zwaanenburg was appointed director of the ensemble, though composer Barry Russell – a full time lecturer in the faculty – was also instrumental in the day-to-day management and direction of the ensemble.

The ensemble was primarily a resource for the course. Students were invited to compose for the group, engage in rehearsals, discuss problems and technical concerns, and ultimately have new work performed in concerts at Bretton Hall and beyond. In order to best aid the development of compositional skill the ensemble was designed to represent all sections of the orchestral convention and the original line-up contained flute, trumpet, cello, percussion, piano, and soprano voice.¹¹ The ensemble was keen, however, for this not to limit the available sound world. Instruments could be modified with a range of electronics and all musicians were experienced in extending the technique of their instrument, incorporating theatrics and non-western instruments and techniques. The message to students was that the ensemble was in effect a plaything, and given the liberal and explorative ethos already established on the Contemporary Musics programme, this thrived: the ensemble represented a living and breathing group that gave many students their first opportunity to compose for musicians. The ensemble resided in the department in four-week blocks, rehearsing a range of repertoire (student work, established works of the field including Cardew, unusual or abstruse works), working with students to find compositional solutions to ideas, and providing a series of three concerts at Bretton Hall. The Cornelius Cardew Foundation gave the ensemble permission to use Cardew's name as it sympathized with the ethos presented by Zwaanenburg and Russell as founders, an ethos that resonated with the Cardewist manifesto outlined in chapter seven.

Although the Bretton Hall residencies provided the core of the ensemble's initial activities the group quickly began to operate within broader settings. Indeed, it is within these other settings where the Cardew aesthetic becomes increasingly evident. The ensemble performed at various festivals around the UK and abroad but central to the ensemble's legacy is the Pub Operas – a growing series of mini-operas composed by

¹¹ This line-up became more flexible over time according to requirements of specific projects and availabilities of specific musicians.

Russell himself for performance in pubs. The genre also branched out into a railway station opera, an office opera and ultimately a site-specific outdoor opera for St George's Square in Huddersfield town centre. The Pub Operas take as their starting points tales and urban myths typical to the pub environment – stag nights, first dates and angry wives have all featured (fig. 8.10). They are typically scored for two singers – usually Russell as the protagonist plus a soprano voice – and a reduced ensemble of four. The singers generally perform in and among the crowd rather than 'on stage', with two or three operas being performed during the evening. Stylistically they are informed by contemporary music traditions though with a mix of 'safer' music and parodied operatic technique. Russell explained in my interview with him that they are 'not high-art contemporary – they mix things which could be contemporary music-hall songs with experimental textures'.

The musical score consists of six staves. From top to bottom, they are: Flute (Fl.), Trumpet (Tpt.), Percussion (Perc.), Woman's vocal line, Man's vocal line, and Bass Clarinet (B. Cl.). The lyrics for both vocal parts are: "Here's to a ha-ppy life as man and wife and here's to all the lads and la-sses we've shagged a-long the way!". The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Fig. 8.10: Russell, *Stags, hens and inflatable sheep* (2000), Edition Peters.

Just as the Scratch Orchestra wished to work within a public sphere beyond concert halls, the Pub Operas took elements of contemporary music culture and presented them to an audience who would perhaps not otherwise consider listening to such music.

Russell is quick to explain that this was not some sort of evangelical mission however.

The central aim was to entertain the drinkers:

- TH:* To what extent were you consciously trying to take contemporary music to a new audience, and to what extent were you entertaining the masses in the pub?
- BR:* I was entertaining the masses in the pub, and I just happen to write like that. It just happened to be the ensemble I was writing for. So what they heard was interesting textures you could make with four instruments and two voices, telling stories which were ribald and entertaining

In the event, the value of the Pub Operas often seemed to be more fundamental than introducing a new music. Russell recalls an encounter at a particularly challenging pub in Oldham¹²:

- BR:* There was a pool match going on and the captain of the pool team went up to Jos afterwards and asked if it was a real flute. He didn't want to hold it, just touch it! It was amazing – these people had never been near people who could play instruments to that standard, they had never been near people singing in an operatic way.

It would be patronizing to suggest this was a typical encounter. There are many pub goers in the UK perfectly au fait with the instruments of the orchestra, but the Pub Operas did seem to receive the most positive reactions in the more down-at-heel pubs. Indeed, in the more up-market venues Russell recalls the ensemble sometimes experienced some 'pretty sniffy reactions – not so much about the music, but sniffy about the stories, the content, the swearing, the partial nudity'. So, while the starting point was to provide an alternative form of pub entertainment, as time progressed the ensemble became aware of the value implicit in the performances. We return to the Cardewist notion of people being central to musical practices: the Pub Operas allowed people to have a musical experience they might otherwise not be able to access:

¹² In order to encourage the drinkers to attend the operas the landlord had kindly laid on a support act in the form of a blue comedian. Perhaps a world's first for a contemporary music ensemble.

BR: I remember once in Canterbury this guy at the bar, who didn't want to know, sat with his back to us very pointedly while we performed, and eventually turned round and round until he was laughing his head off and thoroughly enjoying it. And he was hearing some quite extravagant music.

Despite the unusual performance contexts of such operas they still exhibit the relatively traditional conventions of composer, performer and audience, and as such are only partly sympathetic to the characteristics described in the manifesto of the preceding chapter. The ensemble's most typically Cardewist approach is perhaps best demonstrated by the participatory nature of many of its projects. Once established at Bretton Hall the ensemble quickly became involved in wider education and community settings. Performances would often be coupled with participatory workshop activities.

At the 1997 Walton Festival in Oldham, for instance, the ensemble presented a range of performance events – the Pub Operas, Walton's *Façade*, a concert of current repertoire and, crucially, performances of new music created by young people in workshop settings. In this instance the participants had already demonstrated a particular interest in music making and instrumental work, but elsewhere the ensemble would work with diverse groups of people with the full range of prior experiences in music. Russell, for instance, devised series of 'concerto' projects featuring members of the ensemble as soloists working alongside an 'orchestra' made up of primary and secondary school children – the models for such compositional exercises drawing heavily on Cardew's approach. One such project, *songlines and LONGlines* (1998) (fig. 8.11), is an example of how Russell will combine various types of notation within a score that in its fullness bears a resemblance in its visual diversity to *The Great Learning*. Essentially a concerto for piano and an orchestra of project participants, the score requires the performers to respond to text, graphics and conventional notations as appropriate. Only the solo piano part is notated according to conventional linear norms, and this largely provides the time-based structure of the work. Elsewhere the 'orchestral' part is a combination of workshopped ideas, mini-composition tasks and improvisation. The partly improvised

first journey stage 1

Orchestrate the chords by choosing a range of sounds, some short some sustained. Make patterns with the notes (rhythms or arpeggios for example). Some players should play exactly what is written. Add melodies over the top using the pitches in brackets. Use the last line to fade into the Songline...

1

As letter **A**, gradually changing to the material below

H

H O C K W
 n o p h s t o n e s
 SLATE GRANITE FLINT CHALK
 GRAVEL SLATE GRANITE FLINT
 CHALK GRAVEL SLATE GRANITE
 SLATE GRANITE FLINT CHALK
 GRAVEL SLATE GRANITE FLINT

S T O U N D
 S T O U N D

S S T A T E T H R O W I N G S T O N E S
 S S T A T E T H R O W I N G S T O N E S
 S S T A T E T H R O W I N G S T O N E S
 S S T A T E T H R O W I N G S T O N E S
 S S T A T E T H R O W I N G S T O N E S

S S T A T E T H R O W I N G S T O N E S
 S S T A T E T H R O W I N G S T O N E S
 S S T A T E T H R O W I N G S T O N E S
 S S T A T E T H R O W I N G S T O N E S

first journey 3a
songline 3a

first journey 3b
songline 3b

first journey 3c
songline 3c

Fig. 8.11: Russell, *songlines & LONGlines* (1998), BMIC Collection.

elements – the sections using conventional staff notation to relay its pitch and harmonic information – form the harmonic backbone of the work, rising systematically through the work to give the impression of 'journey' that forms the theme of the piece. Jolyon Laycock, in his book *A Changing Role for the Composer in Society*, refers to Russell's use of 'reservoirs of notes' (Laycock, 2005: 291), a recurring characteristic in Russell's work, and similar to the harmonic and textural devices found in Paragraphs 2 and 7 of *The Great Learning*:

A feature of Russell's projects have been his invented modes, often based on modules other than an octave ... participants begin to become familiar with their particular colours, and to work with them in an improvisational way ... he is able to work with large groups of instrumentalists to create, with surprising rapidity, dense orchestral and choral textures which are musically convincing and harmonically rich.

Laycock, 2005: 291

While the concerto model allowed participants to experience, at close quarters, the virtuosic technical brilliance of the soloists, many of the Cardew Ensemble's projects consciously utilized the musicians in less conspicuous ways, with a view to affording maximum prominence and significance to the work of the participants. The ensemble themselves would often take on a subsidiary role. Laycock traces this trait back to Cardew:

A self-effacing man by inclination, Cardew did not wish to draw attention to his own very considerable powers of musical creativity, but to use his talents to help and inspire other people to discover their own creative abilities

Laycock, 2005: 44

An appropriate illustrative example of this approach is a project which formed the backbone of the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival's education and community programme in 2002, ultimately titled *Foundscapes, Soundscapes and Wor(l)plays*. The project featured members of the ensemble as performers, but most critically, as a team of animateurs – Russell (project director), Damien Harron (percussion), Susan Bisatt

(soprano) and myself (electronics). In addition, designer Moira Benoit worked with a group of students from Huddersfield Technical College on visual elements. The other project participants were a combination of primary and secondary schoolchildren from four different schools. Each member of the ensemble ran workshops within these schools to create episodes and layers of material. I worked with a group of GCSE students at Salendine Nook School, Huddersfield, recording material during other school-based workshops and creating a further electroacoustic layer of materials. In addition the Holme Valley Orchestra – an adult amateur ensemble – and the Yorkshire CoMA Ensemble were involved, Russell scoring specific materials for these groups. All participants, numbering in the hundreds, came together at Huddersfield Town Hall on 27th November 2002 where the various elements were sown together and performed to the festival audience. The piece was essentially plotted around the range of sub-groups, momentum and structure being maintained simply by moving between different groups, episodes, tutti sections, and layering different combinations of ensembles. The electroacoustic element and pre-recorded materials also acted as layers and links within the whole. This simplicity of means is something Laycock pays tribute to, suggesting it is the mechanism through which Russell maintains the differentiation and diversity of experiences and abilities within large groups of participants. He speaks, for instance, of Russell's

large repertoire of well-tried compositional devices designed to generate impressive and effective-sounding textures with simple means, while still allowing maximum flexibility for the display of individual skills and virtuosity on the part of the participants.

Laycock, 2005: 315

The result was a piece that parallels Cardew's vision of the interconnection of trained and untrained musicians, though perhaps with additional layers of complexity given the huge numbers and age range involved. Equality of importance of the participants was central to the success of the performance, the Cardew Ensemble musicians working

alongside the participants and often taking a backseat, demonstrating a firmly embedded sense of the Cardew aesthetic as laid out in parts of the manifesto of the preceding chapter.¹³

The participatory approach is now a mainstay of the UK community music and music education culture. The Cornelius Cardew Ensemble, however, found this not to be the case outside the UK. They had taken a model similar to the *Foundsapes* project to Plovdiv, Bulgaria a couple of years previously. Titled *Rituals for Orpheus*, Laycock, who project-managed the events, cites the project as 'an outstanding example of how a high level of cathartic climax can be achieved' (Laycock, 2005: 311). Members of the Cornelius Cardew Ensemble were deployed to work with a range of groups with a view to creating a newly devised performance for the city's Roman amphitheatre. The ensemble worked with 'two youth choirs, two folk bands, a wind orchestra, an accordion orchestra and children from an institution for abandoned street children – a total of 180 children and young people' (ibid). The inclusion of street children was vital to the perception of the project: 'Such 'openness' is an accepted part of many creative projects in Britain, but to the Bulgarians it was a new idea. Russell ensured that these socially underprivileged children played an important and conspicuous role in the final performance' (ibid). Russell agrees that the inclusive qualities of the ensemble's approach took the Bulgarians by surprise:

BR: To an extent in the UK we were working with an education system that had some notion of where this was coming from. But we took these ideas to Bulgaria where they were totally new, to the extent that the final performance was broadcast on state television.¹⁴ It was that important an experiment.

¹³ The range of compositional strategies employed by Russell, and the debt he pays to Cardew, was discussed in my 2008 interview with him. See appendix five (p. 302).

¹⁴ Bulgarian National Television followed the project and broadcast a 45-minute documentary. There was also considerable radio and print coverage of events. Similar community music projects in the UK tend to attract the attention of local newspapers at best.

Once again, equality between the ensemble and the project participants in the final performance was consciously and carefully balanced. Laycock recalls that the Cardew Ensemble's own performances, which filled out the concert programme (including Cardew's *The Tiger's Mind* alongside music by Frank Zappa), were 'severely overshadowed' (Laycock, 2005: 316) by the 50-minute performance of *Rituals for Orpheus*.

Russell considers the Bulgarian project an important achievement of the ensemble. When asked in which respect the ensemble were less successful Russell cites 'getting the funding to carry on. Possibly because of our anarchic view of life and musiking'. While the ensemble technically still exists and members still regularly work with each other, activities under the ensemble's name ceased in about 2004 as members became ensconced in their own performing, composing and teaching careers. There is little doubt that the members of the ensemble themselves felt the impact of the Cardew approach as experienced through such projects. Damien Harron, who was relatively new to education and community settings when the ensemble was formed, now works extensively in education and workshop settings alongside a busy performing and composing schedule. Susan Bisatt is now a vocal animateur for Calderdale Music Service alongside a range of other workshop and education based activity. I have worked variously in education and community settings and now within teacher training. In this respect Cardew's legacy has had a significant impact on us as practitioners, and therefore, the many with whom we have since worked.

Apartment House

Apartment House is a contemporary music ensemble formed in 1995 by the cellist Anton Lukoszevieze. At first glance there are a number of similarities with the Cornelius Cardew Ensemble – both formed in the mid 1990s; both groups are committed to the

performance of a range of new, contemporary, experimental and twentieth-century music; both groups perform at contemporary music festivals; both have a strong association with Cardew and are advocates of his work; both are flexible in their personnel and instrumental combinations. But there are key distinctions apparent between the ensembles right from the moment of formation. Whereas the Cardew Ensemble was formed primarily as a resource for others – essentially driven by the external need of a resident ensemble to enhance the Bretton Hall programme – Apartment House was initially driven by internal motivators.

TH: What led up to the formation of Apartment House?

AL: It started with myself and Ian Pace. We wanted to do concerts of music we wanted to play and hear. So basically it was a need and a personal taste. You can enjoy music at home, of course, and go to other people's concerts but I was interested in making concerts. So, it was just the two of us at the beginning. Then we parted our ways and I continued [with Apartment House].

In addition, the link with Cardew came about through different routes. Russell and Zwaanenburg had been aware of Cardew for some considerable time before the formation of the Cardew Ensemble. For Lukoszevieve the association was relatively less ingrained.

TH: When did you first become aware of Cardew's work and music and what drew you to it?

AL: I came to Cardew's music through Cage and that would have been the early '90s, through my explorations of experimental and avant-garde music of the last 50 years. It probably came through reading one of Cage's books where there may have been a mention of Cardew – maybe *A Year From Monday* or *For The Birds* ... And then through my experience of knowing and working with Michael Parsons which would have been 10 years ago now.

Parsons is a regular performer with Apartment House and, clearly, represents a critical connection to Cardew – the kind of systematic thread back to Cardew that does not exist within the Cornelius Cardew Ensemble.

Since its formation, Apartment House has steadily built a reputation through its regular performances and broadcasts. The group has now performed at all the major contemporary music festivals around Europe, and is one of the more visible ensembles in the field. Discussions with Lukoszevieve demonstrate a number of idiosyncrasies in his approach to Cardew's music. Firstly, he is highly selective as to which pieces he feels are worthy of programming. Given the nature of the ensemble it is to be expected that Apartment House are drawn to the more Cage-informed pieces of the 1960s and Lukoszevieve considers Cardew's greatest works to include *Solo with Accompaniment*, *Octet '61* and, particularly, *Autumn '60*.

AL: For me, the greatest Cardew works are piece like *Autumn '60* and *Solo with Accompaniment* and *Octet '61* and *The Great Learning*. They are totally self-sufficient but they are all encompassing, in a way, and there's a great integrity to the music. The great thing about something like *Autumn '60* – which I've conducted many times, all over the world now, I love the piece, one of the greatest pieces of avant-garde music – is its flexibility. It's inclusive and it's exclusive. The clever thing that Cardew did is maintaining this kind of skeleton pitch material through the piece. It's a kind of D minor F major feel, which is quite strange, but around all that you can have noises and sounds, perfect 5ths. You can have all these things that are banned and banished from traditional music but because he's structured the piece in a certain way, and he's given it all these rules which you can break or stick to within reason, he's made this wonderful kind of mobile.

Lukoszevieve believes, however, that Cardew ultimately damaged his reputation irretrievably by 'writing such terrible music in the '70s'. He is damning and dismissive of this later music, believing Cardew to be entirely misguided in the belief that he could influence people by 'playing an upright piano on a lorry with a bunch of saddos'.

AL: It was a sign of the times. Eddie Prévost said once that Cardew was just so rubbish he couldn't even play *Yellow Submarine* on the piano, it wasn't part of him, it wasn't really him. I find that rather sad in a way. I see him as a very tragic figure who got caught up in this thing, this maelstrom of the shifting political spectrum.

Furthermore, Lukoszevieve is adamant that these two broad sides to Cardew cannot be reconciled, believing that people drawn to Cardew are divided into two camps: 'Of

course there are some who like both, but I think they're deeply weird. I think they're just trying to be fair'.

The issue here is, perhaps, not so much about 'liking' both aspects as considering both aspects. Lukoszevieve's comments run counter to my earlier argument that the later political music, regardless of judgments as to the quality of the music, is fundamental to defining the Cardew aesthetic. Parsons and Tilbury have been equally quick to maintain the importance of considering Cardew's work as a whole (see, for instance, Tilbury, 1983: 11). To simply dismiss Cardew's later music completely is perhaps a significant compromise to one's Cardewist integrity.

The Cornelius Cardew Ensemble demonstrates a more holistic character. While not an overtly political organization in the party politics sense, they do demonstrate certain sympathies with the later Cardew. The piano repertoire features in their concert programmes but, more importantly, the ensemble is willing to embrace the notion that their performances can be used to challenge and tackle pre-supposed sensibilities.¹⁵

TH: Was the Cardew Ensemble political in any way?

BR: I don't think we ever considered ourselves as a political entity. The thing we had in common was a deep caring about a lot of kinds of music and the collective will to actually share that with as many people as possible and in as many places as possible, which is coming back to a bit of Scratch. I don't think we were consciously political but definitely subversive – if that's a political thing. Sometimes subversive in as far as everything was tongue in cheek and we were willing to take the mick out of the status quo and the canon. I suppose that could then be construed as being a political act in that nobody's allowed to criticize that canon and the great and the good. There we were doing it.

A further departure between the two groups, as already alluded to in chapter seven, is Lukoszevieve's tendency to work within, and make reference to, a relatively defined historical experimental tradition, in many respects the canon that the Cardew Ensemble

¹⁵ The Cardew Ensemble also demonstrated a more overt commitment to the idea of political music making by appearing at the 1997 Raise Your Banners festival of political music in Sheffield.

attempts to subvert. He claims that 'there are certain things that are in context and certain things that aren't', the 'context' being a very complex notion but essentially meaning a kind of code or protocol that has developed over forty or so years of experimental music performance practice. For Lukoszevieve, Cardew's is an historical music, and it is therefore performed according to historical practice.

AL: I think that's fair in any realm of music. People talk about interpretation all the time. Some people have said, 'yes, but it says you can do anything'. But it doesn't really say that. Cage has suffered so much from people's bad performances.

This devotion to the historical context is a trend that Russell finds particularly worrying, believing that Cardew's music should be 'alive' and free from pre-determined codes of behaviour and approach:

BR: I think possibly that [Cardew] was rebelling against this notion of the canon which I hate as well. He didn't want his works to enter the canon, which in a way they have with groups like Apartment House, and I think he would have hated that. I hope he wouldn't have hated our way of working with him, which was to consider them as living organisms and pieces to delight in, not as museum pieces. I hope we made them live rather than saying this is how they should be performed.

Russell, clearly, sees no point in disguising the divisions he perceives between Apartment House and the Cardew Ensemble. While paying tribute to their 'consummate musicianship', he remains critical of their approach to Cardew, citing a performance of *Schooltime Compositions* at the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival as particularly baffling.

BR: Their performance of that was all about a solo cellist and some other people wandering around doing odd things they didn't understand.

Intriguingly, this particular performance is considered by Lukoszevieve to be Apartment House at their most Cardew-esque, because the performance included non-professional musicians working alongside the ensemble. Russell would argue that simply including

people is not enough in meeting a Cardew aesthetic. Levels of ownership, engagement and understanding are also vital. Lukoszevieze considers the inclusion of the untrained performers in that particular performance as a 'bonus' and comments:

AL: If only I could do more projects where I could encompass a greater range of performers ... unfortunately the way music festivals and radio stations work you can't always encompass that aspect because they want certain repertoire.

This would immediately suggest an attitude counter to Cardew's commitment to avoiding compromise and maintaining honesty to one's art – forgoing a significant and defining aspect of the Cardew aesthetic due to the demands of controlling organizations. This issue is further muddied by the seemingly contradictory claim from Lukoszevieze that Apartment House aim to avoid the need to compromise:

AL: We're not state-funded. I've always wanted to be free from that. I don't want to have to jump through hoops with the Arts Council or be held by someone saying I should do 'x' amount of bollocks for the community or whatever. I don't think communities want experimental music.

In addition, Apartment House demonstrate no motivation in bringing their music to an audience beyond that which already exists:

TH: What is a typical Apartment House audience?

AL: It depends on where we play. If we play at the BBC you probably get a certain amount who always go to the BBC and a certain amount who like experimental music, or friends have suggested they come along. If we go to a festival you've got a specific audience. If we play in Cambridge we get people who never go to contemporary music. If we play in an art gallery you get a broader spectrum of people. But I don't aim at the audience. I just aim to perform as an artist to my best ability and to make programmes which I think have an integrity. As an artist that's all you can do. I'm not there to change people's minds.

Indeed, Lukoszevieze rather resents the notion of broadening contemporary music's audience:

AL: You fill in these forms for getting money and they say who is your target audience? You have to specify what percentage of your audience is black, disabled whatever. I think

that's totally insulting. I think it's totally insulting to the general public and to you as an artist. If they want to do surveys of audiences let them come and do it but don't expect me to do it.

This is considerably at odds with the Cornelius Cardew Ensemble's publicly communicated aim of bringing high quality contemporary music to the widest possible audience, particularly those who might not otherwise have such an opportunity.

Comments from Russell further exemplify this profound division:

BR: The most significant achievement [of the Cardew Ensemble] for me would be the person with the lowest expectations of that sort of music having the best experience of it. They thought of contemporary music being a certain thing, and they discover it to be something different because we present it in an audience friendly way.

Perhaps the most significant aspect to be drawn from this requires a reminder that Apartment House is considered, or perhaps assumed, by many to be today's premier purveyor's of Cardew's work, especially on the more established contemporary music concert circuit. The analysis of their attitude, or at least their director's attitude, towards music-making in this chapter, however, suggests a number of threads in which they run counter to the ideals I have described under the term 'Cardewism'. In many respects, Apartment House is an embodiment of the distorted understanding of the Cardew aesthetic as discussed in chapter seven. Whether their approach is a direct result of this distorted understanding, whether they are indeed a contributory cause, or whether – as is perhaps more likely – it is a combination of the two is difficult to assess.

CoMA: Contemporary Music Making for Amateurs

CoMA is an organization, formed in 1993, with a national network providing opportunities for amateur musicians to engage in the creation and performance of contemporary music. The genesis of the organization can be traced to an influential

music education project of the 1980s based in East London, a brief overview of which is offered here.

Tower Hamlets, a borough of East London, was rife with social and economic problems with evidence of 'acute racial discrimination, housing problems and appalling overcrowding which disproportionately affected ethnic minorities' (Swanwick & Jarvis, 1990: 6). The now defunct Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) were operating a music service that provided subsidized instrumental teachers to schools where tuition was available to small groups of pupils and some individuals. In addition a Centre for Young Musicians provided 'opportunities for ensemble playing with children of similar standard from other schools' (ibid) – a relatively common model.

Teachers working within this scheme felt that it was not appropriate for the context of Tower Hamlets. Swanwick & Jarvis's 1990 report on the project noted that 'many children are not able to practise musical instruments at home, partly because of overcrowded living conditions and sometimes because of their Moslem faith' (ibid). This practice regime is clearly an important aspect of the traditional one-to-one style of instrumental training and, as such, the opportunities available demonstrated some bias towards those children in environments where this was possible. Sheila Nelson, who had recently returned from the United States where she had been investigating the string teaching methods of Paul Rolland, was invited to discuss possibilities with the ILEA music service. The Tower Hamlets String Teaching Project was born.

The crucial distinction between the model that had been in place and the initiative being suggested was that it was to be based in large group work in a bid to 'remove any shadow of elitism' (Swanwick & Jarvis, 1990: 8). Nelson's string teaching method was informed by both Rolland and Kodály, and their work on the connections between

physical movement, the inner ear and instrumental training. Nelson also recognized the 'importance of music as a social activity ... and for this reason ensemble playing is introduced at an early stage.' (ibid). In addition, the groups would be of mixed ability and this would be 'handled by combining tasks of different complexity simultaneously' (ibid). Although there is no mention in the documentation of these values being informed in any way directly from the events of the experimental movement, there are some obvious comparisons to be made with the Scratch philosophy. The project drew up its mission statement offering 'instrumental training not to a selected few from a peripatetic teacher, but to whole classes ... It fosters a degree of musical participation and instrumental achievement that cannot be matched by the usual class music lessons' (ibid).

In 1983, as part of the inclusive ethos of the programme, parents of those children involved were invited to participate in a lesson designed to provide parents with a greater understanding of the ethos. Chris Shurety was one such parent:

CS: One day, about May 1983, they gave a one-hour lesson to parents. We all sat there on a nice sunny day and they said, the purpose of this is for you to get a better understanding of how we're teaching the kids and how to be more supportive. A number of us got to the end of this one-hour session, looked at each other and we thought, hey, we could learn this.

Regular sessions were organized and the group slowly grew into what is now known as the East London Late Starters Orchestra (ELLSO)¹⁶. Shurety talks proudly of ELLSO's success:

CS: ELLSO has just had its 25th Anniversary and it has 120 members. It has a summer school and trips to Greece. There is a Yorkshire Late Starters String Group, there's one in New York, one being set up in Stratford, one in Norfolk. All the principles that guided the ILEA project are incorporated into the Late Starters Orchestras.

¹⁶ See Everitt (1997: 41) for other brief details of ELLSO.

Shurety's role in founding ELLSO was significant because of his interest in contemporary music, something Everitt (1997) considers unusual given amateur classical musicians' 'somewhat conservative image' (ibid: 41). Shurety, however, was aware of Cardew and the Scratch Orchestra and cites this as an important influence on the working practices of ELLSO.

TH: Were you aware of Cardew's work and music at the time CoMA was formed?

CS: Yes. Definitely. It's not Cardew influencing CoMA so much as Cardew influencing ELLSO. ELLSO don't do contemporary music but the whole ethos of ELLSO is anybody can play, anybody can join in, everyone is a musician, everyone is creative. These sorts of things were really bedded down in ELLSO.

Despite Shurety's claim that ELLSO avoids contemporary music they had already commissioned several composers by 1993, the tenth anniversary of their existence, including Michael Finnissy, Judith Weir and Diana Burrell. It was decided to focus on this emerging interest and organize a one-off summer school, with the tag of CoMA, drawing together other amateur orchestras that had been commissioning new music. Everitt describes this as an 'ambitious initiative' that 'proposed to disseminate its philosophy of commissioning nation-wide' (Everitt, 1997: 41). However, what was discovered was simply that there were no other orchestras with that particular interest.

CS: What we found out was that there were no other orchestras that had that level of commitment. In fact, we had a group of individuals come together but there was no repertoire on the table. We did a couple of pieces by Nyman and a few other bits and pieces. John Tilbury was there and I think we did Paragraph 7 of *The Great Learning*. We probably did some other Cardew too. I'm sure that would have influenced us and introduced us to that music. That was the start of CoMA. Our aims were to create a national network of individuals interested in contemporary music who wanted to take part in it. From there we set up ensembles over the years, developing more repertoire and so on.

CoMA now comprises nine regional ensembles and a vocal ensemble, 'still the only dedicated amateur contemporary music ensembles in the UK', Shurety proudly proclaims. Many ensembles also support their own internal Composer's Groups – in fact the bulk of the ensembles' repertoire is member-created. Up until 2008, when financial

viability ceased,¹⁷ CoMA also held an annual summer school, the focus of which was a more conscious attempt to draw together amateurs and professionals through a series of tuition, workshops and performances.¹⁸ CoMA's ideals have remained unchanged:

TH: Have the aims changed over time?

CS: The aims are precisely the same now – to create a repertoire that is of high quality, is cutting edge, artistically challenging but technically accessible to amateur performers; to establish ensembles and other means of allowing amateur musicians to perform contemporary music; to collaborate with professional musicians to achieve these aims.

While the 'amateur' tag in the organization's name suggests a clear division from the professional world, Shurety is at pains to point out that the philosophy is one of collaboration. The summer schools illustrated this with what Shurety likes to think of as a 'spectrum' of musical experiences and abilities working as 'music comrades' towards a shared goal. Although summer school participants and teaching staff are present on slightly different terms (not least the paying and the paid) Shurety is keen to foster what he describes as a 'spirit of co-operation and all exploring an area of music together'. This is achieved simply through how workshops are presented and the choice of language.

TH: How, specifically, does CoMA tackle the issue of integrating professional and amateur musicians?

CS: I'm conscious that Cardew would say the Scratch Orchestra was for trained and untrained musicians. I don't think we have used those terms. I don't think we have such a clear-cut definition. I think it's just through our practice, the manner in which we do things. The way that teaching staff in the Summer School, for example, have always taken part, they join in with the orchestra. In talking with them about their role as teachers it's always been discussed on the basis that this is a spectrum. In a way it is about creating an atmosphere and a series of activities where people find themselves rubbing shoulders with people they might have seen as 'up there' – and they find that actually they are musical comrades. Some people simply have more experience of than others, and they're willing to pass on those skills. In terms of how we present workshops, we use language that says that. We haven't got terminology as such but we've always encouraged a sense that there is nothing genuinely differentiating people from the more experienced composers other than experience.

¹⁷ Due to cuts in CoMA's Arts Council funding rather than any demise of interest among its members.

¹⁸ See Pitts (2005) for a detailed case study of the 2002 CoMA summer school.

The success of this approach is verified by Pitts' analysis of the 2002 summer school (Pitts, 2005). Pitts discovered that while participants were motivated by a range of individually desired outcomes and expectations of the summer school¹⁹ they found it was the collaborative context that defined the experience, something that some participants had difficulty in adequately communicating to those who have not been part of such an experience (ibid: 45).

They were appreciative of their tutors' commitment to the summer school and respectful of the achievement and professional standing held by many of them, but were equally willing to learn from other participants, valuing one another's diverse skills and interests. United by a commitment to contemporary music, these participants had something of [a] crusading enthusiasm.

Pitts, 2005: 8

The 'amateur' tag in the organization's name and the division it highlights is a contentious (and ongoing) issue in itself. Both Pitts (2005: 22) and Everitt (1997: 38) allude to the negative implication of the term 'amateur'. Indeed, Damien Harron of the Cornelius Cardew Ensemble, who has worked as a tutor at numerous CoMA summer schools, has in the past suggested the organization should be re-named Contemporary Music-Making For All. Many would rather see the unpopular, 'less than apt' (Everitt: 1997: 38) CoMA acronym laid to rest completely, Shurety himself admitting to reservations in the past (Pitts, 2005: 22–23), though he is now resolute that the brand is firmly established and recognised. Additionally, Pitts (2005) has identified that some summer school participants take pride in the 'amateur' name, considering it 'a valued part of their group identity' (ibid: 8) and Peggie (2002) denounces 'professionalism' in the arts generally as a 'postmodern obsession', championing the 'rough music' of the people.²⁰

¹⁹ 85% of participants reported their interest in developing specific musical skills (Pitts, 2005: 36).

²⁰ See Pitts (2005: 23–28) and Finnegan (2007: 12–18) for further discussions on the amateur and professional labels.

Given the nature of the CoMA principle, particularly the integration of trained and untrained musicians, Cardew's repertoire has over the years appealed to various CoMA ensembles. *Treatise* is often visited by groups, John Tilbury having led the CoMA Yorkshire Ensemble in a recorded version. I have worked with both CoMA Birmingham and East Midlands ensembles on extracts from *Treatise*. The CoMA summer school is responsible for one of the few complete performances of *The Great Learning*. *Octet '61*, *Autumn '60* and *Schooltime Compositions* have also been variously workshopped or performed. But Shurety is another individual who believes that Cardew's legacy ceased the moment he abandoned such works and took up an his increasingly active political role.

CS: It's a pity he died when he did because I'd have liked to think he'd have come through that and ended up being a musician again. I have to say I think some of that stuff is just utter crap. It's just crap. He was abandoning all that other stuff, this is crap, this is crap, this is the way forward, revolution ... It's such bad music, so pathetically out of touch with the working class and its aspirations in my view. It's an embarrassment. If he hadn't said anything about this other stuff [the earlier works] it wouldn't have been so bad. You kind of end up thinking that his legacy is prior to that.

From Shurety's perspective, then, it is clear that CoMA sits in what Lukoszevieze would consider the early camp, relishing the indeterminate nature of Cardew's works of the 1960s and the philosophies of the Scratch Orchestra. Indeed, it would be easy to suggest that CoMA serves as a modern day example of a Scratch Orchestra – democratic collaboration between trained and untrained musicians, exploring models of composition that build on flexible and indeterminate scoring techniques, a commitment to allowing the widest possible access to participation. There is a significant distinction, however, partly residing in the different cultural climates in which the two phenomena were born. Despite the wish to avert divisions between amateur and professional, CoMA exists within an accepted, and perhaps respected, understanding of those terms. Indeed, many amateur musicians aspire to be professional, or at least to be engaging in music making activities that have the highest possible professional sheen. In this respect

CoMA ensembles operate according to a similar code to any number of amateur choral societies, orchestras, brass bands and so on. Shurety believes the 'professionalism' of its ensembles is important, noting that the CoMA London ensemble describe themselves as professional amateurs.

CS: We've been seven years at Spitalfields festival. We've been paid £1000 for the latest gig. We've done BMIC Cutting Edge tours, workshops at different festivals, and we'll get paid. Some of it's Greg's expenses.²¹ We've actually conceptualized what we're able to offer from a professional point of view – an interesting concert, an all comers workshop, we can incorporate them into the concert. We've got a package that we promote and sell. The ensemble members are not paid but we have professionalized. I think that's the right thing to do.

Likewise, the East Midlands Ensemble (of which I am a member) feels like a professional outfit, hiring a professional director and playing professional venues, as 'professionally' as we possibly can. The Scratch Orchestra in one respect sits at the opposite end of the spectrum, rejecting rather than aspiring to the professional world, perhaps not in terms of professionalism of presentation, but in terms of the conceit of music-making being a professional activity at all. This difference of purpose is perhaps exemplified by Shurety recalling one particular composer – a well-known name with a close association with Cardew and the Scratch Orchestra – who presented one of the least successful commissions Shurety has experienced. Shurety suspects the issue was one of attempting to simply apply what they considered to be a Cardew aesthetic 'without responding to what they're now applying it to'. Shurety, then, considers CoMA to be informed by the Scratch Orchestra ethos, but is not attempting to replicate it. Indeed, simply replicating the model, as this composer did, is detrimental to success as it ignores or bypasses the specific dynamics and tensions of the ensemble.

CS: Here was somebody who wrote for us, who thought they understood the model and then applied it to us without listening or working with us, and it didn't work. That's the danger of any legacy. One recognizes it for what it is but you don't worship it. You can be inspired by it, you can respond to it in any way you like, but you don't force it on

²¹ Gregory Rose – music director of the CoMA London Ensemble since 1998.

what you're doing. I'd say the influence of Cardew is philosophical. It's affirming in terms of other people working in these areas, but we don't use it as the model.

It could be a criticism of CoMA that they do not maintain more of the challenging and rejecting spirit of the Scratch Orchestra. After all, the very motivating factors under which CoMA came into being are a reaction to the embedded Western culture that the most highly valued music (or at least classical music) is composed and performed by highly trained, professional musicians. Organizations across the UK amateur music scene such as choirs, choral societies, bands and orchestras are all characterized by this striving toward professional standards rather than the celebration of the inclusive amateurism promoted by the Scratch Orchestra. Professionalism, essentially, is valued above participation and this explains the auditioning policy of many amateur choirs and ensembles. Should CoMA not be leading the fight to reject this oppression of the peoples' right to access music-making regardless of technical capability?

CS: It does occur to me that we could be more campaigning. My background is subversive. I suppose that it can be quite un-constructive to be entirely that. So we've been advocates – I think that's the general tone of the organization. And I think that is a good thrust, but I think we could be much more challenging about why people think it's the greatest success to write for the BBC Symphony Orchestra, or the London Sinfonietta, than writing for their local orchestra.

Shurety's explanation of why CoMA is not more campaigning demonstrates a distinctly un-Cardewistic streak, citing Cardew's position within the musical establishment as the reason why he was able to be so provocative, claiming that 'in a sense it was his role'. CoMA, conversely, are an amateur-led organization without that privilege of position. Shurety is seemingly claiming subservience to the system with these remarks, presenting CoMA as perhaps an example of the oppressed. The irony here is that CoMA (or Shurety at least), dismisses the last decade of Cardew's work as 'utter crap' despite it being the period of his life when he was devoted solely and directly to attempting to reshape the system CoMA still find themselves silenced by.

There is an element of devil's advocacy in the above argument. CoMA would be very unlikely to exist at all, perhaps going the same way as the Scratch Orchestra, if they had not been prepared to work alongside the system rather than attempting an attack. Indeed, there is a faintly subversive flavour to CoMA's work in that it has attempted to infiltrate the very fabric of contemporary music culture in the UK. The ongoing Open Score project provides some evidence of this starting to happen. The basic premise of Open Score is to encourage universities and conservatoires to include composing for amateurs and flexible ensembles as part of their required composition portfolios. CoMA offer the services of their ensembles to work alongside students in achieving this. Success of projects is variable though Shurety insists that the 'model is established', and that some institutions have bitten the bullet. The Royal Academy of Music, for instance, gives equal weighting to all elements of their post-graduate composition portfolio, including the piece for CoMA, Shurety noting that 'if they mess up with CoMA, it's as bad as messing up on the London Sinfonietta or the BBC Chorus'.

CoMA is clearly informed by a whole gamut of interconnected influences and experiences, though a Cardewistic thread can be traced, directly linking history to the present day: a Scratch-informed Late Starters Orchestra; a proactive branch of contemporary music enthusiasts exploring Cardewist ideas; the need for an alternative repertoire of contemporary music; small but important changes in the way universities and conservatoires might consider the training needs of future composers, perhaps leading back to explorations of the processes and techniques of Cardew in achieving such aims.²² The work is still in relative infancy but these do seem to be measures that suggest certain elements of the system are heading in the right direction, a phenomenon that Shurety now feels is 'unstoppable'.

²² This last remark is based anecdotally on myself being invited to talk about Cardew's work to Open Score students at Birmingham Conservatoire

Epilogue

In September 2005 the landlord of my local pub began a regular Friday night 'Open Mic' session, hosted by Chris Niven, a local amateur musician. The King's Head in Lichfield, Staffordshire, is a traditional British pub in a small but busy city. The socio-economic status of the locality is typically mixed though not especially deprived. The ethnic balance of the city is largely white, almost exclusively so in the pub itself.

I have supported and closely followed the event due to the perception that, through default rather than design, it represents a rather Cardew-esque approach to a musical event. The ethos is one of 'turn up and have a go' regardless of experience, ability, style or confidence. The host acts more as a facilitator, enabler and, in some cases, mentor and pillar of support rather than 'front man'. During discussions, Niven has describes his role in terms that are not so distant to those expressed in my Cardewist manifesto, or indeed Cardew's own role within the Scratch Orchestra:

TH: What is your role?

CN: My role is to notice those that want to play and encourage them to play whereas normally they probably wouldn't. My other role is to organize the night ... to keep the thing running as long as I can. I also try to put the right people on at the right time. I read the audience and get an inkling for when that individual should be playing. And I perform myself to fill in the gaps so there is no dead air.

TH: Is there a hierarchy? Are you a sort of mentor figure?

CN: It's not a competition. I'm there for them, if they want to treat me as a mentor, but at the same time it's their gig not mine. I'm just the host.

Niven himself is the product of an informal musical development such as that explored by Green (2001 and 2008a). As such, while Niven is technically more advanced than some (but not all) Open Mic performers, he is not especially differentiated from the

participants, certainly not in terms of musician/non-musician, professional/amateur or trained/untrained, though this is a distinction that Niven does perhaps aspire to.

Of particular interest is the blurring of the boundaries between performers and audience with both often being members of each group, something that also characterized some Scratch Orchestra events (see pages 106 and 108). Even the physical boundaries are blurred – the event occurs in the corner of the busy bar rather than in the more practical area used by rock, pop and jazz bands on other nights of the week, a conscious decision by the host:

TH: Why in the fireplace rather than in the band area?

CN: Because we have to consider a lot of inexperienced people who would be intimidated by a large audience as opposed to what would appear to be people sitting cosily. It's easier to play for a closeted kind of audience, but if that appears to be expanded, if you're put on the spot in a large area, it can make you very nervous, especially for an inexperienced performer. So I decided to put it in the fireplace because it doesn't come over as a professional performance – it's a bit of fun. It appears to work.

The result is that at times there is no distinction between 'stage' and 'auditorium', as participants join in freely in much the same way often experienced at traditional folk music sessions.

The early sessions were low-key affairs with large chunks being filled in by the host. Over time, however, as the supportive and inclusive ethos became recognized more individuals decided to give it a go. A few years on, the event is a popular way to finish the working week. There are regular contributors – enthusiasts who rehearse specifically for their Friday night moment. There are occasional performers who attend when the fancy takes. And then there are one-offs, ranging from professional musicians passing through the town, to those whose confidence is bolstered by ale and the supportive environment. The repertoire tends to be fairly narrow with a focus on typical pub-band classics and is dominated by guitarist-vocalists. Additionally, the regular performers

tend to have their favourite offerings. The result is that one Friday night tends to sound very much like any other Friday night. My longer term observations have shown that there have been clear lines of progression, however: participants, who first arrived out of interest and as on-lookers, have progressed to sing-alongs and social engagement with the crowd, to strumming a few chords on the house guitar and struggling through a classic track, through to investing in an instrument, rehearsing, performing and ultimately becoming one of the regulars.

The event now has its own momentum. If so desired, the host would be able to remove himself entirely from the event without detriment to its success, though Niven's impressive commitment has never put this to the test. Some participants have already branched out, forming groups with other participants and beginning to perform in other local venues in a more conventional band-audience context. I spoke to a number of participants to discover their perspective. One such participant, Brian Lingard, noted:

BL: I hadn't played for about 12 years. Coming to Open Mic, I went out and bought my first guitar and basically progressed since then. We did just over a year of Open Mic every Friday night with Chris Niven and it's given us the incentive to start our own band.

This particular band appear to have now outgrown the need for Open Mic, claiming they are too busy rehearsing and have mastered their sound with their own superior equipment. Another member of this group, Tracey Cliffe, is a particular success story having made the journey from not playing a musical instrument at all to being a gigging pub musician: for Cliffe the experience has been genuinely life-changing. Both of these individuals credit Niven and Open Mic as the crucial part of this process, and Niven himself cites this as one of the achievements of his Open Mic nights:

CN: We've got people actively getting gigs, actively rehearsing, consciously making themselves good as performers'.

The King's Head scenario is, of course, a good but not unique example of this kind of event. It is repeated every week in pubs and bars throughout towns and cities across the UK alongside other forms of all-inclusive social music-making such as karaoke.¹ The striking point to note here is the similarities between this type of event and the Cardew aesthetic as identified in chapter seven, despite Niven having no familiarity with Cardew or any part of the scene with which he was associated. It shares with the Cardew aesthetic an ethos of music being a social act, an ethos of inclusivity regardless of experience and an entitlement to perform (see page 210). The event is consciously non-hierarchical with all performers afforded equal status, an ethos identified as central to the Scratch Orchestra mentality (see, for instance, the comment from Carol Finer on page 79). The host is a facilitator, enabling others to perform, in much the same role as the 'composer' as defined in my Cardewist manifesto (see page 211). The success of the Open Mic nights is a result of those ideals it shares with the Cardewist approach. It has, of course, no basis in the actual music of Cardew or, indeed, experimental music of any kind, but it does adopt elements of the experimental attitude. My suggestion here is that while the relationship between the two phenomena is considerably removed, the parallels are not coincidental. Both represent the resurgence of a return to musical activity as something that engages people on a practical level, a notion that had been eroded through the 19th and 20th centuries as the culture of professionalism took hold.

The King's Head Open Mic event and the many others like it represent a shift in the wider acceptance of an approach to music-making that was not a significant or particularly valued part of the musical landscape immediately prior to the work of Cardew and the Scratch Orchestra.² While not solely responsible, the emergence of the

¹ See, for instance, Finnegan (2007) for a study of the wealth of music making in a typical English town.

² An exception to this is the parish church choir which, conversely to the suggestions here, was a thriving part of many communities in Cardew's own time but has declined in popularity as a musical pastime since. Its prominent contribution to inclusive amateur music making in the 1960s is perhaps reflected in Cardew's extensive use of massed voices in *The Great Learning*.

Cardew aesthetic was a contributor to this shift. This contribution has been demonstrated in the previous chapter through Cardew's impact on the world of music education; it is implicit in the work of CoMA, itself an embodiment of the post-Cardew philosophy that the amateur and professional musical worlds are not mutually exclusive; it is found and further promoted in the education and community based work of many of the UK's orchestras, opera companies, theatres, arts organisations and other participatory music-making activities (see, for instance, Everitt 1997, Peggie 1997, Pitts 2005, Winterson 1994, 1999); and, more directly, it is apparent in the work of individuals and groups such as those discussed in chapter seven.

This thesis has attempted to explain how the legacy of Cardew has contributed to such a cultural shift by examining the work of Cardew, the development of his thinking and identifying and defining the emergence of a Cardew aesthetic as a distinctive phenomenon. Chapter one took a snapshot of Cardew circa 1974 at the time of the publication of *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism*. By this time, Cardew was demonstrating his rather narrow interpretation of the Marxist principles that were to underpin his existence up until his death in 1981. Chapters two and three identified the series of rejections that characterized Cardew's formative years and came to define the period in the 1960s during which Cardew held the position of respected luminary of the British avant-garde and experimental music scene. The conservative nature of musical culture in Britain, certainly as experienced through educational establishments such as the RAM, was the first to be rejected. Cardew's further study and experiences in Europe, notably working alongside Stockhausen, resulted in a less sweeping rejection, but certainly ignited the 'questioning spirit' of which Skempton, Smith and others have spoken. Cardew began to question the role and status of the 'composer', the role of notation and the score in the exemplification of the 'composer' figure, the nature of

collaboration and the relationships between composer, performer and audience, and the function and purposes of music within society.

The profound impact of Cardew's exposure to American experimental music, particularly Cage and Feldman, was also explored in these chapters. Similarities were identified between Cage and Cardew's own work of this period, pieces such as *Octet '61 for Jasper Johns* and the *Four Works* being clearly informed by elements of Cage's approach to indeterminacy and graphic scoring. Crucially, Cardew's broadening perspective was discussed, specifically his work with AMM and his growing preoccupation with improvisation, as exemplified by *Treatise*. This was identified as a significant element distinguishing Cardew from Cage, and perhaps representing the emergence of a distinctive 'school of Cardew'.

Chapter four discussed in detail a significant period in Cardew's life: the Scratch Orchestra and its parallel compositional endeavour, *The Great Learning*. Emerging from the frustrations and burgeoning ideals of Cardew's formative experience, the Scratch Orchestra was perhaps the embodiment of what I come to define as the Cardew aesthetic and, for Cardew, was the catalyst for the political stance he was to proclaim with such vitriol in *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism*. Cardew's name has become synonymous with the Scratch Orchestra and I consider this thesis to have demonstrated the profound impact of the phenomenon on aspects of today's musical culture.

Chapters five and six outlined Cardew's overtly political work and the music associated with the last years of his life. This was a music that received much criticism, bordering on ridicule both then and now, and chapter six offered a new perspective. It explored Cardew's intentions more thoroughly than have previously been examined, identifying Cardew's own reservations and frustrations. It also speculated, from some anecdotal

evidence, that Cardew would ultimately have recognized the flaws in the approach he had adopted and perhaps would have made some reconciliation with the compositional strategies he had earlier employed, especially in relation to a score such as *The Great Learning*.

Chapter seven drew the investigation together, pointing to specific problems in making assessments of Cardew's legacy, especially in relation to placing Cardew into a canon that does not necessarily value the defining characteristics of his work. The chapter ultimately attempted to define the Cardew aesthetic by pointing to a number of characteristics and traits that appear to unite the diverse work of Cardew. This included the aforementioned 'questioning spirit'; Cardew's refusal to compromise that perhaps informed the rejections that characterized his formative development; Cardew's preoccupation with integrity and honesty, from his discussion of Stockhausen's '101 snappy items', Cage and Tudor's collaboration and Feldman's music, to his repudiation of the avant-garde and his political activism; the contradiction and dualisms that pervade his compositional strategies and his political proclamations; and, perhaps most significantly, the streak of humanity that seemed to underpin Cardew's actions throughout his career. The chapter concluded with my own Cardewist manifesto: a collection of essential Cardewist tenets that might underpin a Cardew aesthetic.

Chapter eight explored a range of individuals, groups and organizations in an attempt to identify how the legacy of Cardew, in the shape of a defined Cardew aesthetic, has impacted on music-making since. The chapter demonstrated that the Cardew aesthetic has not only informed those most directly associated with Cardew but perhaps more broadly through developments in music education and the sort of participatory music making found in the work of the Cornelius Cardew Ensemble and CoMA.

So, what is now to be made of these words:

Any direction modern music will take in England will come about only through Cardew, because of him, by way of him. If the new ideas in music are felt today as a movement in England, it's because he acts as a moral force, a moral centre.

Feldman, 1967: 43

When first embarking upon this research I was confident that the influence of Cardew on a finite number of individuals or groups of individuals could be demonstrated beyond doubt, that he has indeed been a 'moral force and moral centre'. This I consider to have achieved. It is apparent in the comments of various members of the Scratch Orchestra who cite the experience as important to, or defining their work since. More specifically, as discussed in chapter eight, Cardew was a profound influence on the work of Howard Skempton and Michael Parson, and, as my wide ranging conversations have shown, the work of other composers who worked alongside Cardew. Cardew has also influenced individuals with no direct personal connection. Anton Lukoszevieveze identifies specific works of Cardew as exemplars of the experimental tradition. More pertinent to the arguments in this thesis, Barry Russell and members of the Cornelius Cardew Ensemble have shaped their practice according to elements of the Cardew aesthetic. It was also Chris Shurety's awareness of Cardew and the Scratch Orchestra that informed the ideals of ELLSO and CoMA. Scratch Orchestra member Brian Dennis brought the Scratch mentality to the classroom, ideas that, through John Paynter, brought something of a revolution to music education.

Less expected, however, was the emergence of the possibility that Cardew, and the world of experimental music he came to represent, is indirectly more far reaching and a contributory factor to the sort of cultural shifts discussed above. I consider this thesis to not only demonstrate that the movement of 'new ideas' in the 1960s and 70s was considerably informed by the work of Cardew and his contemporaries, but also that the Cardew aesthetic continued and continues to inform and guide practitioners and thinkers both directly and indirectly: consciously for some as a source of material

inspiration, and unconsciously for many as part of the wider shift in attitudes towards music being a social, community and essentially human activity to which all have rights of access.

In this respect, as intimated in my introduction, this thesis represents just the starting point for what might be considered 'Cardew studies'. Future research might focus on how the Cardew aesthetic has pervaded any number of today's musical phenomena, especially musical cultures underpinned by a social, participatory, facilitatory, inclusive, educative, political or humane ethos. Additionally, and crucially, future research might focus on how Cardew's legacy can be mined for the benefit of the future health of such music making. I would suggest that Cardew's legacy is essentially a resource that, as yet, has only partially been tapped. Returning to the ideas found in the Scratch Orchestra draft constitution, or the compositional strategies found in *The Great Learning*, or the 'tentative experiments' of Cardew's *Piano Albums*, might represent effective starting points for answering a range of musical and cultural questions that remain as relevant today as they did in Cardew's time. My own article, 'Back to the fore for the avant-garde' (Harris, 2008), for instance, argues the case for more thorough attention to Cardew and his work in the training of community musicians.

I would suggest that this thesis identifies the possibility that Feldman's words remain as relevant, as vital, and as potent today as they did in 1967. It demonstrates that the world of Cardew is complex, rich in interpretation, challenging, often contradictory, but also inspiring, enlightening and exciting, and worthy of a broader consideration than it currently receives. I remain in little doubt that Cornelius Cardew has been for some, and could continue to be for many, both a moral force and a moral centre.

A Scratch Orchestra: draft constitution

Cornelius Cardew

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

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

The *Scratch Orchestra* intends to function in the public sphere, and this function will be expressed in the form of—for lack of a better word—concerts. In rotation (starting with the youngest) each member will have the option of designing a concert. If the option is taken up, all details of that concert are in the hands of that person or his delegates; if the option is waived the details of the concert will be determined by random methods, or by voting (a vote determines which of these two). The material of these concerts may be drawn, in part or wholly, from the basic repertory categories outlined below.

1 Scratch music

Each member of the orchestra provides himself with a notebook (or Scratchbook) in which he notates a number of accompaniments, performable continuously for indefinite periods. The number of accompaniments in each book should be equal to or greater than the current number of members of the orchestra. An accompaniment is defined as music that allows a solo (in the event of one occurring) to be appreciated as such. The notation may be accomplished using any means—verbal, graphic, musical, collage, etc.—and should be regarded as a period of training: never notate more than one accompaniment in a day. If many ideas arise on one day they may all be incorporated in one accompaniment. The last accompaniment in the list has the status of a solo and if used should only be used as such. On the addition of further items, what was previously a solo is relegated to the status of an accompaniment, so that at any time each player has only one solo and that his most recent. The sole differentiation between a solo and an accompaniment is in the mode of playing.

The performance of this music can be entitled *Scratch Overture*, *Scratch Interlude* or *Scratch Finale* depending on its position in the concert.

2 Popular Classics

Only such works as are familiar to several members are eligible for this category. Particles of the selected works will be gathered in Appendix 1. A particle could be: a page of score, a page or more of the part for one instrument or voice, a page of an arrangement, a thematic analysis, a gramophone record, etc.

The technique of performance is as follows: a qualified member plays the given particle, while the remaining players join in as best they can, playing along, contributing whatever they can recall of the work in question, filling the gaps of memory with improvised variational material.

As is appropriate to the classics, avoid losing touch with the reading player (who may terminate the piece at his discretion), and strive to act concertedly rather than independently. These works should be programmed under their original titles.

3 Improvisation Rites

A selection of the rites in *Nature Study Notes* will be available in Appendix 2. Members should constantly bear in mind the possibility of contributing new rites. An improvisation rite is not a musical composition; it does not attempt to influence the music that will be played; at most it may establish a community of feeling, or a communal starting-point, through ritual. Any suggested rite will be given a trial run and thereafter left to look after itself. Successful rites may well take on aspects of folklore, acquire nicknames, etc.

Free improvisation may also be indulged in from time to time.

4 Compositions

Appendix 3 will contain a list of compositions performable by the orchestra. Any composition submitted by a member of the orchestra will be given a trial run in which all terms of the composition will be adhered to as closely as possible. Unless emphatically rejected, such compositions will probably remain as compositions in Appendix 3. If such a composition is repeatedly acclaimed it may qualify for inclusion in the Popular Classics, where it would be represented by a particle only, and adherence to the original terms of the composition would be waived.

5 Research Project

A fifth repertory category may be evolved through the Research Project, an activity obligatory for all members of the Scratch Orchestra, to ensure its cultural expansion.

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

The above is an intellectual structure, so for a start let's make the research vector a word or group of words rather than an object or an impression etc. A record of research is kept in the Scratchbook and this record may be made available to all.

From time to time a journey will be proposed (Journey to Mars, Journey to the Court of Wu Ti, Journey to the Unconscious, Journey to West Ham, etc). A discussion will suffice to provide a rough itinerary (eg embarkation at Cape Kennedy, type of vehicle to be used, number of hours in space, choice of a landing site, return to earth or not, etc).

Members whose vectors are relevant to this journey can pursue the relevance and consider the musical application of their research; members whose vectors are irrelevant (research on rocket fuels won't help with a journey to the Court of Wu Ti) can put themselves at the disposal of the others for the musical realization of their research.

A date can be fixed for the journey, which will take the form of a performance.

Conduct of research. Research should be through direct experience rather than academic; neglect no channels. The aim is: by direct contact, imagination, identification and study to get as close as possible to the object of your research. Avoid the mechanical accumulation of data; be constantly awake to the possibility of inventing new research techniques. The record in the Scratchbook should be a record of your activity rather than an accumulation of data. That means: the results of your research are in you, not in the book.

Reprinted from 'The Musical Times', June 1969

Example

Research vector	Research record
The Sun	29.vi. Looked up astronomical data in <i>EB</i> & made notes to the acpt of dustnotes (symbol of <i>EB</i>) and sunbeams 1-28. viii. Holiday in the Bahamas to expose myself to the sun. 29.vii. Saw 'the Sun' as a collection of 6 letters and wrote out the 720 combinations of them. 1.viii. Got interested in Sun's m. or f. gender in different languages, and thence to historical personages regarded as the Sun (like Mao Tse-tung). Sought an astrological link between them.
Astrology	3.viii. Had my horoscope cast by Miss Jonesky of Gee's Court. etc

(note that several vectors can run together)
(the facing page should be left blank for notes on eventual musical realizations)

Spare time activity for orchestra members: each member should work on the construction of a unique mechanical, musical, electronic or other instrument.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Popular Classics

Particles from: Beethoven, *Pastoral Symphony*
Mozart, *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*
Rachmaninov, *Second Piano Concerto*
J. S. Bach, *Sheep may safely graze*
Cage, *Piano Concert*
Brahms, *Requiem*
Schoenberg, *Pierrot Lunaire*
etc

(blank pages for additions)

Appendix 2 Improvisation Rites from the book 'Nature Study Notes' (two examples must suffice)

1 Initiation of the pulse
Continuation of the pulse
Deviation by means of accentuation, decoration, contradiction
HOWARD SKEMPTON

14 All seated loosely in a circle, each player shall write or draw on each of the ten fingernails of the player on his left.

No action or sound is to be made by a player after his fingernails have received this writing or drawing, other than music.

Closing rite: each player shall erase the marks from the fingernails of another player. Your participation in the music ceases when the marks have been erased from your fingernails.

(Groups of two or more late-comers may use the same rite to join in an improvisation that is already in progress.)

(blank pages for additions)

RICHARD REASON

Appendix 3 List of compositions

Lamonte Young, *Poem*
Von Biel, *World II*
Terry Riley, *In C*
Christopher Hobbs, *Voicepiece*
Stockhausen, *Aus den Sieben Tagen*
Wolf, *Play*
Cage, *Variations VI*
etc

(blank pages for additions)

Appendix 4 Special Projects and supplementary material

(blank pages)

At time of going to press, the orchestra has 60 members. More are welcome. A meeting to confirm draft constitution and initiate training should precede the summer recess. Projected inaugural concert: November 1969. Interested parties should write to Cornelius Cardew, 112 Elm Grove Road, London SW13.

An interview with Howard Skempton

19 September 2003

TH: Cardew's name is synonymous with the Scratch Orchestra but, from what I understand, it was a joint venture between Cardew, yourself and Michael Parsons. What were the events leading up to the formation of the SO?

HS: It was Cardew's idea. In 1968 he started an experimental music class at Morley College. I had started studying privately with him. The great thing about studying with Cardew was that, because he was a performing musician and interested in improvisation, he was very happy to involve his students in performances and first performances – the first performance of *Schooltime Compositions*, the first performance of *The Tiger's Mind*, and the first British performance of Terry Riley's *In C*. His students took part in all of those. I think he realized that there was quite a lot of enthusiasm that wasn't being exploited. When he started the Morley college class there were people there who clearly didn't have the skills to go to the Academy but they had plenty of enthusiasm. They might have been visual artists. Some of them taught at art colleges. He was excited by this and he felt there was huge potential there.

He started working on *The Great Learning* Paragraph 2 to exploit the skills of the people at Morley College. I remember at Morley College we used to work on various things – we might work on a version of Cage's *Variation One* during the first hour and three quarters, then we'd break for tea and in the last part, which would be two hours, we'd improvise. And that was always very frustrating because people had more enthusiasm and more ideas than skill. So there was a lot of noise and very quickly it reached the point at which you couldn't really contribute. Nothing you could do added to what was happening already. So it was a very frustrating experience for everybody taking part. He devised *The Great Learning* really to reign in and exploit the talents people had. He'd already written Paragraph 1 and that's for voices, pebbles and whistles. So he stuck to voices and drums in the end and told each of us to get hold of a drum. Then he taught us the rhythms – we all had to learn the rhythms, which is no small task to learn 25 of them. We did it 5 at a time. Then we learnt the vocal part. When it came to the first performance at The Roundhouse, May 1969, he realized that he would need more vocalists. He could use the drummers who had been trained at the Morley College class but he needed a choir for each drummer. So he asked the students to invite as many of their friends along as possible. And that Roundhouse concert, the first performance of Paragraph 2, was so successful that he thought it would be a pity if these people just went their way. So that's really when he had the idea of forming the Scratch Orchestra.

TH: How many were involved?

HS: I think Scratch was about 40-50 usually. That would be 2 or 3 times the number of students in the Morley College group. Michael Parsons and I were members of the Morley College group and Cardew regarded us as senior figures in a way, though I wasn't. Michael and I were prepared to pay £5 each. So we started with £15 in the bank account. That was the main reason we were co-founders – because we were happy to do that.

TH: It seems odd, given the principles of the Scratch Orchestra, that anybody would be considered senior members.

HS: Senior only in age. Michael certainly was older than I was – 9 years older. I think because when I first approached Cardew I was so single mindedly interested in

experimental music and contemporary music he probably thought I'd been through the mill. I was only 19 but I didn't know anything else. I probably seemed older than I was. And also, what is interesting, is that I'd written some pieces during the Morley College class which were influential. I'd written a piece called *Drum No 1* which was the first of the Improvisation Rites. Michael Parsons has said that the sort of music I was writing at the time was very close in spirit to Scratch music. I think Cardew felt that I was exactly the sort of person who should be joining the Orchestra – somebody who might have slipped through the net otherwise. In a way he was acknowledging that sort of innocent influence.

TH: Was it a facet of his personality that he would spot people on right wavelength?

HS: He was very quick. I remember we did a performance of *Drum No 1* at Morley College and he was incredibly impressed by it because it worked as a piece of social music making – it's just a short text but it really took off in performance and he thought, you know, this chap may not have any talent but he's obviously got the flair; he obviously knows what he's doing; he knows exactly what he's trying to achieve. He was really amazed. He said 'This is a piece that isn't really a piece Howard – you're describing a situation but it's not actually a piece of music'. And so he called it an Improvisation Rite. He was prepared to talk to me as a fellow composer from that point on: he had been pretty rude to me when I was studying privately with him.

TH: Could you describe a typical Scratch Orchestra meeting? What sort of role did Cardew take?

HS: The meetings were very relaxed, they were very enjoyable, pleasant. What usually happened is that somebody would start drumming with a stick or some sort of object on the floor and people would start improvising 'Scratch music' which is very low level accompanimental music. Or we might just be chatting. But we'd be waiting for Cardew who was inevitably late. Nothing would happen until Cardew arrived and it was very much Cardew's orchestra. Really the orchestra was lost without him. So we were all waiting for Cardew and we'd probably spontaneously start playing. Typically you just made music with whatever came to hand, like a comb or a pen tapping on a table. You'd just start some sort of simple piece and then he would arrive and it would be very laid back, very relaxed.

TH: Would you say it was similar to the way in which folk musicians might work?

HS: Yes. It's very close to folk music. I think Psi Ellison talked about the Scratch as urban folk music. I think there are many parallels – it's very homespun. It wasn't at all academic and we were essentially amateurs – we weren't there to make money. Any money that was made through concerts was ploughed back into the orchestra. The one thing about the Scratch Orchestra rehearsals was that they were very convivial – you felt very much at home at a rehearsal. Somebody said it was rather like a Quaker meeting. There was a real sense of mutual respect, people giving each other time to say exactly what they felt and so on. There was no criticism of other member's work so you could bring anything along and it would be performed. Nobody would ever say anything rude about it.

TH: How did the SO change over time?

HS: I talked at that time about a honeymoon period. I think the first concert was around September '69 and the honeymoon period lasted about a year – not very long. I think some people felt that what we were doing in the Orchestra was fine but we were playing to very small audiences and the idea of a lack of criticism was probably a mistake. They wanted to tackle the problem of why, as a radical group, we were having so little effect. As in folk music, it's socially essentially humanistic. What we were doing in the Scratch Orchestra was trying to contradict the notion of the composer as an ivory tower – an individual creator. There was a strong anti-establishment feeling. You can imagine what other composers were doing at that time – the composers that were celebrated were very dominant figures. Cardew had always been opposed to the idea of the ivory tower. He was also interested in the idea of collaborating with the musician – you see that in his own scores. He calls for an

imaginative input on the part of musicians. Although it wasn't a socialist organization it served to democratize art in a big way. That was the whole idea. But the point is, it wasn't having any effect and this was very frustrating for a small number of people – or a large minority of people. I don't think party politics was very important to Cardew in '68–'69, but John Tilbury was already a Marxist and one or two members of the Orchestra became very interested in Maoist thought. There was a lot of discussion at that time and I think that the more liberal wing of the orchestra was tolerated.

Cardew was not one of the most outspoken initially. He was definitely in the middle and he was holding the Orchestra together. And he thought that it was important to do concerts with the BBC and to maintain friendly relationships with, for example, the press. It was quite pragmatic, quite practical in that way and he was a very good leader in that way – he was someone who could bring people together. It was only really later that he became more extreme himself. I remember he once criticized me for trying to keep my balance when the ground was giving way beneath me. He felt that it was inevitable that our work would become more political, even at the expense of the music. I wasn't prepared for that to happen. I wasn't prepared to throw the baby out with the bath water. And I still feel that if the ground is giving way beneath me then what I want to do is keep my balance.

The Morley College class sort of folded in '71. Then in 1972–3 Cardew started another class but he was just about to go off to Berlin on a scholarship in 1973 so Michael Parsons and I were asked to be co-tutors. By that time I would think half the class were primarily politically rather than musically motivated.

TH: Had they joined the class because of that political slant?

HS: These were mostly old members of the Scratch Orchestra though there were also other who had joined. People were now joining the Scratch Orchestra for political reasons, not for musical reasons, and I found it very difficult. Cardew again, in his usual way was pleasing everybody, satisfying both sides. He encouraged us to write songs, political songs, and I did one. A political member of the orchestra wrote a text and I wrote the music and then she criticized it for being too jaunty of something like that. That was very instructive. Michael Parsons resigned as tutor at Christmas – he said 'Look I can't go on doing this – for me the tail's wagging the dog, I can't put up with this'. So he left, Cardew went off to Berlin and I was left holding the baby. I didn't resign – I was thrown out. Cardew came and had tea with me and he said 'the people in the class want you to leave'. Well, of course, the class folded because there was nobody left to run the class after that. I'm not quite sure at what point the Orchestra died. They went off to the Munich Olympics – I didn't go with them. That was 1972. I think by 1974 anyway ... And, of course, *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* came out about then, so the Scratch Orchestra was dead and buried.

TH: How did these experiences impact upon you?

HS: I found the Morley College experience incredibly instructive and unsettling, upsetting. I remember one Morley college class when I was in charge of the 'music workshop' as it was then called. I was talking about improvising and I was just told it was rubbish though in slightly stronger language than that. I was saying 'improvising is the necessary roughage of the musical diet' and they were saying 'shit Howard!' The typical criticism was 'you're an individualist' and that really hurt at that time. I wasn't able to cope with that. There was no argument against it. The worst possible thing to be was an individualist at that time.

I think that as a composer now I've obviously changed. I obviously changed through studying with Cardew – I became more practical, more concerned about the musician, very much aware of the collaborative nature of composing. But I think through the political experience I also became much more aware – the basic question 'Whom do you serve?', 'For whom is this music designed?' Is it designed for a privileged middle class? I was never interested in that. If someone asks you that question you say 'well of course it isn't'. I think that's remained. I don't know whether I learnt that or whether it was my approach anyway. I was always very

interested in pop music and I've always been very interested in what folk music has to offer. I've always seen that as a very attractive option.

TH: Social forms of music making, such as pop/rock and folk are very important to you then?

HS: That's always been very attractive. I think all the political discussions at the time of the Scratch Orchestra helped to strengthen my resolve in that direction. Though I didn't go all the way with the politics – I didn't become an activist because I was a musician. I was working in music publishing and I wanted to be a composer. So I hope that my music has a sort of wider appeal – I do think the piano pieces and the accordion pieces have. And the choral music. Also I compose things on a small scale. If you write music on a small scale then style isn't a problem. You're not saying 'I am a serialist'. I've always written simple little tuneful piano pieces and the accordion pieces – they can be appreciated by a folk audience but I did a concert of them at the Huddersfield festival a couple of years ago and the biggest fan of all afterwards was György Kurtág! He's a very hard man to please but he loved the accordion pieces. You can appeal across the board.

TH: What do you think were the defining achievements of the Scratch Orchestra?

HS: The most important thing is that the orchestra asked fundamental questions. It forced one to think again about what music making was.

TH: I've heard you say in the past that Cardew considered it the composer's job to ask the right questions. The answers are not the responsibility of the composer.

HS: Asking the right questions. Cage said that towards the end of his life. Feldman said that to me in 1979. He said that he felt he and Cage were starting to ask the right questions. Cardew was always challenging. Quite apart from the quality of his music perhaps his greatest contribution was to challenge the status quo. I think we were certainly doing that. We were certainly saying whom do we serve? What is our audience? Are we reaching the audience we should be reaching? Are we just middleclass dropouts, as my older brother described us!

TH: Do you consider Cardew to be distinctly British?

HS: I went to study with Cardew because he'd worked with Stockhausen and I was very interested in Stockhausen's music from the beginning. It was clear from a score like *Octet '61* and from what I read that he was in a way definitely a European. He was a very sophisticated, really quite brilliant musician. More of a European composer than a British composer I felt at that time. But he was also a colleague of Cage and he knew all the Americans as well. At the point at which I wanted a composition teacher I was as interested in American music as I was in European music. I felt here was a man who looked in both directions.

David Bedford in the memorial concert programme wrote somewhere of Cardew's wit and elegance: the elegance and wit of Cardew's scores. The wit that is there in the instructions of his pieces is very British he feels. It's difficult to know what Britishness is ... there is humour and in the 1960s humour in music was quite a rare commodity and laughing in concerts was definitely unusual. Cage sort of reintroduced the possibility of humour and maybe Cardew warmed to this. Maybe it was that to which Cardew responded most positively – the humour and the theatricality of Cage's performances.

There's a sort of flexibility [in Cardew]. The sort of crucial element in Cardew's music is fantasy – as John Tilbury will tell you he didn't like structure in music. Cage was a constructivist and Cardew didn't like structure. The whole idea of the fantasy – it's very sort of English notion. The sort of flexibility, the volatile aspect of the music, though you think of the British as being phlegmatic you could also say they're unstable in certain ways. There's a volatile side to the British character as well as the stable phlegmatic side. The fanciful lyrical aspect of the music, in the loosest possible sense, seems to be very English. There's something which is not European, and isn't American either and it's a sort of flexibility. I use the word flexibility about British

music, I see that as a very positive thing – just as the language is flexible, just as the landscape is flexible and subtle and understated so is the music. If you look at Cardew's own music there are radical aspects to it but there is also a sort of softness and humanity there. It isn't Stockhausen.

TH: In the Arts Council film of 1986 John Tilbury uses the words restoring and reviving to describe Cardew's aims. Do you think this is the case?

HS: The trouble is, of course, that he was a very complex character. I think that is true. It's interesting how he used pentatonic material, he uses much simpler material, he uses triadic material quite often. In Paragraph 3 the chords are simple. In Paragraph 2 he's using a pentatonic scale – that's 1969. In a sense, he's going back to drums, he's going back to simple percussion – a sort of real ale approach to music making. He was pretty hostile to electronics at that time. He said if you use loudspeakers then it's anti-social because the people with the loudspeakers dominate: it's very difficult for somebody playing the chime bar in the corner to be heard.

TH: I had wondered why Cardew never really experimented with the technology of the day, particularly considering his background with Stockhausen.

HS: Well he thought the loudspeakers were too rough. He said maybe the quality of the speakers will be better in the future but at the moment it's simply not good enough though he used contact mics in AMM concerts.

TH: John Tilbury commented [in the Arts Council film] that it was the transient nature of music that appealed to Cardew the most. This would explain his avoidance of tape music.

HS: And it's very much an ivory tower. The composer is completely self-sufficient. That would have worried him.

TH: I'm currently working on an electroacoustic realization of *Treatise*. Is Cardew turning in his grave?

HS: I think he was ambivalent. In Germany he'd had experience of working with tape. There's an acknowledgement in *Treatise* of tape – that fact that you've got a line running through the middle. Everything is measured. In *Treatise*, you move through time as through a landscape. That's the way I describe it. It's difficult to imagine a work like *Treatise* being written without the experience of working with tape.

TH: Do you feel you have a duty to continue Cardew's work in your own work?

HS: No. Feldman talks about Cardew as a moral force in 'Conversations Without Stravinsky'. He said the English radical composer will always be isolated but at least with Cardew around he won't be lost. Or perhaps you'll be lost but at least with Cardew around you won't be isolated – something like that. He said that Cardew was very important as a moral force. I think he was that sort of figure in my life, a sort of moral force. Musically, I don't think he was influential at all. I think I'd established my style. He told me that in the first year. He told me 'Howard, you seem to know exactly what you want to do'. It's like when a teacher tells you I can't teach you anything, there's nothing more that I can teach you. It's a backhanded way of saying 'you've got so little talent there's nothing I can teach you'. He said I seemed to know what I was doing – what I wanted to do was create a background with an occasional event. I was very interested in, even from the very beginning, in something that was almost ambient. But with features, features in a landscape. Musically he was very different from me. I'm closer to Feldman.

TH: Is there some sort of non-musical connection?

HS: There must be common ground – maybe Feldman. There's something bridging the gap. We both acknowledge Feldman. There's Feldman in Cardew's music. Cardew was really very impressed by Feldman's lack of system, the fact that you could just do a rest, a fermata or something. You could have a single note with a fermata, then a

long rest, then another note. And this is so rich. He said this is fantastically rich and complex music and there's so little there – the richness of a decision, a single decision. Feldman said at one time the sound is the experience. Cardew talked about informal sound, about noise. He was very interested in sounds that couldn't be pinned down. The sort of sounds that can't be notated. You've got to find a solution to that – so you do a score like *Treatise*. Or you use texts – I was very interested in that as well. So there was that connection.

TH: What sort of effect did the publication of *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* have on the experimental music community?

HS: I found reading it, how persuasive, incredibly persuasive ... I felt there's a sort of uncompromising honesty. I found the book very persuasive. I remember giving it a very good review in *Composer* – the last line was something like 'this book is highly recommended, we have nothing to lose but our complacency'. I felt he was flying in the face of complacency – this is the point. This is what he'd always done. It was that sort of British non-conformist school. It's in the tradition of British non-conformism. You might see Cage as an anarchist but Cardew is a non-conformist. There's a sort of a back to basics – the idea of the revolutionary actually taking things back rather than revolving history.

I think that it was regarded as a particularly nasty piece of work. I think people were really deeply affected by it because these were personal attacks. One thing we're not used to in this country is polemical writing. It's not so uncommon abroad. What he says about Stockhausen is incredibly powerful. And what he says about Cage too. He says 'I'm taking part in a performance of HPSCHD but I don't encourage anybody to go to it'. He really puts the boot in. I think some people thought he'd just gone off the rails completely. But one or two of those essays were broadcast – one was the interval talk in an Aldeburgh Festival concert and it was immediately followed by a performance of Stockhausen's *Refrain*. It was impossible to listen to *Refrain* in the light of what he'd just said. I think Hans Keller who produced the talk – as Cardew says in the book – got into a lot of trouble over that. He commissioned another talk but that wasn't broadcast. I think Keller had a respect for Cardew. Even in *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* there's a lot of imagination and elegance in the writing. That's Cardew the composer as well. Very stylish, very virtuosic, very intelligent.

TH: Do you think *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* was a conscious attempt to make a lot of noise – a consciously violent attack in order to grab attention?

HS: It's very rhetorical. Things printed in caps and so on. Rod Eley had written SMASH THE BOURGEOIS CLASS [at the end of chapter 1]. What I did take against was the violence of it. I felt it was essentially violent. A very violent use of language.

John Tilbury says composers should be more political. He said this at a CoMA summer school last year. He was getting really angry that composers weren't more politically engaged, and you think well why do composers get it in the neck all the time. More often than not they're getting absolutely no money out of this. There's no glory in it, there's no money in it, it's hard work, and they're getting it in the neck because they're not politically engaged, well what about the performers? It seems OK for performers not to be political. That was one of my feelings. There are so many reasons for writing music. You might want to write music for educational reasons. If you're writing a primer for seven year olds you shouldn't be criticized if it isn't political. I just felt that very strongly.

TH: In Trevor Wishart's review of *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* he comments that in Cardew's later political songs it is the texts, the titles and the programme notes that carry the political weight. There is, I suppose, nothing inherently political in the music. Do you think his earlier avant-garde music is potentially more politically potent?

HS: What was really valuable for Cardew, and what was really instructive for me, was that you realize it's very much a class thing. If you're working with a particular community, if you ally yourself with an oppressed or an exploited group in society

and work with them and meet them, then it's going to affect the way you write music. It's bound to. I think a lot of composers don't know how the other half lives. That's the point. And the best thing you can do as a composer is discover how the other half lives. This can be done personally or in some other way. There are musical ivory towers but there are social ivory towers as well. In becoming politically active Cardew was escaping from the sort of comfort and complacency of a middle class existence. It's very difficult to get that. How do you identify with the working class? And these are people who are being exploited, who are not actually getting the right reward for what they do because all the money's going to, as it is now, the fat cats. I think that's something positive about the '70s – through his political work he became much more closely identified with the people. To some extent when you've had that sort of experience – and it may only be working as I did, performing in the '80s in minors strike concerts and meeting minors and talking – then you've got to ask yourself does this music make any sense at all. I would play my accordion pieces and they went down very well. Cardew, in a sense made the right move in that he was able to identify with the sort of audience he wanted to reach but I don't think the music would ever have appealed to that audience. It appealed to the party members and they sang the songs with gusto but it would never have the appeal of the best pop music, the best revolutionary radical pop music. Radical pop groups are far more effective.

The point is I do see something very positive. I benefited from it as well – and that is the need, as Cardew said about Cage, of shuffling over to the working class. I see it very much as a class conflict and can understand the politics in that. There are people who work and are exploited and there are people who exploit them. People who benefit and people who are exploited. And the great enemy I would say is complacency.

TH: What do you think Cardew would have done over the last 20 years?

HS: I think he'd gone beyond the point of no return. He might have come back to improvising as Keith Rowe did.

TH: I've read somewhere that he was considering working with AMM again.

HS: Well, there you are. He would have done that. And he might even have come round to doing some Cage again and Feldman as John did. He might have acknowledged some of his earlier works, some of the work that he rejected like *Treatise* and *The Great Learning*. What an interesting question ... there was little sign of a move back to mainstream composition.

TH: Some have commented that perhaps he would have worked himself out of music altogether. Maybe he would have reached a point where he felt that music was simply not able to communicate.

HS: He would have done something productive, something creative. He was a very good writer so he would have always written articles. Michael Chant, a composer friend, who became very politically active, he's carried on composing but it's sort of sporadic. I think Cardew was too much of a musician to give up music. That's what I feel. What impressed me was that he was identified with his music. Every cell was musical. A brilliant performer: this was high definition performance. What they did was what they were. He once said, introducing a performance of *Treatise*, that the composer is his music. There's a complete integrity. The man identified with the music.

TH: You function as a composer in a fairly traditional way – commissions, first performances, recording and broadcasts etc. That's quite at odds with the principles of Cardewism. Do you feel any conflict of interest in the way you work?

HS: I'm kept very busy partly because I write small pieces, I write a lot of choral music. I've got more music than I can cope with. I felt even then in a curious sort of way that I was more of a composer than he was. It was everything, that's why I wasn't prepared to sacrifice it. Before I went to study with Cardew I knew about his writing.

I always thought he was really a critic rather than a composer. You look at scores and you see that they are so deliberately anonymous, the material is so anonymous. I'm definitely a tunesmith you see.

TH: And also your music takes on a distinctive character whereas Cardew's music cannot be defined by the sonic properties alone.

HS: Yes, though there are one or two piano pieces that are very close to what I'm doing – the *Unintended Piano Music*. [Cardew's] work wasn't really organized, there wasn't really a body of work so it's quite a job if you're trying to get an overall picture of his music. Going right back, I've got the performance by David Tudor of his *Third Piano Sonata*. There's a very individual style to the music, the fantasy, the imaginative aspect of the music is very rich in that way, and it seems sort of wilfully illusive. In the introduction to *Octet '61* he says quite clearly...

'When performed, the piece may be judged as a musical experience (sounds brought together by human agency) and thrown down the drain. No one is to blame. My reputation is free to suffer. The piece is not gilt-edged.'

This is what he was saying in 1961. He says:

'If the most important function of a composer were the stimulation of an interpreter this piece would be a composition'

So he's questioning 'what is a composer'. Going right back, he was 24/25 when he wrote that.

'The stimulation of the interpreter is a facet of composition that has been disastrously neglected. Disastrously under-stimulated performances of contemporary music are the result (for here, past glories cannot act as stimuli).'

That was his approach to music making. I think I was always trying to do things that had character. A sort of Britten. I like the idea that a melody has character, something very memorable. Michael Parsons said in an article about the importance of rhyme being memorability. I like simple song forms. I like songs.

I was asked to work on a film though unfortunately nothing came of it. The director kept referring to my pieces as songs – he meant the piano pieces. It's the idea of the melody as it were carrying the substance. The substance of the music lies there melodically and harmonically. What I liked about Cardew, and experimental music as a whole, was a back to basics approach, meaning back to pitch. It's back to melody and harmony essentially, instead of all this integral serialism of dynamics and so on. In the end you can't hear it, it all comes out as grey plasticine. It's all ironed out. You get something very flat and boring as a result.

Another favourite composer is Webern, there's a sort of edge to it that keeps you interested, keeps you on the edge of your seat. That's enough. But minimalism does that as well. At its best it's very exploratory. I think I was actually always a little bit ambivalent towards Cardew the composer.

TH: You felt your role was different?

HS: I felt I was a different sort of composer. I remember taking [Cardew] a very early score, a piece for solo guiro, this is when I was 19. I said that I very much like the guiro in Stockhausen's *Zyklus* but it was a pity he'd used all the other instruments. Obviously I was a minimalist you see. But he criticized me for writing the piece Cage somehow hadn't got round to writing in the '40s. I think he felt the piano pieces were sort of salon music, he used the word salon music. And he thought it was rather like Cage's piano music of the '40s, almost pastiche. He thought I was a bit of a dilettante. So he said take a large piece of paper, put everything you like about music on it ... a piece of music should contain everything you like about music. He had this almost Mahlerian symphonic view – a piece of music should be everything, whereas what I wanted to do was create something distinctive. And I was definitely taking my cue

from Feldman who said that actually a modest statement is better able to be original, or probably more likely to original if you have a more modest aim.

TH: Which features of Cardew's music do you most admire?

HS: In Cardew's *February Pieces* he somehow creates this whole world. He's celebrating the piano. It's not traditional piano music, but somehow there's just more there, there's a fantastic wealth and richness. And so I can sort of see this is the real thing. Art should be rich. Feldman said if it's original how can it be simple, if it's original it can't be simple. I went to study with Cardew because I thought he would be very good teacher, because of his involvement with Cage and Stockhausen, because he was so intelligent. I'd thought of studying with David Bedford, he's a very good musician, but Cardew [was] very acute, perceptive, very imaginative, very articulate basically. And also very uncompromising. I mean, just to say 'Howard, you're dilettante!'. I'd burned my boats by then, I had no choice but to be a composer and he was telling me I was just a dilettante. I reacted very quietly. It was a challenge, I had to examine what I was doing. He said 'why do you underline your titles? You underline them twice or three times. You put a date after your name. Why have you done that?'. This sort of thing. 'What are those little squiggles on the front page?' He said it was bad manners. 'You don't give professional musicians a score like that, it's bad manners, it's self-indulgent'. He said it will take you five years to get rid of all that. But that sort of professionalism, that was something else he could teach me.

You're very much aware that here is, very unusually in British music, as with Britten, a real professional. Stockhausen had obviously focussed him. Stockhausen was always a supreme professional. Absolutely, everything, every small detail, nothing was left to chance. And there's the same sort of focus in Cardew's approach. His scores are very, in their way, very focussed. I'm interested for example, in how he gives performers freedom. In a score like *Autumn '60*, he's asking the performers to take responsibility for things. They alone can, as it were, make a dynamic very precise. If the performer decides where to put the hairpin, if the performer takes responsibility for placing the hairpin then that hairpin is going to have a sort of meaning. It's going to be focussed and precise in a way that it wouldn't be if it were just left to the composer.

Everything Cardew did he did it with great style, very elegantly and very professionally, so I respected that. But as a composer I'm really a student of Feldman not Cardew. And I'm not a student of anybody else. For me I always come back to Feldman in the end. I might list my favourite composers as Webern, Feldman, Górecki, Cardew. That's what I said in 1970 and I would stick to that. I would perhaps add the Beatles, for some reason I left them off the list. I can't think of many other composers I would add to that. They are the sort of guiding influences of that time and then after a time, of course, you're working in your own tradition. When I wrote *Lento* I drew strength from certain things other people had done ... Górecki in his *Third Symphony* which I knew very well at that time. The first part is just strings and he uses the trombones for about two bars and you don't hear from them again. I just thought, to have the courage to use just the strings for twelve minutes, if he can do it then I can do it. So the first half of the piece is strings only. And I wouldn't have done that without Górecki. So, a composer can give you permission.

TH: But there's a difference between those kind of direct influences, or references to other composers, and the more deep rooted influences that Feldman and Cardew provided you with.

HS: Yes. I think there is a strong influence. The crucial thing is that [Cardew] got me out of the ivory tower. All that self-indulgent stuff on the score. I was still thinking like an academic, avant-garde composer, still thinking about the structures, the systems and not really hearing what I was doing. Not even hearing it! This joke about singing the series – I was that sort of composer, it was all numbers, I was playing with numbers. When Cardew talked about Webern, he said the great thing about Webern is you've got two pieces. You've got this little piece which is twelve notes and you've got this other piece which is what he did with it. Those twelve notes, and that sort of sense of the material, getting to know the raw material. When I think of Webern, I

think of that, that sort of working with pitches with those twelve dots. That's why with my own pieces I just have dots ... with *Of Late*, you've just got dots, no stems, nothing extraneous.

TH: What are your thoughts on the circumstances that surround Cardew's death?

HS: I had got the impression from Cardew that there was a sort of sadness – I think he felt that he'd lost his way, I felt he had thrown the baby out with the bath water and I think that it hurt him and depressed him. There was almost a sense of depression. I actually felt, I have to say, there was almost a sort of negligence to his death. When I first heard about his death, for some reason, I almost thought of suicide because I felt that he'd got himself in a position which was uncomfortable for him. But then of course I read that he was as active as ever and as positive as ever and had just delivered a speech and was obviously fully occupied. He said to me at one time that the tempo of his life had speeded up. There was a sort of fulfilment in the work he was doing. So I'm probably completely wrong about that. I don't see it as a conspiracy. And I think even John Tilbury would say that. I remember the weather of that time – it was quite horrendous. You had to walk in the road, you couldn't walk on the pavements. The first time I went out when the snow had fallen I fell over three times. It was treacherous. I wouldn't have been surprised if he'd been walking in the road and at night that would be a dangerous thing to do. A drunken driver who wouldn't have reported it? If somebody had deliberately run into him ... it seems an extraordinary, and a rather unreliable, way of disposing of somebody. He's not the only musician to be knocked down, musicians being what they are! You know, it happens.

TH: There's a certain romanticism, a Cardew myth if you like. He was charismatic, influential, uncompromising. The conspiracy theory adds to this doesn't it?

HS: Cardew had extraordinary grace in a sense, he was so intelligent. He was incredibly charismatic. The most extraordinary thing about him is the sort of serenity, a calm authority. You can imagine that that's a sign of complete control but he might have been daydreaming some of the time. He might have been pre-occupied. That's the other side. Serenity doesn't mean being in complete control necessarily. People have muttered about the conspiracy theory but it hasn't been very clearly discussed. There was an article in a Sunday newspaper where Michael Mansfield was interviewed. He says in that article in the early-mid '80s that he wouldn't have been at all surprised if the agents of the government had decided that Cardew was dangerous. He says it very clearly. He thought it was unlikely that it was merely an accident. My instinctive feeling is that I just think it's a very odd way to dispose of somebody. I think an accident seems the most likely answer.

An interview with John Tilbury

14 October 2003

TH: In the 1986 Arts Council Film about Cardew you state that his music was fundamentally about restoring and reviving some very primal musical concerns. Could you expand on this?

JT: I think what I was talking about then was notation. Notation had become totally prescriptive – it was simply a sequence of commands, and this included Cage incidentally. Whether you're playing the Boulez *Piano Sonata* or *Variations II* where you overlay the transparency – they're all commands. There's no creative input. I was thinking back to the Baroque period when the performer's relationship to the notation was much freer. And Renaissance music as well where there's a lot of improvisation in it. There are other ways one could understand the idea of going back and retrieving things or restoring things but that is what I had in mind at that time. Of course that is a feature of all Cornelius' notations. It's about collaboration. I don't think it's necessarily a question of harking back. I think it's a case of certain ways of humans relating to each other that have been lost, trampled upon. And he wanted to restore that. It's not like going back to something that is dead and bringing it back to life again.

TH: I understand Cardew was very interested in Morton Feldman in the early days?

JT: Yes he was. I can really only personally go back to the days after he left the academy. He was like other young people at that time – sensitive and enquiring young souls who wanted to know what was happening in the world, particularly in the music world. They probably felt instinctively that it wasn't what was happening in England at that time – that stuffy establishment atmosphere of the academy – and they were bursting at the seams trying to get out of that. I think they saw in Germany and France that this was where the new world of music was being mapped out, that's where their future lay. That's what the Darmstadt people were saying themselves. They were extremely arrogant about that. Anyone who wasn't on board – people like Shostakovich and Britten – were clowns, buffoons, people of no significance whatsoever. So I think for people like Cardew, and Richard Rodney Bennett, this was where the future lay. And they were extremely talented. They did the first performance of Boulez's *Structures*. That in itself was an astonishing feat. One thing lead to another, and he went to work with Stockhausen. Stockhausen admired him greatly as a person who had tremendous knowledge of the repertoire. He could point out mistakes in Stockhausen's scores that Stockhausen himself hadn't noticed!

Then I think the dogma of it got to him and he became disillusioned. He felt that, when he met the Americans, here was a music that was much freer, more intuitive, more all-embracing, less exclusive, all those sorts of things. He then moved towards that. He really understood the music, as Feldman himself used to say – nobody played his early music better than Cornelius.

TH: Do you consider Cardew to be a distinctly British composer?

JT: He had certain traits of character that could be described as an Englishness. Whether his music ... it's impossible to talk in that sense, especially now.

TH: Well, what made Cardew distinctive from what was happening in America?

JT: I think the English were much more radical. The Americans were still hung up on being artists, property rights, being a composer. They were making careers. Nyman says in his book that Cardew was going ahead with this kind of social music making while Cage was still scratching his head! The Scratch Orchestra were way ahead. Cornelius would also take it warts and all, he wouldn't censor. Cage was very wary of history, wary of the historical context, of people who played his music, the subjectivity of people, hence the so-called objectivity of his scores. He was extremely wary of improvisation and proclaimed against it. I think he mistrusted people – he thought they would do silly things if they weren't controlled. So for all his words, in his own way he wanted to control the way his works were. There is lots of anecdotal evidence of Cage being annoyed at the way an orchestra had approached his work and not trying to understand why, which Cornelius talks about in *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism*. Towards the end of his life Cage rejected a bunch of students playing his music, wanting professionals to play. Cornelius would never have done that. There was far more of the American individual entrepreneur about Cage than the Zen Buddhist!

TH: How did Cardew's involvement with AMM influence his work on *Treatise*?

JT: His attitude towards it changed. It became freer. It was something you could use more impressionistically whereas originally I think it was more like a real notation – what does this and that symbol mean; how does the modification of that symbol affect the sound and all those sorts of things. A lot of people to this day do it like that. There's no reason why they shouldn't. But then having done it with AMM – with three of them coming from an art background they have a freer response to it. They work backwards – Keith Rowe would see something in a far corner I hadn't even noticed. I would be working left to right like a typical musician. He looked at it more like a picture.

TH: Why are the staves included? Are they for a genuine notational purpose or is Cardew making some sort of statement?

JT: There are versions of his own that exist in rough form where he uses them precisely for notations and I've used it for that. It's very practical for a musician playing it. He writes 'gong here' or a note or a pitch set. He uses five lines because if he's going to notate pitches it's the easiest way of doing it. There are other things like 'switch on transistor'. He was very keen on transistors and percussion instruments, sometimes amplified piano, contact mikes and stuff. So I think it was a practical, functional thing. It may also have been a piss-take or he may have unwittingly looked at it like that afterwards, but I tend to think it was for musicians who wanted to make notes. In the early days it was about that, it was not improvisatory at all. So if you're going to work it out you're going to need an aide memoir and here it is.

TH: In the *Treatise Handbook* Cardew seem to present a fairly clear idea of how it should be interpreted? Do you think this is the case?

JT: Well, that handbook was written very early on so you can take some of that, in a sense, with a pinch of salt. You don't have to take it as gospel and he changed his views about it. That was the gospel according to 1967, and the influence of AMM was beginning to assert itself though it was still very much a score to be 'read' and mostly played by trained musicians. He wrote a lot of it when he was in Buffalo for a year and it was published there first. He worked on it with some of these very high powered instrumentalists in Buffalo, so that would have influenced the way he approached it. I think there is reference to that in the handbook. They were all well-known experts on contemporary music.

TH: What were your thoughts when seeing *Treatise* for the first time?

JT: Wow! Just incredible, the sheer visual impact of it even for someone who is not that visually sophisticated. I know a lot of people still feel very intimidated by it – you can't measure up to the complexity and sophistication of the score. You always feel a sense of failure when you play it! It's very precise.

TH: What sort of decisions do you make prior to a performance?

JT: The work falls into a number, probably about seven, sections. It runs parallel to the Wittgenstein *Tractatus* where there are seven sections or something. What I do, and have always done, is to take a section and see what are the most striking features. Usually you find that each section contains certain features that tend to predominate and recur in modified forms – like the circles or the squares or the horizontal lines – which give each section a specific character. This is the way to approach it in terms of music making because this is, in a way, what you do when you're a musician – certain things will predominate. When you improvise, for instance, that tends to happen. I usually make a mental list of all the features. I'll take one, say a triangle, and I'll follow it through and see how it metamorphoses. And then it's about assigning a sound to that symbol modifying the sound in the same way that the shape is modified. Then you do that with the other features. That's a way of actually getting off the ground with it – just to calmly decide what is actually there and then the big question of how you transfer it into sound. There are other aspects to consider, such as the location of the signs in respect to the middle line. What is the middle line? Is it something against which you measure things or is it itself a sound? What happens when the middle line breaks off? You have to take a very alert interest in the lives of all these signs. To approach it with a spirit of mental laziness is not a good thing. I'm making a moral judgement here. If you do something just because you can't think of anything else to do then you're better off just not doing anything. For me it's about integrity and a mental alertness.

TH: Which graphics do you consider to be instructional rather than sonic properties?

JT: I suppose size is instructional. It tells you about the parameters of sound rather than the sound itself. And similarly, the modifications of a given symbol are not prescriptive of the sound itself, or the sound source, but rather the way that the sound should be moved around.

TH: And of course extra-musical details exist in a conventional score.

JT: Yes. You just have to decide which is which. Things like modes of performance I would tend to see in modifications of symbols, location of symbols, those kinds of things. In the old days, when we first started, we used to distribute the symbols among us. We would come to an agreement – you're playing circles, you're playing parallel lines, you're playing numbers and so forth. That also had the effect of making it quite chamber-like. There would be long stretches when you wouldn't be playing anything. This is assuming you are all following at the same time. Things like that I think are quite nice. That was very common in the old days.

TH: How has the way you prepare a performance changed over time?

JT: The mode of music making depends of the situation. For example, if I'm doing a solo performance as I did up in Glasgow – the whole thing over two days – then there would be quite a lot of preparation. I would notate ideas. If I'm playing it with AMM it would be like an AMM performance and we would agree on which section to do and there would be no preparation. I would just read through, listening as well, and the symbols would give me an idea of what to play. In a way, it's not much different from playing without the score. If you're not playing with a score you could be interpreting the room or pictures you see, or the atmosphere. The score becomes subsumed into the totality of the venue.

TH: So you use it as a springboard for a much freer form of improvisation?

JT: Yes. The score is a provocation, it's an inspiration but it's also a constraint in the way that scores are. There would be a point at which you turn the page and then that would influence you. Nothing can just take off and be completely free. You'll always have this constraint. It's quite an interesting contradiction. It sounds different. On one of the Matchless Recordings CDs there is a performance where one half is *Treatise* and the other a free improvisation. The music sounds quite different even though we were probably treating the score in as freer way as anybody has.

TH: To what extent does the history of *Treatise* affect your approaches to performance? Do you either consciously borrow or avoid precedents?

JT: A tradition builds up around the performance. That becomes subliminal. One tries to approach the work fresh when you play. There are certain things that you subconsciously carry with you and there are certain interpretations that are more overt that you tend to fall back on – like the performance of the numbers. Often, you find yourself using techniques of repetition with the numbers. I remember that from the very first performance I played. So that's a sort of tradition that's grown up.

TH: How consistent are you within a single performance? Can your interpretation of a particular symbol change?

JT: Yes. I think anything's possible as long as you do it consciously and you don't do it out of mental laziness. You have to accept your frailties but you must be conscious of them. I think that sort of integrity is important.

TH: How and why did you become involved in the Scratch Orchestra?

JT: I was a close friend of Cornelius. I admired him and loved his music. It was natural for me to be involved in a big project like that. I'd already been playing a lot of his music, already part of the gang.

TH: What would happen at a typical Scratch Orchestra meeting?

JT: Well, you'd turn up. Most people would bring some sort of instrument with them. We'd find somewhere to sit and we'd kind of play around and tune or prepare our instrument in some way. Everyone would do this and gradually the whole Orchestra would be seated around just tuning up and this was where the idea of scratch music came from – a low level accompanimental sort of music that could accompany any other musical activity. They always started with this. And then Cornelius, who was sort of the unofficial but obvious leader, would clear his throat or say something. There was always something to prepare for, a concert or something. A lot of it would then be very practical – information about our next gig, who was in charge, who's proposal it was, where we were doing it, when it was going to be. The person organizing it would say what he or she wanted, who was doing what and so forth. That would take quite some time. Then we might do a bit of rehearsal if there were pieces that needed to be rehearsed. And that was it really. Then we'd retire to a pub. It was a nice atmosphere.

TH: What were the main achievements of the SO?

JT: The politicization, in the sense that it was so serious. It opened up the whole question of the social function of music. Music for whom? I'm not just talking about Maoism, but the whole political element being raised to something of extreme importance. It affected those people who were very much against the politics as well. It forced them to look at what they were doing, and maybe it affected changes in them in some way. Also, this idea of giving people permission to do what they thought it was right to do – enabling – that was what the Scratch Orchestra gave you. In practice, whatever was proposed,

however outrageous, you knew it would be done. Nobody was obliged to do anything but there was a kind of unwritten thing about living in a kind of musical commune with responsibility to each other. You did your best for others. That was very important.

TH: When did the Scratch Orchestra close and why?

JT: It's difficult to say. When it became political a lot of people left and you could say that then the Scratch Orchestra died. On the other hand you could say it transformed and Scratch became something different. And that went on until about 1973, difficult to pin it down exactly. For a time it gave itself a sort of revolutionary name but that didn't last long – it was always regarded as the Scratch Orchestra. All you can say is that when it became politicized half the Orchestra left, so that in a way can be a point of change. Some would say it was hijacked, very heavily influenced by the party, a kind of cultural wing of the party.

TH: Is it important that composers strive to be political? Can music not be political?

JT: It depends how far you stretch the term political. Clearly, a lot of music isn't political, but perhaps ideological, in that there are more general ideas that underpin the musical idea. Any artist has to be true to themselves, and if you're not, you're not going to be any good. You have to be convinced of yourself in what you're doing. I think there is an awful lot of self-delusion, and that's encouraged in this society that's based in lies and hypocrisy and not facing up to reality. Composers are no different from other people in that respect. They shy away from difficult questions, musically, politically, socially, personally. It's a planet of the living lie.

TH: Were you sympathetic to Cardew repudiation of his earlier avant-garde works?

JT: It was difficult. One of the key things, though not everyone would agree, was a text that I'd read by Caudwell, from a lecture on DH Lawrence and was called *The Bourgeois Artist*. There was this piece in it about the so-called 'dilemma of the bourgeois artist' who is trapped – a dilemma of their own making, either through being a populist and 'writing down', as it were, or, on the other hand, living in an ivory tower and writing because it is the truth or of great artistic and human value. There seemed to be no other way for the bourgeois artist because they were unaware of the Marxist answer. That was what was brought up at that time – it was the question of who are we doing this for, why are we doing it, are we doing it for ourselves, is it self indulgence, who are our audience, who do you want to reach, who do we actually reach? It was about the social function of music and the responsibility of the individual composer or musician.

TH: How much of that way of thinking grew directly out of the activities of the Scratch Orchestra?

JT: I think quite a lot of it did. That's why this text had such an effect because it was already there. I think it was a kind of revelation, it was something that you somehow already know, it's there inside you and it's been brought out. I think that was the case with this – it stirred people because it was something which we had been dealing with in the Scratch Orchestra. But since there was very little verbalization in the Orchestra we never really talked about it. It was inherently there in the way we played, in the repertoire we performed, the mode of music making. And then here was a sort of intellectualization, verbalization of that which made it easier for people to objectify it and then perhaps take the next step – so now what do we do? That's where the communist proposal/solution project came into being and some members were politicized. People like Hugh Shrapnel, Michael Chant, Bryn Harris.

TH: What was the effect of *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* on the experimental music community?

JT: It was traumatic. It was terrible. Not for those of us who went along with it and were instrumental in it – don't forget Cornelius took some time to get into it. Keith Rowe was much more prominent at that time as being a supporter of the Maoist party, it was he who introduced the Maoist line into the Orchestra. *Art for Whom?* was an absolutely crucial text and this was discussed at length. Cornelius came along and didn't say much but was taking it all in and, ultimately, he joined in. He wasn't a leader in that respect. He was very anti politics. I was one of the few members of the Scratch Orchestra who had a political background: I'd been a member of the Communist Party before I joined the Scratch Orchestra. In a way that was why a lot of them got involved in these certainties of Maoism. As a communist I'd learnt to be sceptical, it's what being a Marxist was about. It wasn't about believing, but not letting scepticism and questioning hinder action. I would act on the basis that something might not be right.

It certainly had a traumatic effect on people in general and, of course, when the book came out with the language that it used – that was very hard to stomach. Although I do think, and I wrote a defence of it quite recently, if you strip that language away what it says is very reasonable. It's hard to disagree with it in a way.

TH: What was Cardew trying to achieve by publishing *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism*?

JT: I think he was still at that time felt very much a bourgeois composer: he came from a bourgeois background, he was very much part of that, of the avant-garde. He was, if you like, what they called a progressive bourgeois composer. And basically I think he wanted to take a lot of his peers with him, his mates, his chums. To a certain extent he did take some of them with him. He certainly ruffled feathers and perhaps at least made it difficult for us to carry on what we were doing. We had to take a good hard look at what we were doing. I think that was his aim. I think later on that stopped: he didn't give a damn, he was trying to integrate with working people, trying to do work with ethnic minority groups and the oppressed people, and he was no longer interested in criticizing *The Great Learning* or Rzewski pieces, who was sort of comrade in arms. It was up to them to decide what they wanted to do. He was going to integrate and become a real communist activist not just a progressive bourgeois composer. At the time when he wrote the book he was still part of it and was saying, wait a minute, let us look at what we're doing and realized, rightly I think, that this had to be expressed in pretty extreme terms otherwise it could just be absorbed. He was saying 'this is the line, I dare you to cross it'.

TH: In many respects a piece like *The Great Learning* has far more potential both politically and socially than the later songs. To what extent did Cardew get it wrong?

JT: It's funny you should bring that up now because this morning I was reading a letter which Stefan Szczelkun wrote to him in 1977 after a concert at St. Pancras town hall. He said exactly what you've said now almost word for word – that the earlier works are more politically viable than the later works which he said didn't inspire any revolutionary spirit. I found them, in a way, beautiful but that's not the point! He says towards the end of the letter, don't reject the Scratch. You mentioned in particular *The Great Learning*, these actual modes of playing where you relate to each other, you listen to each other. It's a collective: it's where the individual has extreme responsibility but to the whole. In a way it's a perfect balance between individual and collective responsibility – he gets it absolutely right and it's very difficult to do that. The text is very reactionary, translated by a fascist, but ... I tend to agree with you. Obvious things like the fact that the later music can only be played by virtuosi, it can't be played by people, and not even amateurs. You have to really be a professional to play the *Thälman Variations*.

TH: Dave Smith thinks that maybe the problem was that Cardew was very skilled at writing avant-garde music, but he wasn't skilled at writing pop music.

JT: Yes – he arrived at that point a bit too late in life. Although on one level 45 is young, on another level ... I go along with Dave in a way. I remember saying this to him once –

you've achieved this great skill but after years and years of study, of work. It's going to take at least the same amount of time ... he kind of grimaced! Maybe he would have had to go back to something like *The Great Learning* and ways of involving people. Because let's face it, popular music itself carries so many associations, very bad associations.

TH: What would Cardew have done over the last 20 years?

JT: I think the best response to that question was Rzewski's response which I haven't heard bettered. There's no way we can say what Cornelius would have been doing but what we can say is that it would have absolutely astonished us and it would be something we could never have conceived of. I think he's absolutely right.

TH: Do you think there would have been another big shift?

JT: No. What could the shift have been? A born again Christian! I don't think politically he could have ... Musically, that's too difficult to speculate. One can come up with all kinds of feasible ideas probably about finding ways in which some of the earlier modes of music making could be politically viable and useful. On the other hand a really great political song like *The United Front Song* ... there are no substitutes for those. They are fantastic for mass singing. I think if he could have come up with something like that ... What he needed to do was find a better lyricist! He was stuck with all those terrible lyrics which his party comrades had come up with. He needed somebody like Brecht who can encapsulate the idea poetically and with power. That would have been a step in the right direction.

TH: Other people have said they think he may have spent more time working with smaller and shorter-term causes, rather than the bigger picture.

JT: No. I think he was very much the big picture. That's what they do in America: they've given up on politics basically, they just have lobbies, Fidel, single black women, begging for the rich to help. He wouldn't have got involved in that. Not at all. Sometimes the ongoing party agenda can be concerned with this rather than that – you don't take on everything at the same time – but the agenda is still the same, the strategy is still the same, which is to overthrow the system. He wouldn't have settled for anything less than that. People do remain with things, Alan Bush did. I don't know how he would have done it but I can't see that he would have stopped being a communist. There are various ways of being communist anyway ... I think he was attracted to the purity of it, the almost abstract nature of it. That appealed to him.

TH: Was his death an accident or was he murdered?

JT: They were suspicious circumstances. And he could have been assassinated. But on the other hand it could have been an accident. The roads were very icy, somebody may have been joyriding. I think the car had been stolen anyway, it was abandoned immediately afterwards. He was hit and they ran away and that was the end of it. But probably the evidence in the other direction, that he was assassinated, was stronger. The fact that the police weren't forthcoming, the car was stolen, they never found the people. The police were extremely unhelpful, so was the hospital. All kinds of little things, that I'll probably bring out more fully in the book, suggest that it was a political assassination. For example, the police in that area were well known racists – East London where the fascists were quite prominent – and he would have been considered the ultimate traitor to the white people. He would have been a number one target for being a traitor. There's other circumstantial evidence. I think it's an open verdict but more 60:40 in favour of assassination. I haven't thought about it for some years but I've got lots of notes on it, and when I come round to writing the very end of the book I'll go through that all again and discuss it with a few people. I think that's probably what the conclusion will be.

An interview with Michael Parsons

12 November 2003

TH: What do you consider to be Cardew's legacy?

MP: It wouldn't be in a body of work as one thinks of a legacy traditionally. It's more in a musical practice which is partly transmitted by oral tradition and partly through improvisation – one has to remember that Cardew was very involved with improvisation as well. That's as much part of his work as the notated scores, especially in the 1960s when he joined AMM. He got very involved in improvised music and that remained an important concern right through until the dissolution of the Scratch Orchestra, and then he turned his back on improvisation when he started writing the political music. But from about 1965–72 improvisation was a very important part of his practice. So part of the legacy would be the way that AMM, and through AMM, Cardew has influenced a whole generation of younger improvisers. There's a very active and flourishing improvising scene going on all over the country and particularly in London which is not part of the official musical scene and is not very well documented, but is never the less very active and vital, and I think that would have to count as part of what Cardew left through his own example. So that's one thing – there is a complexity of interrelated things with Cardew. He's not an easy person to define.

TH: Well, that's the problem. I'm finding that there are multiple legacies.

MP: There's a whole range of interconnected legacies, some of which appear to be contradictory on the surface but they do fit together in a strange way through the dynamics of his own personality.

TH: How did you first come to know Cardew?

MP: I first got to know him in the 1960s. I was interested in what he was doing in his piano music and more generally – I was a student at the RAM in the early 1960s and I was constantly coming across his work. There were young composers in the college who were also interested – people like Roger Smalley and Brian Dennis who were interested in Cardew at that time. So there were performances around of that kind of music and I used to go to those. And then I met him informally on a number of occasions. I first got to know him in the mid '60s through journalism – I was writing articles for various music publications and I did an interview with him and article on him. This was not very long before the formation of the Scratch Orchestra and around the time he was getting involved with AMM. I use to go and hear AMM a lot in the early days – 1965-6 – they used to play in very obscure little places without a great deal of publicity. It was more a word of mouth thing. It was more like sitting in with them than being a regular audience. They just had a room where they played and people came and sat and listened. It wasn't like an official performance – it was like work in progress that happened every week or so. For a while they played at the Royal College of Art – I think Keith Rowe had a connection – they had a room there once a week I think and people just came and sat in. So I came to know him through that as well.

He then ran this experimental music course at Morley College in 1968 which I went along to and that's where I first met people like Howard Skempton, Chris Hobbs, Hugh Shrapnel, and out of that class arose the idea of a larger group that eventually became the

Scratch Orchestra. So it was really in October/November '68 that I first starting working seriously with him. That to me was very liberating at the time because I'd got into a bit of a dead end trying to write serial music – the kind of Boulez, Stockhausen tradition – I felt that that wasn't really going anywhere, and this was a revelation of all kinds of new possibilities of music-making in a much more informal way.

TH: Others have said that Cardew gave permission for young composers to follow a different route.

MP: Yes, he gave you permission. And it was particularly encouraging coming from him because he'd actually been part of that background himself. It wasn't as if he was someone from outside who was saying that kind of serial music is all finished. It was coming from someone who was actually a leading practitioner of it.

TH: Do you think that was important?

MP: Yes. He had proved his credentials. He'd worked with Stockhausen. He'd written quite ambitious and formidable pieces like the *Third Piano Sonata* which are thoroughly immersed in that kind of serialism. Then he'd criticized it from the inside and gone on to work with Cage, Wolff and Feldman. So he was very much aware of the background against which he was critiquing this. That was very liberating. He gave us permission to explore things in a much more spontaneous way.

TH: You mention the American background. In what way does Cardew's music differ from what was happening in America?

MP: I think it was distinctively European. I think partly because of his earlier work with Stockhausen. He'd come to Cage through the European avant-garde. That kind of very systematic way of organizing pitches was something which wasn't current in the American scene. He sort of took Cage's line that that type of pitch organization was just a kind of neuroses or control freakery. As Cage put it, the composer is trying to control the performers. But Cardew had been through all that and assimilated it from a European point of view. I don't think there's anything specifically English or British about Cardew at that time. There was no British tradition of that way of approaching things before him. It's very difficult to see any relation with the official English music of that time. Although, his family was very musical. He had an uncle who was a bandleader called Phil Cardew – a jazz band. There was music in the family undoubtedly, but it wasn't in the mainstream classical tradition as far as I know. And he was a chorister at Canterbury Cathedral so he had that kind of musical education. He was particularly esteemed as a student for his Bach performances, as a keyboard player. It probably came as a bit of a surprise to the people at the academy when he turned his back on that and starting playing Boulez and Stockhausen. He really broke out of the English way – he was always international in his outlook, always looking at the wider field of new development. He was a great source of information as well. He was the first person to introduce Feldman and Wolff and possibly even Cage, although Cage and Tudor had been here in the early '60s. Cardew became a great champion of their music and probably without his advocacy their music would have taken a lot longer to become known at all here. Then also La Monte Young and Terry Riley. He organized the first performance of Terry Riley's *In C* in London. So he was a great advocate of what he saw as new and interesting and different kinds of music right from the beginning.

TH: Are we more reticent towards cutting edge music than we are with art and painting?

MP: It was true of painting and sculpture in those days as well. Since then there's been a great opening out, but in the '50s and '60s not much was known about American abstract expressionism for example. I remember the first big exhibition of American painting in the early '60s – it was a complete shock to most people. I think generally there was a rather smug and provincial attitude to the arts at that time.

TH: Was it inevitable that the Scratch Orchestra became increasingly political? What were the events that sparked this?

MP: I think it was the trip to Newcastle. Neither Howard nor I went on the Newcastle trip for some reason. It was a confrontation with the police and the authorities over what was seen as obscene at that time, although it was very mild. Cornelius was actually following some instructions which someone else in the Orchestra had written about writing four-letter words on pieces of toilet paper or something and handing them out to the audience. The authorities and the press got hold of this and, of course, it was a great scandal. It got into the newspapers and there were articles – “Royal Academy of Music Professor Writes Out Rude Words and Hands Them To Children”. It was a ridiculous piece of media, tabloid stuff. It did make Cornelius and other members of the Orchestra aware that there was a communication gap between what we were doing and the wider public perception of what musicians could do and might be doing. It was that awareness that the Scratch Orchestra existed in a private world of its own.

TH: Prior to that event what were the central aims of the Scratch Orchestra in terms of reaching out to a public?

MP: Well there was very little discussion in the early days – there was a sort of taboo on theorizing and discussing. The ethos was just to get together and play. Cornelius himself never really explained what he thought we were doing. It was very much free exploration and experiment. Though it was always intended to be, as Cornelius put it, in the public sphere – it was presented in town halls around London initially and then in public places and informal situations like parks and playgrounds and so on. His idea was to get out and be part of the outside world – to break out of what he saw as the narrow world of concert going. But also to be both inside and outside that world and generally to provoke – to make people reconsider their attitudes to music, to make them think about what the function of music could be in life and society generally rather than treating it as some sort of special or ornamental decorative thing for a privileged few. He was always concerned with that aspect. But in the early days he was more concerned with the effect on the performers themselves – liberating peoples’ potential and encouraging people to work together. The question of audiences was secondary in the first year or two.

TH: John Tilbury has noted that the size of an audience at a Scratch Orchestra event was not as important as the access it provided for the few who were there.

MP: Yes, people got interested just by coming along and seeing how informal it was. A lot of people who came initially to listen became active members of the Scratch Orchestra and I think that’s what we were encouraging at that time – we really wanted people to participate and get involved. We weren’t interested in listening as an abstract thing for its own sake, or as an aesthetic experience. We were more interested in people getting involved in both performing and listening to each other and entering into a music dialogue as performers. So, the question of the size of the audience was irrelevant in the early days. But I think after the crisis which came in 1971 which was triggered by this Newcastle event – then there was a move to try and discuss what we were doing more consciously from inside and so people were encouraged to come to meetings and say what they thought and what they were dissatisfied with. There was something called the discontent file – which I think John Tilbury and Keith Rowe initiated – and people would either write or speak in meetings about what they thought was not satisfactory and that led to the more overt political agenda. It was a gradual process, it changed over a period of months and certain members of the Orchestra including John and Keith were interested in Marxism, particularly the Mao Tse-tung kind of Marxism. The writings of Mao were available and talked about quite a lot in those days. It was the era immediately following the movement in Paris and the 1968 student uprisings and so on. And so Maoism was very much in the air and that was the initial political direction that we took – we were all involved in it to a certain extent. But later on that hardened into a more

specific party line, when Cornelius and others actually joined this party called the Communist Party of England (Marxist-Leninist) and that's really when the split occurred – those people who wanted to actually join a party and make that their priority and make music something that was, in a sense, secondary to that, and others who wanted to maintain the priority of music making.

TH: So was the main aim of the Scratch Orchestra in the latter period a political aim?

MP: It was a split: some went one way, some went the other. Those who didn't want to join the party sort of split off in other sub-groups that continued operating in different ways. But the actual focal point, which was Cornelius' own personality and influence, was then lost to those who wanted to continue in an experimental direction. It gradually fizzled out in a sense, but the ideas just went underground and resurfaced in different contexts.

TH: What do you think were the main achievements of the Scratch Orchestra?

MP: When one thinks of achievements one looks at monuments and finished works. In a sense they're not achievements, they're more influences or currents which have been set in motion. It set in motion a lot of currents. It got people thinking about music in a different sort of way. Then it went into the London Musicians' Collective and other collectives around the country. It influenced the way people thought about music as a social activity and for me the main influence is that it made me realize that music is always something that involved people doing things together and that's just as important aspect of music as the structures and the abstract aspects which are embodied in the notation, if you're talking about composed music. So I think it was the awareness of the social dimension of music which was most influential at the time, and has remained influential for a lot of us since that time.

TH: How influential was the experience of the Scratch Orchestra on Cardew? How much of his later work was shaped by what went on?

MP: He certainly renounced the more spontaneous and anarchic aspects of it, and, of course, he drew on more traditional kinds of musical technique. But I think he always tried to make it approachable and a lot of the later music is in the form of songs which can be learnt and sung by untrained singers. He was always aware of that aspect of it and he wanted the songs to be available as a form of community singing I suppose. He had this slightly nostalgic idea of people joining in as performers. But, of course, the actual music they were actually involved with then was much more formal and traditional. The idea that people should be actively involved was there, he wasn't writing for professional singers.

TH: I take the line that there is more connecting the early and later works than is often acknowledged, so while *Treatise* or *The Great Learning* are poles apart from the later more popular style songs there is this thread that connects the two.

MP: Yes, well it's interesting to try and trace the connections

TH: Do you think that Cardew perhaps achieves far more politically through *The Great Learning* than the later songs, the political content of which is really restricted to the text?

MP: Yes. You're right. And I think he would have come round to that. It's implicit in the music practice of the Scratch Orchestra – that kind of social dimension. I think in a sense it got hardened in a rather dogmatic politics later on and that also alienated people who had been very enthusiastic about participating in the Scratch Orchestra. They weren't so enthusiastic about singing political propaganda as they saw it. And it was a rather kind of dogmatic line that that party took. It seemed to be isolated and rather small and, obviously sincere in their aims, but unrealistic about what they were going to be able to achieve. So that alienated a lot of his previous friends and collaborators and colleagues.

But I agree, *The Great Learning* itself is inherently social and political in the broad sense. It would be interesting to trace the musical connections. In the vocal part of Paragraph 2, there is a pentatonic melody. Although it's stretched out into full breath lengths it's nevertheless graspable – it's a simple melody which uses a pentatonic scheme. And then you can see a lot of the later songs are based on folk-like elements which include pentatonics – *Soon* has that quality. So there is a sort of line that can be traced in pitch relationships through that interest in the raw material, the very basic kind of material – the elementary material of melody – returning to the roots of the basic building blocks of music in *The Great Learning*.

TH: What motivated Cardew during the latter part of the 1970s?

MP: I think he genuinely thought the revolution was on the way and that the party was going to be the spearhead of it. They really believed that capitalism was doomed and it would begin to collapse under the pressure of its own contradictions and that the party would have a crucial role to play in the reforming of the whole social fabric. If not in his lifetime at least in the next generation – he saw it as a cumulative process. He would have carried on in that direction.

TH: There wouldn't have been a political shift at any point?

MP: I don't think so. He might have broadened his aims and modified as a result of what happened in the '80s and '90s. He wouldn't have persisted in a dogmatic way – he was always open to changes of viewpoint. He was very idealistic, in a sense Utopian. Perhaps wishful thinking, that things would change. Perhaps not realizing how formidable the opposition to change was, how very built into the whole power-structure of society the whole resistance to change would be. In that sense it was naïve I suppose.

TH: I suppose his reaction to that charge would be that without idealists nothing would ever change.

MP: Exactly. He was always one of the people who resisted the tendency to complacency and inertia. He certainly would have remained active in some role. I think that was his overall aim. The music was secondary to that in the late '70s. I don't think he did anything that was unrelated to that aim. In pieces like *BooLavogue* the fact that the material itself was of popular origin would have been the most important thing for him, and then the contextual thing of the Irish republican movement which he always supported very strongly. That was one of his key commitments in those days, supporting the move towards republicanism in Ireland. He used a lot of traditional Irish material and that provided a great sort of inspiration.

TH: Do you still consider yourself to be an experimental composer?

MP: Well, I certainly subscribe to a lot of the ideas. I'm not really interested in labelling and pigeon-holing in that sense, but if you ask what the kind of essential characteristics of experimental mean, I would point to ideas like openness, indeterminacy and involving the performer; not necessarily being completely in control of the sound result; being aware of the difference between what the composer proposes and what actually turns out in the live performance. All of those things I'm still interested in. I still write pieces which have those aspects and that are open to different kinds of interpretation and performance, and leaving the performer certain choices to make within the framework. As a composer I like to establish a framework within which people can find things to do and have choices to make. That aspect of experimentalism, I'm still very involved with.

TH: In an interview in *Contact* in 1974 you define experimental music as an attitude rather than a particular type of music.

- MP: Yes, it's not a style. It's not something that can be labelled and put in a particular section of a recording catalogue, which is what people are generally looking for with those kind of labels.
- TH: You see this in those history-of-music wall charts in school music room that descend into disarray or simply stop when it gets to the 1950s.
- MP: Yes, you can't really provide that kind of diagram. It's all coming in from the outside. And of course it implies a greater plurality as well. Experimental – it's an attitude that opens up in a number of different directions. In terms of what the people in the Scratch Orchestra were interested in, for instance, there was a great discovery of music from other parts of the world at that time, before it became a commercial category of 'world music'. There was a lot of interest in discovering what Japanese, or Indonesian, or African music was like, and how it was different.
- TH: Is an experimental attitude today any different to the experimental attitude of the '60s in that we're living in a different age, a different sociological, political and cultural context?
- MP: Well, you'd probably have to ask some younger composers that and see what they say. For me, it's still very much the same: it's a sort of anti-commercial, anti-marketing and pigeon-holing and really just being involved in music for its own sake as a social activity. Educational aspects have always been very important particularly to me. Most of my work in the '70s and '80s was with art students. That arose directly as a result of the Scratch Orchestra. I was teaching in art schools in situations where a lot of students were interested in music but hadn't got any traditional skills as instrumentalists. In that sense, a lot of the ideas of the Scratch Orchestra continued to grow and develop in art school education. And to some extent even in school situations where people like Brian Dennis were involved and encouraging the kind of experimental activity with extended sound media so that the whole class of children could participate in a music lesson, not just those who'd chosen to play instruments. Music would have been hived off into a separate category where the musical children were having music lessons and the other children were doing something else. The whole class would now be involved. People like George Self and Brian Dennis were very active in that way. I think all of that, although it can't all be directly traced to the Scratch Orchestra, it was very much part of that climate. For me also, the London Musician's Collective was important. I did a lot of things with them in the '70s and '80s. In a sense I transferred my experimental work from the Scratch context in the LMC context, working with improvising musicians and people with different kinds of skills. I suppose it's also to do with breaking down this conventional division between professional and amateur. We never thought of ourselves as amateur musicians, we thought of everybody has having equal status regardless of their ability as instrumentalists. Everyone has some kind of skills which they could use. We didn't try to separate skilled and unskilled players, we said they can both learn something from each other. Those who haven't got the conventional musical skills have got other kinds of skills.
- TH: In the Arts Council film of 1986 the words restoring and reviving keep coming up. Do you see recognise those facets in Cardew's work and thinking?
- MP: Yes – that's right. He believed in the basic musicality of everybody. He had this real belief in people and their abilities and that's something that he came to after having gone through a fairly elitist musical education. Through becoming a star performer and working with the avant-garde and so on, he had to fight his way back to rediscover that sense of community. He must have realized intuitively fairly early on that he was moving into a rather ivory tower situation and he was backing away from that even as early as 1960 I think. Initially, he probably saw Cage as being a liberation from that, and then later on he saw Cage himself as being elitist and wanted to move further in the direction of ordinary people making music. But you're quite right – there is that sense of restoring something which has been lost in the western tradition.

TH: Does this make Cardew distinct from Cage?

MP: Yes, it's a good distinction to make. I mean, Cage did believe in the liberation of people but he believed in a rather sort of anarchic way. He believed in the liberation of the individual I think, he saw individuals as being very diverse. I don't think he really understood the way that power structures work and the way that social organizations are cemented together. He believed, in a rather naïve way, that if everyone pursued their own individuality then everything would be alright and there'd be no need for any kind of government or power structure. He was politically naïve in that sense. I think Cardew understood the way power works much better but possibly didn't understand how strongly entrenched it is in its present forms. But certainly he was always determined to stir up awareness and controversy about things which were taken for granted. He was always on the side of ordinary people against politicians and bureaucrats. I think you're right, the traces for that can be found early on in his work.

TH: You work with Apartment House. What are the philosophies of Apartment House in the way they approach Cardew?

MP: Well, I suppose they are looking for an alternative to the mainstream avant-garde. Anton Lukoszevics, the director, is very keen on searching out anything that is different or alternative but still, as he sees it, radical or experimental. He's very interested in Cardew. I first met him in 1994-5, and he was discovering Cardew at that time, actually playing the works. There's a CD you may know. There are other young players and composers but he was always interested and enthusiastic and somehow seeing the same sorts of things about Cardew as people saw in the '60s. He wasn't so interested in the political work. He was interested in what he saw as the experimental and iconoclastic kind of aspects of the work, breaking things open. Also, including visual aspects is important for him.

TH: You mention the recording. How valid are recordings of Cardew?

MP: It's a sort of document, just an example of what could be done. It's not meant to be final or authoritative in the sense of being the only possible way of doing it, but it's useful as a way of introducing people to the music. I think Anton would see it as a documentary recording rather than as a final statement. It's not that experimental music is against the idea of recording at all, it's just that it sees it in a different light. What it is against would be the commercialization and categorization of recording as somehow being masterworks or embodiments. Recording itself is fine, the technology can be used in all sorts of different ways – as a means of introducing people to the music, especially if one thinks that the music is not going to be accessible to a lot of people if they don't go to live concerts, or if they don't read scores or the literature surrounding it. For some people the direct sound experience can be a way of being introduced to the music. As one means among others then recordings are valuable.

TH: I get the feeling that, especially since the twentieth anniversary, there has been a sort of tradition growing up around Cardew. The recordings contribute to this don't they?

MP: I think that's OK in a certain sense but it needs to be complemented and balanced with an emphasis on the active continuation of that performing tradition and those attitudes. But if works like John's biography and recordings by Apartment House, if they can contribute to people becoming aware of and actively participating in the development of those points of view then I think they're OK. Also, it makes a lot of difference the way recordings are distributed, the fact that it's not a big corporation. In order to get hold of these recordings you have to seek them out. Nobody's going to have them suddenly coming up on their television screen and being bombarded by them. It's going to be something you're already actively interested in if you are to seek it out. There's that process where you have to be active right from the start, it's never going to be sold to

you. I agree that it's an ever present danger. That's one of the ways capitalism works – it incorporates the dissident elements and packages them and then sells them as products. In that way it can incorporate all kinds of dissident and oppositional attitudes as we can see with rock music and other sorts of apparently socially deviant behaviour. It gets incorporated and marketed. That's obviously something we have to be aware of. I think the contradictions in Cardew are sufficiently difficult that they couldn't easily be ironed out by that marketing process. I think he's always going to be seen as a rather difficult and controversial figure in that respect.

TH: Are there any musical traits in your own work that you can directly trace back to Cardew?

MP: Yes. It was partly because of Apartment House and Anton becoming interested in the music that I became inspired to revisit that early period, and I wrote a set of pieces for Apartment House which are deliberately open in that way. I did performances of pieces like *Autumn '60* with them. In a sense, being rediscovered by a younger generation was very invigorating for me and made me look back at the things I could have done more of in the '70s if I hadn't in a sense been discouraged from pursuing that experimental direction. I continued doing it in art school, but we were all influenced by Cardew's political ideas even if we weren't actively involved in the politics: we somehow felt there was a strong imperative to make our music more accessible and more tuneful or more based on traditionally recognized types of harmony and so on. So I wrote a lot of pieces based on traditional folk music as well, although they weren't specifically political in the Cardew sense, they were still motivated by the idea that they should be accessible to ordinary listeners without any special knowledge of twentieth century music. I did some pieces based on Greek traditional folk music, some pieces based on Scottish melodies, alongside other more abstract pieces, and arrangements of Macedonian traditional melodies. They were social in that broader sense of being accessible. I didn't write any open indeterminate scores except for use with arts students and the London Musician's Collective. When Anton began to be interested in Cardew, he encouraged me to write for Apartment House in a way which would be open to different kinds of interpretation. Although it started off as a fairly professional kind of group playing difficult avant-garde music, Anton gradually got interested in including other people, who didn't come from that background and from improvisation. I think he was very influenced by the early Cardew and he encouraged me to continue to explore that area.

In the '90s, when John recorded that CD of Cardew's piano music, I helped him with that in the sense of writing the liner notes and being there during the recording and helping with editing and so on. I think that made me realize how interesting that early music was and that it shouldn't simply be pushed into the background. There were a lot of people pushing Cardew's political music at that time and making a lot of capital out of the fact that Cardew had himself rejected the early music, whereas John and I have always maintained that the work needs to be seen as a whole. That early music is actually very interesting, and I suddenly realized there were a lot of things I wanted to do in that more complex area of experimentalism and chromaticism. So I started to write piano music in a more experimental way which also involved some indeterminacies in the notation. A lot of the more recent pieces have been written in time-space notation in which the notes are not given specific lengths but are left to the interpreter. It's partly John's recording and the fact they became available in the mid '90s and it was sort of a counterweight to the idea that Cardew had moved on from that and that the political music was his final statement. You needed the distance to put it all in perspective.

And then I began to realize there are certain things that could have happened with this music if things had gone differently. There are open ends which could still be developed and so I started to work on those. Since about 1995 I think the things I've been doing are closer to the things we were doing in the '60s and early '70s than anything I did in between. He was a big influence on my work at the time, of course, but retrospectively, he's become an important influence again.

TH: What about extra-musical influences?

MP: Certainly educationally he's very important. He was never didactic in the sense of telling you what to do. His way of doing things was very inspiring and charismatic, his way of listening, his way of being aware of everything that was going on around and seeing the whole thing as part of an organic musical situation. That was certainly something that became an important part of the way I thought of teaching in the art school context. I never wanted to work to a curriculum for example. I always wanted the ideas to be self generating and to come from the students themselves. The whole idea of assessment and examination, something that's become pervasive recently, is something I've always been very uncomfortable with. In that sense my whole attitude to education was deeply influenced by Cardew. I learnt to not to be constantly giving out information to people, not to be telling people what was interesting and what to think but waiting for questions. Giving people the information they ask for but not overloading them with things that they haven't yet wanted to know about. Be available as a source of information when needed.

TH: And also asking the right questions?

MP: Yes, raising questions was the crucial way of proceeding in those early days. Later on he did become more didactic. When he was committed to the political line he would give us a lecture on Marxist theory and say 'why are you doing this, why aren't you on the side of the people, don't you realize you're playing into the hands of the capitalists'. He would become more didactic, but still with a kind of humour. He was never oppressive in that sense, never heavily dogmatic. Outside music, little things from his daily life were impressive. When I worked with him at the time of the Scratch Orchestra his own children were quite young. I remember how laid back and patient he was with his children. He didn't mind if they were being troublesome or screaming or being a nuisance, he always remained very calm and humorous with them. He tried to see things from their point of view. He was never authoritarian as a parent. That always impressed me very much. I tried to treat my own children as individuals right from a very young age, tried not to dominate them but tried to listen to them. Also, he actually taught me to drive! He didn't formally give me driving lessons – I observed from his driving how to drive. There was something about his very relaxed manner, never getting ruffled, never getting angry, always taking the situation as it came. I learnt relatively late. I remember thinking, that's the way to do it, stay cool and relaxed. Little things like that impressed me. He never seemed ruffled by things, always seemed to be able to take in any kind of problems, be aware of them but not ruffled. Very good at solving problems and seeing the obvious solution.

TH: Do you feel you have a duty to carry on Cardew's work?

MP: I wouldn't see it as a duty, more an inclination. It's still to me the most interesting approach to music. There's a sort of aliveness about Cardew's understanding of sound which I don't find very often in the more competitive professional music making. It seems to lose something in the process of becoming professional and highly pressurized. It seems to lose a certain kind of spaciousness about feeling for sound, which he had. Another thing about him – he never seemed to be in a hurry. That was something that impressed me – he always had time around him, he made time and space for everything so he was never flustered. He always allowed things to happen in their own time and that was very important for sound, feeling the sounds had to be respected. The sounds weren't there to be used as a way of achieving some means of expression. They were more there to be attended to and listened to and respected for their own sake. I think that has a lot in common with Cage, but it seemed in his sense to go further. He seemed to have a reverence for sound rather than just an abstract interest in it. With Cage, I always feel it is a little bit abstract. With Cardew it was a sort of emotional warmth in his feeling for sound. He never denied the emotional qualities of sound in the way Cage did. Cage

was so keen on this autonomy of sound that he denied it any connection with emotional messages or effect, he wanted to strip all that away. With Cardew there was always a sense of the sound having an emotional dimension to it, which was not put into words but was always implicit.

TH: He never explored electronic music?

MP: He did have a very brief experience. When he first went to Cologne after being at the RAM he did initially go to study electronic music, but apparently he found it so alienating that he very soon gave it up.

TH: It was a conscious decision then?

MP: I think so yes. I think he probably realized that he wanted to be involved with people. And the sound in itself wasn't enough – he wanted the sound to be in a human context.

TH: Another difference from Cage ...

MP: Yes. Well Cage had this strong fascination with sound as an autonomous medium. He would study almost in a scientific way – be aware of all its parameters and dimensions. In that respect Cage's attitude is not that far from the serialists.

TH: What was the effect on yourself and the experimental community as a whole when Cardew repudiated the avant-garde?

MP: There was a certain amount of dismay that he rejected everything, and an attack on his own work as well, the fact he denounced *The Great Learning*. I think people felt a little bit at a loss when that first came out. And it certainly took the impetus out of the enthusiasm for experimentation. I think he continued to be, even for those who hadn't gone through the political conversion, quite a strong moral influence in the sense that there were certain things they felt they couldn't do immediately after that. In my case it involved more of a return to so called more accessible kinds of music making. For other people it may have given them more inhibition about the spontaneity of free improvisation. Keith Rowe, for instance, stopped playing as a member of AMM through the '70s. And then restarted in the late '70s and '80s. AMM carried on just with Eddie and one other person. Eddie always remained committed to improvisation as a way of making music but I think he would have felt a little bit isolated and marginalized by it, the fact that both Keith and Cornelius had renounced that way of playing. There would have been an effect on different people in different ways.

For me the art schools and the London Musician's Collective provided an alternative, where one got the kind of support and encouragement for continuing the more playful and experimental kind of work. That context became very important for me. It wasn't a complete split, though. We always kept in touch. I was still very interested in the politics, I just didn't want to join a party. My main commitment was as a teacher and as a musician. That to me was valuable even within a context where there wasn't an overt revolutionary aim. It's difficult to separate the ideas completely because in the art schools there was a lot of discussion and critical activity with regard to mainstream culture. That was always very important in Portsmouth, particularly during the 1970s. Cornelius himself came down to Portsmouth and talked to students there on several occasions. So we kept in touch.

TH: What do you think Cardew would have achieved over the last 20 years?

MP: It's very difficult to know. I think he would have broadened out. He would somehow perhaps have integrated his earlier work into a more ongoing awareness of the breadth of musical possibilities. He was already considering an invitation to play again with AMM at the time of his death. It's always difficult to know what goes on in those parties –

there's a mentality that I don't understand, about the loyalty to the ideas. There's a slightly secretive illusive aspect of it, which I've never really fully understood – you'd have to talk to colleagues within the party. I know John's been doing that in relation to the book. As far as what he would have been doing now it's very difficult to predict. Certainly he would be doing something interesting and surprising, unpredictable. I don't think he would have joined the musical mainstream, he was too far gone for that. He wouldn't have renounced his political ideals although he might have changed the way in which he pursued them.

TH: Some think he may have worked his way out of music altogether, realizing he wasn't going to achieve his political aims through the use of music.

MP: Well, that was a conflict for him at the time. But then the fact that he was such a natural musician – it would have been a sort of self denial if he'd not had some outlet for his musical abilities. And the fact that he realized that music could be a very powerful means of expression of those ideas. I don't think he would have renounced it, I think he would have just found a new role for it. It's difficult to imagine him not being involved in music in some way. And after all, there are plenty of ways one could explore these directions further. There's a great need for that. Maybe he would have become involved in music for young people, for deprived people, youth clubs, prisons, immigrant communities, asylum seekers.

TH: His death: accident or conspiracy?

MP: I suppose when I think about it, it seems very likely that he was murdered. I know from what John has told me that Sheila, his partner, tried to find more information from the police and came up against a blank wall. They just refused to answer questions, so it seems quite plausible that there was some sort of police cover-up. Maybe he was killed by somebody in some far-right party and the police assisted or colluded or failed to investigate. I have no inside knowledge or firm evidence. It just seems a plausible hypothesis. I suppose one day somebody will investigate that. It remains an open question.

An interview with Barry Russell

23 March 2008

TH: When and how did you first become aware of Cardew's work?

BR: It had been made a joke of at university. I remember finding the stuff myself and thinking this is amazing and trying to work out how the heck it worked. I sort of rediscovered these people via John Paynter and SoundPool in York, people suggesting have you heard this, have you seen this score. So it wasn't part of my education, it wasn't somebody at university saying you should hear him, it was word of mouth. Heard about him, found the scores and started doing it.

TH: You taught in schools for nine years. What drew you to teaching?

BR: I failed to get a place to do drama at university, postgraduate. I don't know whether I was actually drawn to teaching. In the first instance it was a sort of necessary evil, I didn't think I was going to be any good at it. And then when I started teaching I was very fortunate to be at Holmfirth High School where the Head of Music, Alan Simmons, was up for anything. He was also a creative person and encouraged me to think creatively, and I discovered more about experimental composition and experimental composers and was able to incorporate more of that into the way I taught. It sort of attracted local and national attention. There was an article very early in my teaching career in Yorkshire Arts Magazine, a whole page on how I worked with creative music at a time when not many people were out there doing it.

TH: So you were aware of Cardew during your time in schools?

BR: Absolutely.

TH: How did that inform your work in the classroom?

BR: I didn't actually use any Cardew but I used graphic scores and prose scores. I suppose I sort of diluted his ideas which is not the way I would use him now. I suppose I was a bit frightened of him then so now I would just take it into the classroom. I mean, *Octet '61* is so unthreatening to six-year olds. And the song odes from *The Great Learning* – I would happily use those with a GCSE group, girl singers who just want to sing Beyonce, have a go at this! These are the shapes you sing, what does it sound like to you? I think what is important about that way of working is that I would take them in the spirit of Cardew and the kids would come up with interpretations that I hadn't considered, which is directly contrary to this sort of movement in 'Cardewing' that says that there is this historic way of doing it – this is how we do it. Kids don't see that, kids see a sonic possibility in the symbols and they make sounds accordingly. That informs some of the ways I think about the scores.

TH: You would have been very aware at that time of John Paynter and George Self. How influential were they on you, and how widespread was their impact?

BR: I remember on my PGCE, George Self was hardly mentioned. The Schools Council Music project: we had to do an essay on it but there was very little available. And this was at Hull, so not very far away from York. I had a very formal music education, a very formal

PGCE. It was really only when I moved to York, I was round the corner from the University and Paynter was there. I offended John very early on with a letter in the Yorkshire Arts Magazine, where I misunderstood what the Schools Council Music project was doing and criticized it. I got a very considered reply from him. I then had the chance to go and work with him and see what he was doing, and how he was doing it. And then he let me lead some stuff, such as a workshop with Grüber and the London Sinfonietta, where I suddenly realized this is how it's done. In answer to your question, I think Paynter and Self were significant figures, but to a lot of teachers they were just people who were challenging the status quo. The same thing that's still happening – this is how we teach music, this is how we've always taught music, how dare you challenge the orthodoxy.

I've been teaching composition at Leeds [College of Music] – I've got students in the first year and you'll throw a composition technique at them and ask them to tell me other composers who've used similar ways of working. It might be graphic scores. None of them. Not one. And you just panic about what's going on out there in schools. They're doing the softest option and you don't have to read music to do it. They're denying children part of the delight of learning about music. It's like geography without maps, music without scores.

TH: Do you identify Cardew in the work of Paynter?

BR: Paynter distilled the ideas of a whole plethora of experimental composers and in a way diluted them, so that only with a detailed knowledge of what those composers are about can you spot where he's coming from in things like *Sound and Silence*. In things like *Sound and Structure* he actually lays bare the models that he's working from. I'm not saying that as a criticism. What he did was to find things in a whole variety of composers who's ideas he could explore sonic possibilities with, with young people. So yes, I can identify the Cardewisms.

TH: How has Cardew's music influenced you as a composer? I'm thinking in terms of your concert, rather than your education, music though I'm assuming the two aren't mutually exclusive?

BR: Well I use prose scores, graphic scores, I use Cardew-esque ideas that enable large ensembles to make really exciting textures using very simple means. Can we come back to that?

TH: Which composers other than Cardew are residual in your music?

BR: A very odd combination. My music is very dramatic, even the concert pieces have an element of drama. I would have to say composers who consider that as part of their working methodology. Pieces rather than whole composers – Thea Musgrave and the way she uses soloists in her concerti where they are actually protagonists and they move around the stage. That's really exciting to me. Charles Ives – one of the first pieces I made was a school orchestra and brass band piece called *Encounter* which was different material happening simultaneously. Tippett for the harmonic and tonal language; little bit of Britten; Berio for his way with words and using parts of words for making collages and labyrinths of musics; Kagel for his theatrical stuff; George Crumb for his excitement about the qualities of sounds. I take a little bit from everybody.

TH: So to return to the Cardew question – it seems to be about the nature of influence from different composers. Tippett, for instance, feeds into your harmonic and tonal language for, whereas Ives informs structural aspects. Does Cardew perhaps manifest himself in certain types of your work?

BR: Certainly. I think, strangely, I take from Cardew an attitude to structuring pieces by allowing decision making to take place and having a sort of idea of a possible sound

world but then leaving that open to the performers to explore their own reaction to combinations of pitches and rhythms.

- TH: You're perhaps most widely known for your large scale compositions and performances that involve large numbers of participants – kids, musicians, non-musicians with a wide range of experiences and abilities. What strategies do you employ to cater for this diversity and can you trace these back to other composers?
- BR: I think rather than strategies the basic premise of my work is that everybody has a right, and should be given a chance, and can make music. I find that in these big performances, the scale has an amazing affect on the participant: when they see that they are part of this huge organism, that's really exciting. Strategies for taking part – it's difficult to talk in terms of abilities, I suppose we can talk in terms of experience.
- TH: It's also in terms of starting points. In a piece like *Foundsapes* you have CoMA musicians, note-readers for whom you can 'compose', but also primary schoolchildren who don't have a musical language from which they can work, so you have to start them from a different point.
- BR: I suppose my starting point is always from a very rich stimulus that's rich in possibilities, rich in linked themes, tangents, possible responses in words, movements, sounds. But then finding ways into using the stimulus, sometime borrowing ideas from, for example, a score like *Octet '61* or *Treatise*, where you have to just take shapes and respond to those. That can be an easy way in. Similarly, sometimes you have to sit and decode some contemporary scores, you have to find a way into them – things like *Memories of You* which is a map of movement around a piano. I sort of invite people to respond to things that aren't scores in that same way. I suppose I borrow a bit of that from Tom Phillips' *IRMA* – treat these as if they were the last remaining fragments of a lost opera. I really like that. It doesn't get many performances now but the idea of actually treating anything as something you might respond to – it might be a gesture, an artefact, a painting. Basically, anybody can start to make responses, subjective and objective, to any of those things. That's the way in and it's informed by the way I tried to find my way into scores I found difficult to begin with.
- TH: How do you maintain musical and aesthetic cohesion across such a diverse group?
- BR: By very simple means. Chorus ideas, tuttis which aren't necessarily related, but are tuttis that occur throughout the piece at key moments. Also, things like using pitch sets, note groups, motifs which recur. In *Foundsapes*, the electronic pieces you made – they bound the piece together because the live sound suddenly dissipated into the room, which in one way drew the audience into the piece but also actually allowed them to stand back from the live stuff and then to re-engage when it started again.
- TH: Do you think the act and process of composition in education and community settings is any different from when you are composing for a professional or conventional ensemble? Are you a different type of composer in that context?
- BR: I try not to be. One of the glorious things about working with huge groups, and a number of different groups is the possibility of throwing ideas in – the suck it and see approach – and see what they come up with. Sometimes they won't respond at all and sometimes I'll see a way to make something happen. I've been very fortunate in a lot of the professional work that I've done – for instance with the Cardew Ensemble I can actually throw ideas at them, try them out and if it doesn't work we can put it in the bin and start again. But also with pieces for the BBC Philharmonic. With the Proms piece I actually had the chance to explore – it exists in three versions, one of which has only been heard by the orchestra and 120 kids, and we made a version of it where the kids improvise along with the orchestra. I'd written lots of material for the orchestra which we read and some of which we used in the final piece. Sometimes I have to just write and give, but my

preferred way of working is based on that way I work with large ensembles – actually throwing ideas in and guiding the responses, helping the people shape their ideas, suggesting forms that would support their ideas.

TH: In those situations, to what extent are you the composer?

BR: It's a co-creation thing. It's a hackneyed term, but to give ownership of the product to the people involved is absolutely essential. I think that was very apparent recently in the piece I made for the Isle of Man – *Dances in Time of Celebration*. I'd written parts for two youth orchestras, and then I had the Isle of Man Women's Institute creating their own pieces. Their sense of ownership was palpable. And the sense of ownership from the orchestra was negligible because of the terms of the commission – I had to make some music to give to the orchestra into which I slotted in the pieces the community group had made. I think it's disingenuous to say that you're not a composer and that anything they come up with is wonderful. I see some bloody awful work where anything they come up with is considered fantastic. I'm proud of being a composer, I'm proud of having the skills to shape and form ideas and make constructs, and help people see that simple things like repetition and transposition and augmentation – all the things which are part of a composer's language – are all possible and help the music start to live. I'm all those things – a facilitator, an animateur.

TH: Is the term composer sometimes misunderstood, or an inaccurate label for what you do?

BR: Sometimes people who are composers misunderstand how the hell you do a community or education project. They go in there with this notion of the grand sense of creating pieces in the canon and I'm here to vouchsafe some of my god-given talents to you. It's still happening. There are some composers still doing it – composers-in-residence for orchestras. I've seen some terrible stuff where they really condescend to people. The term is misunderstood in two ways. One of the ways in which I don't like it being used is when anybody who pens a little pop song with their guitar says 'I'm a composer'. OK, arrange that for strings or how would you produce that – oh, I can't do that. Well, at the moment you're a songwriter. A composer is someone who has strategies for creativity, strategies for creating structures small and large, somebody who knows how to use instruments effectively, knows how to write for different standards.

TH: How would that definition sit with an electroacoustic composer?

BR: I think electroacoustic composers work in exactly the same way – you can take an idea, a sound they've recorded. With me it might be three pitches or a little rhythm. And I can say these are some ways of transmogrifying that, it starts to become a compositional object where you're starting to sculpt with it. I think electroacoustic composers are doing exactly the same thing.

TH: You tend to sit outside the conventional establishment model of the composer: PhD, academic post, etc. What have been the drawbacks of not following that model?

BR: I sometimes think it would be nice to have three years to write a piece but then I think no, I'd get bored. It wouldn't be a very good piece. I'm a doing composer and a lot of that is making and doing pieces that perhaps have one, maximum three or four performances and that doesn't bother me. A lot of composers find that strange. Birtwistle's new opera *The Minotaur*: they were talking even before the first performance about it entering the operatic canon. How dare they! It's like saying there is a canon and anybody who is a high art composer, whatever they write, it will enter this bloody canon whatever that is. They should be shot with it. I think I believe too much in, cliché, it being something that you do. It can be a high art activity but it doesn't have to be. I compose in a different way: I compose quickly with simple ideas which sound, hopefully, really effective in context. I compose oddball pieces that challenge people's ways of perceiving music and challenge their expectation – for example the *Pub Operas*, the *Station Opera*, the *Supermarket*

Symphony. But also by throwing bits of theatre into the straight things. One girl came up to me, who is now in quite a senior position in an orchestra, and said you don't remember me, I was the one who had to push a pile of boxes off the stage in an education project. I asked if she liked the sound and she said not at the time but it was quite good wasn't it. So I mix that sort of madcap experimentalism, the Goons meets Cardew, into my music. Some of it's fun, some of it's strange, some unexpected. It's difficult to pin down and I think that's a large part of me as well and my personality – off at tangents.

TH: Do you think you share any of Cardew's refusal to compromise?

BR: My refusal to compromise is based on something I learnt as a teacher and that is the higher your expectations are, the more people can achieve. I'm quite happy to make a piece which involves very young children or people with no experience of making music at all and give them really quite challenging things to think about. Perhaps not technically in terms of performance, but in terms of the idea or the aesthetic. They have to go on the journey and believe in what the possible outcome might be. The analogy I use is the jigsaw – we have all the pieces but I'm the only one with the box lid with the picture on it. So they have to come on this journey of faith and they have to try all these, what they consider weird and wacky things, which are part and parcel of all that '60s and '70s experimenting. I'm one of the few who recycle – for some it's all there in a glass case in a museum but I'm still using those ideas via Paynter and more directly via Cardew and Cage, Penderewski, Lutoslawski, Crumb.

TH: How sympathetic are you to Cardew's politics?

BR: I don't get politics. I was a card-carrying socialist – my politics extends to caring about people. And I suppose in one way I'd like to be an altruist but I'm too cruel to be that. I think the further he got towards that extreme form of Marxism ... I don't really understand it. I don't think I have the intellect that Cardew had – he embarked on an intellectualized Marxism that was partly his own creation.

TH: He was perhaps attracted aesthetically to the purity of Marxist thought?

BR: Yes. The aesthetic. My politics are socialist but they don't inform my compositional practice.

TH: You wouldn't consider yourself in any sense a political composer?

BR: I think people have described me as such because I want music to be out there for people, the pub operas, the big opera in the square in the snow – *Snogging Harold Wilson*. I suppose that's political with a small 'p' because it's saying here is some music which is based in a really quite difficult musical language, and here it was at the opening of the festival. It had a community aspect but it also had this mad performance aspect of performers on top of buildings around the square. So the politics of it were saying to people this is the start of the contemporary music festival, here is some contemporary music, and it's in the city square.

TH: A strategic composer rather than a political composer maybe?

BR: I think so. One of the things that does incense me – the people who go to football matches and pay £70 and say they can't go to the opera. It's actually cheaper! Part of what I do is a response to people making points like that. Damn it, I'll make some music you don't have to pay for, that you don't have to dress up for, which is not to say you don't have to think about it. I think the case in point is that there are people who still come up to me who were at *Arcade Games* and say 'you were the guy in the middle of the pitch weren't you?' Some of them remember the fact we had a mad electroacoustic thing going on over the PA and kids improvising with wind band instruments and chorus girls leaping around on the pitch. This was back in '97 now.

TH: Why was the Cornelius Cardew Ensemble formed? What was the rationale?

BR: It was an appendix to the Contemporary Music Studies degree at Bretton Hall College. What we wanted was contemporary music that was a living thing and not like the dust music strand which was all about 'dead composer good, live composer bad'. And to be an ensemble that worked experimentally, encouraged experimentation in the students. They could work with us, they could write for us, they could ask us to do bizarre things. I remember one piece where I was asked to play an ostinato and as I played it somebody took my socks and shoes off and put my foot in a bowl of warm water. And then a very handsome young man started kissing the back of my neck. They were trying to get the ensemble to stop playing this ostinato – I rather enjoyed it. It was about having a living, breathing ensemble that had skills in many musics, some of which I only discovered when I became a member of the Cardew Ensemble. I'm an untrained pianist, untrained percussionist, untrained vocalist, but this ensemble actually gave me the chance to flower as all of those things and discover I could actually do those things. We got together a group of people who had not only contemporary music skills but skills beyond that, into early music, cutting edge electronics, world music. It was a resource for the course but also was fortunate enough to get permission to use Cardew's name because they believed we believed in Cardew's ideals of everybody can and should make music.

TH: Which aspects of Cardew's work did you most want to associate yourselves with?

BR: Allowing everyone to make music. That manifested itself in doing education projects, working with schoolchildren. We'd take our skills into schools and make pieces that encouraged the children to experiment alongside us, and sometimes to take over our roles. I'm thinking of a project at Halifax High School where we had a vibraphone that in the performance was played by seven students – the percussionist had a sort of subsidiary role: very much the Cardew of finding ways for everyone to participate in new music and make new music.

TH: Cardew goes a step further in his interest in the interactions between musicians and non-musicians, how one feeds off the other. Is that something you explore?

BR: Very much so. It's difficult to talk about because some of it is so intuitive. I think stemming from my grandmother teaching me to play the harmonium aged three by not telling me where C was but encouraging me to make a story – something good, something bad, high notes, low notes and me reacting to her skills at playing hymns and parlour songs. And then, my experience at primary school where there was some very good music teaching – lets make some sounds, lets move to it, lets make something for this part of the play. With all those experiences ... I don't really mention this thing about interaction and feeding off each other because it's so understood as part of my personality, it's so intuitive in what I do.

TH: Could you give an overview of the range of activity of the Cardew Ensemble?

BR: The basic ones were the series of concerts at Bretton. Residencies of three or four weeks where we'd work on a range of new music. Sight-reading it on the first day and the first concert would be a fortnight into the residency. Then we'd give a series of three concerts on Friday nights. It was reading and performing a lot of new music. The second part of that was to take new pieces from students and to work through them and suggest solutions to compositional problems they were having, and then to perform them so they could take away a CD and work on them further. Another part was working in festivals such as Oldham and Raise Your Banners. The Oldham Festival was the pub operas, Walton's *Façade*, also about young people making new pieces that they performed alongside us. What was lovely about that was that it showcased the fact that experimental is not just this very short period of English and American music. We did the Walton, which is hugely experimental, we did some Ravel. At Raise Your Banners,

we did Paragraph 1. Really fantastic experience – we didn't have an organ so we made a new version. Very humbling experience, almost a religious aspect to it which [Cardew] wouldn't thank me for saying, but if you've ever been to a Quaker prayer meeting, you don't say anything until you have something to say. The whistle solos at the end of the paragraph ... sometimes the most heartrending silences and then out it came these heartfelt solos. At the Altai Festival in Spain, we played Cardew to a group of very enthusiastic Spanish people. The Canterbury Festival – a damn good concert. And Bulgaria. That was probably the highlight – the ultimate Cardew experience. To an extent in the UK we were working with an education system that had some notion of where this was coming from, but we took these ideas to Bulgaria where they were totally new, to the extent where the final performance was broadcast live on state television – it was that important an experiment. Would that we could get that here!

TH: Also, you used Cardew players in a series of projects at Square Chapel, Halifax?

BR: That's true. The aim was to eventually make a concerto for everybody in the ensemble. I sort of achieved that. It was the Young Musicians' Chamber Music Festival with ensembles from all the major conservatoires. In the first year I made your concerto for piano, then, a flute one for Jos [Zwaanwburg], a cello one in Canterbury for Hugh [McDowell]. The concerto for Susan [Bisatt] was *The Ice Palace* which she never actually did which was a shame, and then the percussion concerto, *Creatures of Flame*, for Damien, and finally the clarinet concerto. We didn't actually have a clarinet but Howard [Jacobs] had done some work with us – so I made *Orpheus Torn Apart* for the Canterbury Festival which involved him playing a whole range of clarinets and also having to act.

TH: How would you consider the Cardew Ensemble to be different from Apartment House who are also advocates of Cardew's work?

BR: You cannot deny that Apartment House has some stunning players – Philip Thomas is my favourite pianist in the world today, he's intelligent. A recent performance of his of Feldman was just absolutely sublime. However, I think, as a combination of people they seem to have this attitude that what they're doing is, this is the way it should be done. I don't know how that manifests other than in their programme notes, in their manner in performance. I remember particularly *Schooltime Compositions* at the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival. Their performance of that was all about a solo cellist and some other people wondering round doing odd things which they didn't understand. They seemed to have cornered the market. They do these portrait concerts of all the great experimentalists ... they've 'done' Cardew and the CD is there. It's almost as if they consider that that CD is how it sounds. *Octet '61* for multi-tracked cello – I don't get that one at all, it speaks to me of nothing about the score.

TH: You use the phrase 'cornering the market'. About as removed from Cardew as you could get?

BR: Absolutely. I have to admire their consummate musicianship, but they are all part of other things. I think the worst offenders in the contemporary music market are Psapha, who sit there as is they hate every fucking note they're playing. Their body language is appalling, as if we have to play this music to get paid ... if this is Tuesday it must be Maxwell-Davies. I think what's worrying is that Cardew should be free and alive, and every time it's performed there are nuances and subtle differences. The same as in Chopin, you can't just record Chopin and say this is it – every time you perform one of the Nocturnes or the Scherzos amazing new things happen ... that's the wonderful thing about Cardew. The worrying thing is that their approach is, this is how you do it, now we've done it, now we're moving on to Feldman, now we've done him, now we're moving onto ... and so on. I find that quite worrying.

TH: To what extent is the Cardew Ensemble's repertoire informed by the performance context?

- BR: It's informed by the performance context, but also by the performers. We have to, or we choose to try and expose audiences to the widest possible definition of what experimental music is. But also, within a programme, to find connections and links between musics which you would never have considered. It might be as simple as a thematic thing. Once, somebody had composed a piece for us which was quite a violent love-song, and then in the same programme I played *Memories of You*. The love-song sounded like it as going to be really eloquent and melodious and was really quite hard-hitting. The programme note read 'what would you expect from a song called this?' And the programme note for *Memories Of You* was 'what would you expect from a title like this?' So the idea was just to show how many colours contemporary music has. It's quite hideous when a lot of people say I don't like contemporary music, and you say well which particular aspect of it? What we were trying to do was put as many different kinds, or linked kinds together, just to say to people it's all here, some of it you won't like, some of it you'll love. The bits that you love, come and tell us about it and we'll tell you where to find more or we'll perform more. I suppose we're a sort of shop window for it.
- TH: A lot of the music you perform was repudiated by Cardew. How do you reconcile that repudiation with your performance of it?
- BR: I'm sorry that he did repudiate it and I'm glad he didn't do what a lot of composer did which was to burn stuff and not allow it to be performed. I think he was wrong. He'd turned a corner in his thinking and his life and way of working. I think, had he lived, he would have reconsidered. He was just getting going ... a very short life cut cruelly short.
- TH: There is some evidence that he may have returned to earlier ideas.
- BR: I think so. I think possibly that he was rebelling against this notion of the canon which I hate as well. He didn't want his works to enter the canon, which in a way they have with groups like Apartment House, and I think he would have hated that. I hope he wouldn't have hated our way of working with him, which was to consider them as living organisms and pieces to delight in, not as museum pieces. I hope we made them live rather than saying this is how they should be performed ... the 'there you go, listen to this, it's good for you' type approach. That might be being too cruel to Apartment House! You can see where I'm coming from.
- TH: He was actually quite happy for the earlier pieces to be performed as long as it was accompanied by a discussion of their contribution to the bourgeoisie.
- BR: Well in that case – I'd forgotten about that – in that case we're damn right. Perhaps not discussion about the bourgeoisie but after every bloody concert the Cardew Ensemble gave there was a very lively discussion about what the music was, what it was about in terms of the aboutness of the construction and the pitches, the important compositional things rather than the story behind it and so on. That's something which is missing from a lot of contemporary music performance practice. You go to the concert and that's it. Then you go to the pub. The Huddersfield Festival is one case in point – fabulous festival but nobody seems willing to engage.
- TH: The most you seem to get is a composer's forum, where the composer will talk about the creation of their work.
- BR: Yes. And what I find is that I want to talk about the music. I hear some very bad music and I want to be able to bounce off people and ask how they felt about it, did any of that speak to you, what qualities were important or interesting? But even with Graham Mackenzie's new leadership it still seems to be a sort of museum, lots of glass cases with exhibits in ... do not touch. I'd rather see a Eureka approach than a V&A approach. I like to be able to press buttons and make things happen.

TH: The pub operas were an important aspect of the Cardew Ensemble's work and there are parallels with Scratch in terms of taking your music into unconventional venues. What sort of reactions did you get to the pub operas?

BR: Some pretty sniffy reactions from those people who think they're in the know. Not so much sniffy about the music, but sniffy about the stories, the content, the swearing, the partial nudity of certain members of the cast. But for the people who were there in pubs ... I remember once in Canterbury this guy at the bar, who didn't want to know, sat with his back to us very pointedly while we performed, and eventually turned round and round until he was laughing his head off and thoroughly enjoying it. And he was hearing some quite extravagant music ... I mean the Pub Operas aren't high-art contemporary, they mix things which could be contemporary music-hall songs with experimental textures. Well, they're me.

TH: To what extent were you consciously trying to take contemporary music to a new audience, and to what extent were you entertaining the masses in the pub?

BR: I was entertaining the masses in the pub, and I just happen to write like that. It just happened to be the ensemble I was writing for. So what they heard was interesting textures you could make with four instruments and two voices, telling stories which were ribald and entertaining. Some of the sounds that happen in them are quite extreme, particularly in the first one, *First Love Last Orders*. There are some extreme textures but they are alongside some very safe stuff. For example, in one pub in Oldham - we were warned that this could be trouble, a very rough pub. The landlord had laid on a support act for us which was a blue comedian! The people walked out of him and wanted more of us. There was a pool match going on and the captain of the pool team stopped the match and said, we're not playing this, we're going in to listen to this stuff. All he wanted to do afterwards was go up to Jos and say is that a real flute. He didn't want to hold it just touch it! It was amazing ... no-one had ever allowed these people to be near people who could play instruments to that standard, no-one had allowed them to be near people singing in an operatic way. I suppose we had this intention of 'wouldn't it be fun if ...', but then as they progressed we got more and more of this notion that they were actually good things to be doing because people were having novel experiences and it didn't matter whether it was mob-art or high-art.

TH: Was the Cardew Ensemble political in any way?

BR: I don't think we ever considered ourselves as a political entity. The thing we had in common was a deep caring about a lot of kinds of music and the collective will to actually share that with as many people as possible and in as many places as possible, which is coming back to a bit of Scratch. I don't think we were consciously political but definitely subversive - if that's a political thing. Sometimes subversive in as far as everything was tongue in cheek and we were willing to take the mick out of the status quo and the canon. I suppose that could then be construed as being a political act in that nobody's allowed to criticize that canon and the great and the good. There we were doing it. Poking fun at ourselves at the same time, sometimes doing cod performances of pieces.

TH: What would you consider to be the Cardew Ensemble's most significant achievements and how are these evidenced, how are they measured? For instance, the applause at the end of a concert?

BR: More significant than the applause is people coming up to you and talking to you about it. I suppose getting people to talk about new music, contemporary music and experimental music is one of our achievements. I think the next one is allowing a lot of students to actually hear the music they were writing, both at Bretton and then at other places. Composition is such a paper exercise at so many conservatoires - we made it a

non-paper exercise. Getting new music out there was one of our other achievements. There were obviously certain high points – the Canterbury concert, the Bulgarian Project – the process was such a delightful journey. We learnt so much about ourselves and about Bulgarian folk music. We all brought things back from that which are now part of our way of thinking about music and life. I suppose there are many high points. The most significant achievement for me would be the person with the lowest expectations of that sort of music having the best experience of it. They thought of contemporary music being a certain thing, and they discover it to be something different because we presented it in an audience friendly way. That's another achievement. We actually made it an approachable commodity. The concerts were very audience friendly – we actually talked to the audience and had some banter. No fourth wall.

TH: Where were the Cardew Ensemble less successful?

BR: Getting funding to carry on. Possibly because of our rather anarchic view of life and musicing.

TH: If the Cardew Ensemble were Apartment House they would have got the funding. You're not Apartment House because of your refusal to compromise. Is refusing to compromise a virtue or, as it ultimately disables you, a flaw?

BR: We're all still doing things. Jos is as anarchic as ever – he's just written an obscene piece for Black Hair.

TH: But Jos is a university guy?

BR: But he's still being anarchic within it. And to an extent I'm being anarchic within the university system – when I teach community, orchestration. Back to the question – for myself I think it's not a bad thing. I don't know whether it's a virtue. It sometimes hasn't stood me in very good stead. And I think I worry people that think that if they employ me then, by association, they will be tarred with the same brush! Oh you've worked with that Barry Russell ...

TH: So are there any other things you'd liked to have achieved with Cardew Ensemble?

BR: Just the opportunity to carry on. There are so many pieces still to explore and experiences to make for audiences and performers and composers. I regret the fact that Bretton ceased to exist and no-one has taken us on board. All the ensembles-in-residence in universities are quite safe – string quartets. Obviously Backbeat¹ are at the RNCM, but the RNCM have also got a lot of very safe ensembles too. It's almost as if one of the things that pissed Cardew off and pisses us off ... this is how music's done, this is the way the canon works, this is the way funding works, to do this you have to do that. All these people running festivals who have commissioned themselves to write three pieces! It's wrong, it's obscene that the funding's going to things like that. Do we really need another piece by John Woolrich? A string of new ones at Aldeburgh. The trouble is as soon as you say these things you're accused of being jealous. Which isn't at all true. We're all out there doing stuff still, it's not as if we've stopped doing any musicing. Miffed is the easiest way of putting it! We're a bit miffed that we can't get the funding to carry on saying to people its OK to take the mick out of music, its OK to not like something, and whatever you put in front of us we will play with the maximum care and attention, but then afterwards we'll talk with you about how we feel about it.

TH: You're one of the few people who would consider programming Cardew's later piano works in a concert nowadays, and they are often ridiculed. How successful do you consider that music to be?

¹ Backbeat founder Damien Harron was percussionist with the Cardew Ensemble.

BR: In terms of what he was trying to make it do, only if you were totally in sympathy with what he was saying could it speak to you as a piece of political music making. That being said, they are beautifully pianistic, they're lovely to play, if you get beyond the politics. I manage to get beyond the fact that composers are anguishing over countesses which I'm told is vital I understand – so what? Let's just listen to the music. It might be being unfair to Cardew, perhaps he wanted you to feel certain things, as many other composers might have wanted you to. At the end of the day it's an arrangement of pitches and rhythms. As a pianist it's fabulous to play, it lies under the fingers, it's 'grateful pianism' as they say, and then the way those pitches and rhythms affect the listener. I'm glad to say we've only had good responses when we've programmed them. I opened the second half of the Alti concert with *Soon* and they loved it. And also, I did a very romantic version of it, because I was suddenly aware halfway through that if I looked out to the audience I could see the light sparkling on the Med. So I pulled it about a bit, I made a romantic version of it. The music is so good it allowed me to do that. If it was just about the political message it would be lesser music than it is. Lovely, lovely music.

TH: His death. Conspiracy or accident?

BR: As a drama queen I'm drawn to the conspiracy theory. But as somebody who sees the real world every day, accidents do happen.

TH: Where do you see Cardew's influence today?

BR: Quite a sad one. Only in places where people who know him and love his music and are willing to share that and explore it with people, and then people realize there is something you can take from this. I suppose in educational establishments where there is someone who has a notion of the delights that Cardew contains and understands how to perform it and how that can be a way of thinking musically, that can inform other ways of creating and making music. The basic answer is that it's unfortunately quite limited.

TH: If I was to suggest that Cardew has had no tangible impact on music making in the UK?

BR: I'd say you were very wrong. A lot of us have taken it on board as part of our way of thinking, but it's limited.

An interview with Anton Lukoszevieze

14 July 2008

- TH: Apartment House have been advocates of Cardew's music in recent years. When did you first become aware of Cardew's work and music and what drew you to it?
- AL: I came to Cardew's music through Cage and that would have been the early '90s, through my explorations of experimental and avant-garde music of the last 50 years. It probably came through reading one of Cage's books where there may have been a mention of Cardew – maybe *A Year From Monday* or *For The Birds*. It wasn't through Nyman's book, in fact I'd only read that a couple of years ago, just because I never got round to it. The Nyman book is quite interesting as an overview of experimental music, but obviously there are lots of gaps. So that's how I came about Cardew. And then through my experience of knowing and working with Michael Parsons which would have been 10 years ago now.
- TH: How distinct is Cardew from John Cage?
- AL: The Cardew that I'm attracted to is from about 1957-70. The explorations that Cardew did musically seem to explore a lot of the elements that Cage explored in the '50s in terms of indeterminacy and the organization of pieces. The Cage works of the mid to late '50s are highly organized, and his use of chance and indeterminacy is highly specific. That was a kind of launch for Cardew – Stockhausen and Cage were the launch pads for Cardew really. You know, obviously, that he was Stockhausen's assistant and virtually wrote pieces like *Carré*. And he was in Cologne and Darmstadt in the late '50s, so it was all around him really.
- TH: What led up to the formation of Apartment House?
- AL: It started with myself and Ian Pace. I wanted to do concerts of music we wanted to play and hear. So basically it was a need and a personal taste. You can enjoy music at home, of course, and go to other people's concerts but I was interested in making concerts. So, it was just the two of us at the beginning, then we parted our ways and I continued. Apartment House is a pool of musicians – I have about 20 players at my disposal so every project is a slightly different combination which I saw as a kind of freedom for my group, as opposed to the orchestral microcosm of something like the London Sinfonietta. That seemed a bit daft to me as it seems a traditional way of extending or de-extending instrumentation. I ask people to write new pieces and I think this will be a nice combination this year – one year it was electric guitar, clarinet, piano, cello and harp. You don't really find that very often. The models I'm interested in are led by players I like working with or particular instrumental qualities. So it's not in any way led by tradition or even trying to do something new. It's a much more personal thing.
- TH: So what is your recruitment criteria for the musicians?
- AL: Well, the programmes we do are led by repertoire and particular composers and particular types of contemporary music I suppose. But contemporary music is quite odd because you have individual practitioners who are drawn to performing contemporary music, and it's only recently that conservatoires and music colleges have begun to focus on contemporary performance. You didn't have that 15 or 20 years ago. You only had

places like Darmstadt, or people were seen as sort of oddballs who wondered around with their suitcase of contemporary music. It's a very small scene and you get to meet people who are interested in similar things, or you work with them. It's a purely informal kind of basis. I'm very lucky in Apartment House – all my players are very fine I think. They have their individual lives and performing worlds, but we come together and seem to work very well. It's very laid back but the focus is on a very concentrated performance. I mean, we've played at all the major contemporary music festivals now around Europe and the radio stations. So it's quite a good line up. Obviously it changes slightly, but I have very good core members.

TH: You were saying it is now more common for conservatoires and music colleges to focus on contemporary performance. Do you think there is now a new breed of 'trained' experimental musician?

AL: I'm not sure because a lot of things come from experience. I knew Jack Shit when I was 22. I don't see that the conservatoires are going to push out these highly honed intelligent au fait experimental musicians or contemporary performers because it comes from practice and experience. The reality of it is that you need to work together with composers and other performers. Most of the time people want to give concerts. And giving a concert is a very specific kind of situation and it can be a very difficult situation, for a professional or for an amateur. People want to go to concerts and people want to give concerts. There is a certain level of criticism or expected polished-ness. You want to have a good time at concerts on whatever level. I think the biggest thing that changed everything is the internet. You go to Ubuweb and you can look at any avant-garde thing in poetry or art or performance from the past 50 years. When I was a kid it was Deutsch Gramophon LPs of Stockhausen – we didn't have the internet or CDs, so I discovered everything from record libraries and books. Now the transference of information is so much more immediate. But paradoxically there's a danger – it makes people believe more easily. You can't get away from having to sit down and learn a piece of music and then going into a concert and performing it. Having an encyclopaedic knowledge of what's out there doesn't replace the experience. It doesn't replace the time based element and sharing it with other people. The internet has opened up the game but you can't get away from having a teacher or mentor who inspires, who introduces you to things. I think people are more aware of what's out there now.

TH: Do you think that, because of this wealth of information, experimental music has become a genre?

AL: Words are very difficult but as humans we need to label things and give them names otherwise we can't order things. But the syntax of naming things gets blurred. People say to me what sort of music do you play and I think well I could call it new music, contemporary music, avant-garde music, experimental music, music, sound-art. They don't really mean anything. One person's idea of sound-art could be completely different from another's. Contemporary artists are very fussy about things being called avant-garde. If you're an art historian the word avant-garde refers to 1912–13, cubism and Russian constructivism. Words get bandied around. Go to the back of *The Wire* and there's all this sub-categories – trip hop, acid jazz ...

TH: The worst offender being MySpace ...

AL: Yes. Another problem is with improvisation. I could say the music I do is improvised but there is a sub-structure. It's a time-based improvisation which means I'm ordering it in terms of time brackets or whatever, which is totally different from pure free improvisation. If I sit down with Eddie Prévoist we just turn up, say hello and play, and then we go away again. But I might be with some other improvisers and I might say how long shall we do this for. Or we might talk about what we're going to do in a very subjective way. So the problem is labelling. Experimental music as you or I understand it is much more specific in terms of historical things. If we say experimental music, we

automatically think Cardew, Cage, Robert Ashley, Christian Wolff etc, and its peak probably was the '70s. And then the '80s turned into this nightmare of the Thatcherite sort of new romantic crap. Words are difficult.

TH: It is partly to do with labelling, but do you think it's also to do with Cardew entering the historical canon?

AL: The thing that's problematic with Cardew: people that knew him or like his music are totally divided into two camps. You have the pre-'70s and then you have the break with the Scratch Orchestra and you have the post '70s – the Marxist and neo-communist camp – who are much keener on the '70s Cardew because he renounced Stockhausen and his own music. And then of course there are some who like both, and I think they're deeply weird. I think they're just trying to be fair.

TH: But there are threads that link those periods. The works of the late to mid '60s are in a way far more political than the later pop songs and piano music.

AL: Yes, he lost the plot as far as I'm concerned. Christian Wolff got it right – if you use aspects of sociological organization as templates for your music in terms of sharing material, equality of control, performance possibilities, then that is a much more honest approach to your art. The minute you start setting Chairman Mao to music it becomes historical, and then it's totally bogus because it loses this wonderful thing you can have with art – its independence. If you can't make free art, you're trapped. He just went down the wrong way, just like Rzewski did, and even Christian bless him, and even Cage did when he talks about reading some Chairman Mao and saying how wonderful it was. I think that was naïve. The interesting thing is that all those composers who embraced the radical left all went to public school – Rzewski, Wolff, Cardew. I just think it's amusing in retrospect. I think if you want to organize your music along egalitarian models then that introduces a really interesting element to your music. For me, the greatest Cardew works are piece like *Autumn '60* and *Solo with Accompaniment* and *Octet '61* and *The Great Learning*. They are totally self-sufficient but they are all encompassing, in a way, and there's a great integrity to the music. The great thing about something like *Autumn '60* – which I've conducted many times, all over the world now, I love the piece, one of the greatest pieces of avant-garde music – is its flexibility. It's inclusive and it's exclusive. The clever thing that Cardew did is maintaining this kind of skeleton pitch material through the piece. It's a kind of D minor F major feel, which is quite strange, but around all that you can have noises and sounds, perfect 5ths. You can have all these things that are banned and banished from traditional music but because he's structured the piece in a certain way, and he's given it all these rules which you can break or stick to within reason, he's made this wonderful kind of mobile which for me is a kind of paradigm of a political feeling. I believe very strongly in politics but for me politics begins with the individual. I don't need to sit there and listen to someone singing about some dictator in some far eastern country telling me how to run a society. We all know now of the great totalitarian mistakes and heinous crimes of Stalin and Mao.

TH: How important to Apartment House is Michael Parson's connection to Cardew and the Scratch Orchestra?

AL: It was very important. In the late '90s Michael wrote two Apartment House suites for us. Each had about 5 or 6 movements. Basically they looked at different models that Michael was attracted to, but they all use indeterminacy in different ways. It might be indeterminate pitch, it might be indeterminate rhythm, indeterminate placement etc, but they exhibit a lot of elements that you find in '60s experimental music. Michael's music is in a way a synthesis of Christian Wolff and early Cardew, and, of course, his own explorations of things like canons and more traditional models. And also earlier music: Greek music, his interest in modes. It's very important I think. It's all-inclusive music – non-specific instrumentation, apart from maybe the percussion. I think Michael's music is the clearest extension and continuation of Cardew's music. There are elements in

Michael's music, especially these suites, which refer to *The Great Learning* as well as some of the more complex earlier Cardew pieces.

TH: Are any aspects of the Scratch Orchestra residual in Apartment House?

AL: It has a benign dictator, which is myself. It has nothing to do with the Scratch Orchestra. Someone has to organize something. I don't think that Apartment House is anything like the Scratch Orchestra, but I would consider that an attitude towards music making. There is a kind of egalitarian – we don't have the normal roles that other ensembles seem to have. All my musicians get paid the same. In other more conventional state-funded groups, the percussionist might get more than the bass clarinet in one piece or something. I just think that's rubbish. Obviously people didn't get paid to play in the Scratch Orchestra – you might have a sandwich and your bus fare. It's more to do with attitude than specific organizational things. We discuss programmes, though I decide a lot of things. The rehearsal process is very much an open thing, as it should be. I think that's very important. There is a kind of openness amongst the musicians. Luckily all the people that perform are very open and they work in other areas. I have seen a resistance among some musicians – not in my group – to do new things but that's partly because it's ingrained in conservatoires.

TH: Have Apartment House ever worked with untrained musicians?

AL: Yes. When we did *Schooltime Compositions* in Huddersfield we had people who were untrained. Sometimes I think it's a bonus. If only I could do more projects where I could encompass a greater range of performers.

TH: Why don't you?

AL: It was great. It was just one of acceptance. No problem at all. Unfortunately the way music festivals and radio stations work, you can't always encompass that aspect because they want certain repertoire. But as things that can happen, obviously it's perfectly possible and I don't see anything wrong with it.

TH: Do you approach Cardew's music differently from other repertoire?

AL: Yes and no. I think that there are a lot of bad performances of contemporary music. Not so much the more conventional stuff – you can obviously criticize the way people play Britten or Mark Anthony Turnage, but their particular language is much more related to traditional classical music. If you're playing a melody in the oboe, there wouldn't be much call for extended techniques or multiphonics or whatever. But Cardew's works in the '60s, apart from *Treatise*, are very specific. His instructions are very detailed, he's very clear in the score what is permissible and what is not. So, yes, I pay very strict attention to the instructions.

TH: Do you find a kind of duality or conflict in Cardew's music, where on one hand it's very specific and detailed, but on the other very free, and sometimes with a kind of 'get-out clause'?

AL: Yes – there are obviously elements where the players are required to improvise or find sounds themselves. I do think there are certain things that are in context and certain things that aren't. I remember once doing *Treatise* in Germany with another group and suddenly the bassoonist started doing Bach, and I said 'you can't do that'. And he said why not – I had to try and explain myself. So obviously there are things to do with context. I can't remember how I explained it, but I was quite brusque about it. I suppose it's the equivalent of standing in front of a Rothko and putting a cartoon on it or something. If I was conducting *Autumn '60* and someone did a completely ridiculous sound – maybe the pianist played the Tristan chord or something – I would say that's not appropriate. But I think that's fair in any realm of music. People talk about interpretation

and authenticity all the time. Some people have said, 'yes, but it says you can do anything'. But it doesn't really say that. Cage has suffered so much from people's bad performances.

TH: So a context has evolved along with the music?

AL: Yes, but that's inevitable. It happens in all walks of life – the way people dress. You wouldn't go to a funeral dressed as a clown – it would be deemed to be offensive. So obviously we have modes of behaviour that are intrinsic to all walks of life. I think it applies to music as well.

TH: Could you talk me through your approach to creating the multi-tracked cello version of *Octet '61*?

AL: I decided not to structure the timing of the piece in terms of I would do figure 1 for 10 minutes or figure 2 for 35 seconds or whatever. I decided just to work through the piece once in my own time and I wrote out rough interpretations of each sign as I felt applied to my instrument or playing. Then I would use certain elements of improvisation as a kind of cement, so I would play a figure and I would link it to the next figure but maybe by using other sounds or techniques which were not implicit in the sign itself. I think Cardew talks about other sounds being permissible, so I did it in a really simple way. The diagonal arrow in the middle – out, away – I just used static on a transistor radio which is very simple, maybe a bit naïve, but it seemed to me to be completely different from what I'd done.

TH: Was the transistor radio a conscious reference to the world of Cage and '60s experimentalism?

AL: The transistor radio is a vernacular instrument: they are part of the repertoire of instruments in contemporary music. Lots of people working with laptops use radio noise, it's a very common thing to use material from radios. But also it was something next to me I could use. I could have used another instrument or done another thing on the cello, but it's a very simple thing to use. Early on in my career I used transistor radios in *Treatise*. But I see that as tradition – AMM used to use them and it does add another spectrum. I don't do it any more. We did *Octet '61* at the BBC a couple of years ago and we used dictaphones. We recorded ourselves playing in real time, rewound, and at the arrow point switched them on and continued playing. And suddenly you had this weird kind of new transparent layer coming in. We were quite happy with that. I think that's a perfectly valid way. There are no answers but you have to use your reasonable common sense or uncommon sense.

TH: How much is improvised and how much is slavish to the score?

AL: On the CD recording I spent a lot of time working on each figure and actually wrote out each figure as an interpretation. It was very specific. When we did it again a couple of years ago we did it much more intuitively. We just used the score as a score. We did our homework but we read each sign as it was and that gave a much more fluid feeling to it. It was quite a different way of doing it.

TH: Do you find it difficult not to improvise? If you're an improviser is the temptation not to go with the flow?

AL: I always say listen and don't listen. You have to be a responsive human being, so there are elements where you choose to listen and you choose to react and there are other times when it pays to just pay attention to what you're doing. Some problems with experimental music ... people are afraid of things like single sounds, or they're afraid of long sounds. People often fidget with sounds, they feel they have to prod them and use them a lot or make a lot of noise. There was a prevalent period in English improvising in

the free improvisation scene – like the London Improvisers Orchestra – where everyone was making a racket all the time. And then you have this complete reaction with all these silent guys in Europe just doing very long quiet sounds or whatever.

TH: *The Great Learning* was in part a reaction to that problem in the Scratch Orchestra.

AL: And as a work *The Great Learning* is fantastic – one of the greatest pieces of British music. It's not ignored but I think it's misunderstood. The trouble is Cardew shot himself in the foot by writing such terrible music in the '70s. That's my personal feeling.

TH: That is shared with others.

AL: Why on earth ... why did they adopt a style of music which came out of late nineteenth-century parlours? It seems absurd to me to appropriate this kind of bourgeois conception of what popular music was. Why didn't he go into DJing if he wanted to get to people, go on the radio or something. Surely you can influence far more people than sitting there playing an upright piano on a lorry with some bunch of saddos as far as I can see. It was a sign of the times. Eddie Prévost said once that Cardew was just so rubbish he couldn't even play *Yellow Submarine* on the piano, it wasn't part of him, it wasn't really him. I find that rather sad in a way. I see him as a very tragic figure who got caught up in this thing, this maelstrom of the shifting political spectrum.

I have a problem with *Treatise* these days. I've done it a lot – it's very problematic. I was trying to put my finger on it recently and I think the thing that lets it down is that he did it when he was working in a graphic design studio and I do think that a lot of the drawings are too geometric. I think they alienate the performer. They are so removed from music notation. The nearest thing you can compare them to is Russian constructivism. But there's something very alienating about it. There are certain areas which are very beautiful but it's a very problematic work.

TH: I've been working on it with CoMA East Midlands, and we've spent more time talking about it than making music.

AL: That's what happens.

TH: To what extent is the final performance Cardew's and to what extent is it the performers'?

AL: The easy way out – it's copyrighted to Cardew and his publisher! That's as much as it's Cardew's. *Octet '61* is much more Cardew's. I think we can go 70:30 in Cardew's favour. But *Treatise* – it's just got his name on it. He himself says there is no answer to what *Treatise* is. I think he explained himself – he wanted it to be a paradox, he wanted to push the musicians to go further away from where they were.

TH: Do you think Cardew has a musical personality?

AL: Yes, I think he does, very much so. I think he was a highly intelligent motivated artist. The sad thing was that he was British. I don't think he would have worked in Germany, but maybe if he'd been Italian or Lithuanian or something. He's a product of the English public school system and he was also a product of the European avant-garde and I don't think that necessarily boded well for him. This might be denigrating to him. I think he was a brilliant composer – who knows what he'd have done in the '70s if he hadn't renounced everything.

TH: He probably would have come back round to earlier models of composition.

AL: What is also difficult is the legacy of people who worked with Cardew. They are themselves and you do obviously need new people interpreting these things. There's

nothing worse than nostalgia especially with the Scratch Orchestra. Have you seen the film of the Scratch Orchestra? There's a bit at the end with John Tilbury saying we need to get the music to the masses and the factories ... it's of its time. I just don't think you can mix this type of music with politics.

TH: So is Apartment House in any way politically motivated?

AL: Well, we're not state-funded. I've always wanted to be free from that. I don't want to have to jump through hoops with the Arts Council or be held by someone saying I should do 'x' amount of bollocks for the community or whatever. I don't think communities want experimental music. I think individuals do and certain collectives do, but I think it's a total insult for me to go round telling people they should be listening to my music because I don't think they should. And so, you fill in these forms for getting money and they say who is your target audience? You have to specify what percentage of your audience is black, disabled whatever. I think that's totally insulting. I think it's totally insulting to the general public and to you as an artist. If they want to do surveys of audiences let them come and do it but don't expect me to do it.

TH: So what is a typical Apartment House audience?

AL: It depends on where we play. If we play at the BBC you probably get a certain amount who always go to the BBC and a certain amount who like experimental music, or friends have suggested they come along. If we go to a festival you've got a specific audience. If we play in Cambridge we get people who never go to contemporary music. If we play in an art gallery you get a broader spectrum of people. But I don't aim at the audience. I just aim to perform as an artist to my best ability and to make programmes which I think have an integrity. As an artist that's all you can do. I'm not there to change people's minds. I've had people come up to me who have loved the music and those who have absolutely hated it. Fine – we live in a democracy. That's great.

TH: What sort of reactions have you had to Cardew's music?

AL: People like it, and people are puzzled. It's a mixture. Obviously, now the guy's dead and it's very historical in a sense. We're re-creating these things. I think generally Cardew's music perplexes people.

TH: Is that a good thing or a bad thing?

AL: The trouble with Cardew is that he didn't find Zen like Cage. He touched on it, but Cage really had it – the macrobiotic diet, Zen, and he was a clever very warm person, great writer. But Cardew just ran out of material in a way. It sounds a bit glib of me, and I'm tabloiding it a bit, but I don't think it is popular music. I think there's great beauty in pieces like *Autumn '60* and I think people do appreciate that, and *The Great Learning* is very uplifting. It makes the audience want to take part, probably because the people taking part look and behave like the audience or could be the audience. As an inclusive piece it's wonderful and a kind of model for all educational community music ever after. There are only so many things you can do with amateurs or non-musicians because they have certain limits.

TH: As an ensemble, are you involved in music-making beyond the concert platform?

AL: We have done some workshops but they are more like hit and run jobs. We might go to a university and work with composition students, or I've done improvisation stuff in Sweden. As an individual I've done a lot more community work than with the group. I've done workshops with inner city London kids for the Proms, work with disabled people – I made a theatre opera, workshops with school children, composers, performers, quite a broad spectrum. But Apartment House specifically, probably because we're independent and not state-funded, we haven't been asked to.

TH: What informs your workshop practice? Is there any of Cardew in the way you would operate in a workshop?

AL: I think there is. The simplest way to organize things is with simple numbers, durations, improvisation, specific elements of indeterminate music – loud sounds, long sounds, quiet sounds. The basic building blocks of what a lot of experimental music is made from. I would say a large amount of materials that I use in workshop situations are similar or the same as in Cardew's music, and other composers of course.

TH: What do you think is the 'spirit' of Cardew? How does it manifest itself in Apartment House?

AL: I don't know. I admire his music, and I enjoy performing it but it doesn't play a central role by any means. I would say I'm much closer to the world of Cage and I like to be quite specific about Cage. People are very quick to disregard or pigeon-hole him just because of certain pieces like 4'33" etc. But he was composing from the '30s until 1992 – incredible range. If you listen to the *Sonatas and Interludes*, the early string quartet, and then you do one of the *Variations*, and then one of the late number pieces and then you hear one of the etudes for violin or cello, they all sound like they're written by completely different composers. But if you know his work they are all part of a gradual transition, a progression through different working methods. I think that is much more important as a central body of influence to my aesthetic. But also I'm working a lot with new young composers. People from a lot of different countries and backgrounds.

TH: Do you find the reaction to Cardew different in the rest of Europe?

AL: Yes, because it's not muddied with silly old nostalgia. It's much more objective.

TH: You've made recordings of Cardew's music. What's the attraction of committing performances to record?

AL: I hate making recordings. I really don't like making CDs anymore. They are a necessary evil because people ask you. And it's nice to have a document, but one has to be really clear that the CD is not a definitive thing especially with contemporary music, and especially with music which is more indeterminate. I think they are very good as documents of an artist's work but they are by no means definitive and I much more enjoy the concert situation. In fact, I'd rather sometimes just release live recordings.

TH: To what extent do you think Cardew has impacted on today's musical scene?

AL: Very little I think. Very little indeed, sadly. But then I don't see any reason why there should be a huge influence. A lot of people talk about Cardew, not many people play his music. I have played a lot around Europe and so there are certain pieces I'm very drawn to but he's not such a huge influence. Maybe amongst young composers, to a certain extent. He's your poor man's, British Cage. I don't want to denigrate him at all, he's a very important composer but it's very firmly in an historical context. I'm much more interested in just playing the music rather than trying to build a portrait of him in performances, or having a kind of aesthetic for my own group or whatever. I just see him as an important composer with certain pieces I want to perform. The influence, if there is any, is more so on groups like CoMA and certain aspects of community music making. Very few people perform the pieces, partly because they are difficult. I like that – it's something to get your teeth into. To get to the heart of the matter you have to work hard. A lot of performers don't want to work hard, they just want dots on paper. That's up to them – there's plenty of Turnage in the world for them.

TH: Do you recognize Cardew's influence on other repertoire you perform?

- AL: Yes – Michael Parsons, Christian Wolff. But it's not so much influence – influence is too strong. Christian and Michael and Cornelius all worked together. It's not so much an influence as a confluence. They are sort of second generation Cage and Feldman.
- TH: Do you think experimental music exists today or are we simply replicating the experimental music of yesterday?
- AL: I don't think we have it in the Michael Nyman's book sense. Aspects of it are still around – Nyman, Bryars etc. We have it with some younger composers possibly. It is there. But also we have laptops and the internet and multimedia – it's much easier for people to make things. But there are still elements of craft that you can't get away from, when you need a pencil and paper and live musicians. I think it's just a delta. It always was I think. Experimental music as in the context of Nyman's book or Cage's definition is not the same as someone else's. Someone with MAX-MSP and a few instruments will say their music is experimental. I suppose it really means an openness. How you define it depends on who you are and how you're perceiving something.

An interview with Chris Shurety

16 July 2008

TH: What were the events that led to the formation of CoMA?

CS: It was quite personal. I always loved music, classical music, jazz, but I didn't play an instrument. I went to a school where they asked you when you got there 'do you play an instrument?' If it was 'no' you were written off in terms of music. It tended to reinforce the idea that you were either born a musician or not. At the age of twelve it's all too late. And then my children were part of an ILEA¹ scheme. They did some research in all the London boroughs about musical provision, and Tower Hamlets was the most deprived borough. They decided to pilot a project of string teaching and it was headed by Sheila Nelson. It was called the Tower Hamlets String Teaching Project. It had a series of principles, including things like anti-elitism and music as a core subject. My daughter was about eight years old and she was given a cello. It was treated as a core curriculum project, so they did Maths, English and Music. They did it as a group lesson at least twice a week, all given either a cello or violin and very quickly they gathered them together as a Saturday morning group where they could take it a bit further. Like a number of other parents, we thought it was a fantastic idea, we liked the way they were doing it. Not one child in the class was excluded. So we went along and called ourselves the Tower Hamlets Music Project Parents Supporters Association. We'd provide tea and biscuits and so on. And then one day, about May 1983, they gave a one-hour lesson to parents. We all sat there on a nice sunny day and they said, the purpose of this is for you to get a better understanding of how we're teaching the kids and how to be more supportive. A number of us got to the end of this one-hour session, looked at each other and we thought, hey, we could learn this. So we set up, in summer 1983, a class on a Wednesday afternoon, this then shifted to Saturday mornings and we slowly built something called the East London Late Starters Orchestra. That has just had its 25th anniversary and it has 120 members. It has a summer school, trips to Greece, there's a Yorkshire Late Starters String Group, there's one in New York, one being set up in Stratford, one in Norfolk. All those principles that guided the project are incorporated into the Late Starters Orchestras.

I like contemporary music and, because of people's attitude to contemporary music, written into our musical principles in ELLSO were linking with the community and also exploring all kinds of music, all genres, all periods. Then, as a special principle, to expose members to contemporary music through participation. When we got to the tenth anniversary in 1993, in planning for that, we looked at what we'd achieved. Had we got teaching structures etc, and where had we not succeeded. We had in that time commissioned several composers –Michael Finnissy, Judith Wier, Diana Burrell, Nigel Osbourne, and we had got some repertoire together. What we thought would be great would be to launch that nationally and find other amateur orchestras that had been commissioning new music and bring it together. So we set up a summer school and we called it COMA – Contemporary Music Making for Amateurs. It was meant to be a one off summer school to bring us together as a federation of people who'd been working on contemporary music. That was 1993 and that was the launch of it.

What we found out was that there were no other orchestras that had that level of commitment. In fact, we had a group of individuals come together but there was no

¹ The now defunct Inner London Education Authority

repertoire on the table. We had a couple of pieces by Nyman and a few other bits and pieces. John Tilbury was there, and I think we did Paragraph 7 of *The Great Learning*. We probably did some other Cardew too. I'm sure that would have influenced us and introduced us to that music. That was the start of CoMA. Our aims were to create a national network of individuals interested in contemporary music and who wanted to take part in it. From there we set up ensembles over the years, developed more repertoire and so on.

TH: Have the aims changed over time?

CS: The aims are precisely the same now – to create a repertoire that is of high quality, is cutting edge, artistically challenging but technically accessible to amateur performers; to establish ensembles and other means of allowing amateur musicians to perform contemporary music; to collaborate with professional musicians to achieve these aims. We saw this as a collaboration. So while it has a slightly divisive name, defining amateurs, in reality we don't see it like that.

TH: How specifically does CoMA tackle the issue of integrating professional and amateur musicians?

CS: I'm conscious that Cardew would say the Scratch Orchestra was for trained and untrained musicians. I don't think we have used those terms. I don't think we have such a clear-cut definition. I think it's just through our practice, the manner in which we do things. The way that teaching staff in the Summer School, for example, have always taken part, they join in with the orchestra. In talking with them about their role as teachers it's always been discussed on the basis that this is a spectrum. In a way it is about creating an atmosphere and a series of activities where people find themselves rubbing shoulders with people they might have seen as 'up there' – and they find that actually they are musical comrades. That's the spirit of co-operation and all exploring this area of music together. Some people simply have more experience of than others, and they're willing to pass on those skills. In terms of how we present workshops, we use language that says that. We haven't got terminology as such but we've always encouraged a sense that there is nothing genuinely differentiating people from the more experienced composers other than experience. The judgement of a decent piece of music is a very personal thing and so everyone should have every confidence in their own creativity. I suppose, some tutors are better at getting that across than others. Michael Finnissy, for instance, is very good at getting people to be absolutely wacky, really drawing on new areas of thinking and encouraging them to develop this musically. He really does get people to refresh their musical thinking. There is a tendency for people to be conservative and aspire to what they think music should be. I think Michael tries to get people to challenge that.

Kieran O'Riordan², for instance, is professional. He makes his living out of it. In CoMA London we have Gregory Rose. So there are times when one stands back and says this person has the most skills available to do this job.

TH: And in many respects the East Midlands group feels like a professional ensemble. The only difference being we don't get paid.³

CS: Well, CoMA London call ourselves professional amateurs! We've been seven years at Spitalfields festival, we've been paid £1000 for the latest gig. We've done BMIC Cutting Edge tours, workshops at different festivals, and we'll get paid. Some of it's Greg's expenses. We've actually conceptualized what we're able to offer from a professional point of view – an interesting concert, an all comers workshop, we can incorporate them

² Director/conductor of the East Midlands CoMA ensemble.

³ TH is percussionist with the East Midlands ensemble

into the concert. We've got a package that we promote and sell. The ensemble members are not paid but we have professionalized. I think that's the right thing to do.

TH: And it's what amateur musicians aspire to – to be part of a professional outfit.

CS: The whole idea of artistically challenging music, technically accessible to amateurs was that people should be able to go to a concert and hear a CoMA ensemble or an amateur group and they wouldn't be thinking this sounds weedy or weak. They want to hear the music played with power, massive confidence and competence. There may be the odd little mistake, but that happens with professional ensembles. The fact of the matter is that the ensembles comes across as immensely professional but of course, they've got some music they can actually do it with, instead of, unfortunately, so much of the twentieth-century repertoire that was out of reach.

TH: What have been the biggest frustrations?

CS: They come at different levels. At one level, the administration. The people who have helped with administration centrally have been phenomenal, that's really worked very well. But getting the kind of funding to reward people properly is frustrating. We were music winner of the Prudential Awards in 1997, we've been short-listed for the RPS awards a couple of times and so on, and given what people believe about CoMA – which is generally extremely good – it's somehow seems absurd that we just can't get the money together. There's a lot of good will in this organization.

Then you have the ensembles. Some of them have been frustrating. A couple have disappeared up their own arse really and are entirely based around nothing but their own music. No critical awareness of their music, not setting out to find someone to train them, or to improve their music, and in a sense not acting to the wider aims of CoMA which is to try and make a fantastic impression on people with some really amazing music. Sometimes it's been poorly played, not good music, and presented badly. I feel that is not appropriate. It's very difficult when you've got a very small administration centred, as it turns out in London. We've got all these ensembles, some at the amateur end of the spectrum and at the other end – East Midlands and London – being almost professional really in the way it's presented. The frustration is those mismatches and how can one find the time to raise the aspirations of all the groups.

Another frustration is just the sheer lack of people who seem to be really interested in getting involved in contemporary music. And the attitude of so many amateur musicians to contemporary music – they've hardly heard it. They don't realize, in this post-modern world, how wide a range of music there is out there and how they could easily listen to a concert of contemporary music. They might not like this one, but they would like that one and so on. In fact, when we've managed to get them to concerts they've often said that was fantastic.

I run these Late Starters string summer school – same ethos, same director as CoMA, same kind of thinking. We can just about get 60 people to the CoMA Summer School. I can fill the string summer school, which is full of Bach, Beethoven, Elgar, in about 2 weeks – 100 people with no problem. I always have a contemporary ensemble in the string summer school and it's often well attended. I say to people you could do this more often. They do the soft end of things – Arvo Pärt, Górecki, though funnily enough there's some *Treatise* this year and we've got Trevor Wishart coming along. We've done some amazing concerts of contemporary music at that summer school. They all turned up and I did a little evaluation. Out of 100 people, one or two said they'd been to a contemporary music concert before, 99 said it was the most amazing concert. Would they go to a contemporary music concert again? Maybe four people said yes. Are they inspired to listen more? No. I don't understand it. This has to be the biggest frustration. The CoMA summer school this year will be the last one. If we could get 100 people it would be self financing. But it needs an Arts Council subsidy. I think, in this country, and we do

advertise quite well, there's only 60 people who want to take part? I just can't believe it. We've got it wrong somewhere.

TH: We don't have this problem with modern art. Tate Modern is the success story of the last ten years.

CS: But of course it's much easier to cart images around and you can put them in books.

TH: And the investment of time is different.

CS: Exactly, you can just glance at a picture and have an instant reaction, you can't do that with a piece of music. You have to make the effort. I think that is one of the big frustrations. There are far more people out there who would be interested actually. But somehow the way the world presents itself at the moment ... it's just not being picked up on.

TH: Were you aware of Cardew's work and music at the time CoMA was formed?

CS: Yes. Definitely. It's not Cardew influencing CoMA so much as Cardew influencing ELLSO. ELLSO don't do contemporary music but the whole ethos of ELLSO is anybody can play, anybody can join in, everyone is a musician, everyone is creative. These sorts of things were really bedded down in ELLSO.

TH: And the Portsmouth Sinfonia?

CS: Well I was aware of a number of things – it was reassuring to know the Portsmouth Sinfonia was around. Very aware of Cardew, I was also aware that Hindemith was writing for amateur bands, and I became increasingly conscious that actually in the eighteenth-century and earlier people were often writing for amateurs. Madrigals and part songs and so on. There is a massive tradition of amateur music making. I don't know enough about it really but I suppose the rise of the professional orchestra, and the academies and conservatoires. I can't blame them, but the composers suddenly had access to phenomenal musicians so they starting writing for them and the music changed accordingly. And this came right the way through the twentieth-century more or less, people writing for ensembles that are impossible to pull together at an amateur level.

TH: John Tilbury has noted that Cardew was simply reinstating a much older tradition.

CS: Yes, though while he was maybe philosophically going back, the way in which Cardew approached it was somewhat different. And, of course, he was having to use terminology that wouldn't have been necessary to Mozart or Purcell by talking about the trained and untrained musician.

TH: And now with the trained contemporary musician – something we didn't have in the '60s and '70s perhaps?

CS: In a sense our ensembles are trained contemporary musicians. Scores we were looking at twelve years ago – it took us ages to work them out – but now we get through scores very quickly, we understand the ways round them. So we're quite a specialist group of amateur musicians.

TH: Were there any conscious links between the Scratch Orchestra and CoMA?

CS: Not regarding the CoMA ensembles. Nothing specific about what Cardew stood for was in a sense incorporated, but the general philosophy of his approach was clearly understood. In CoMA London we may have tried a kind of Scratch Orchestra approach a couple of times, where each member was meant to bring something new the next week, but it didn't work. Not everyone wanted to do that and in a way it seemed pointless to

try and force that. Rather than trying to interpret what Cardew might have been saying or doing and using that as a strict model I made a point of employing John Tilbury to come along. A year or so later, John came with Michael Parsons and the guy who plays the organ and we did the whole of *The Great Learning*. That was all recorded by the BBC.

TH: One of the few complete UK performances.

CS: It is. There are some professionals singing on it – it was absolutely a mixture of trained and untrained musicians.

TH: What attracts ex-Scratchers and Cardew associates to work with CoMA? Are they seeing links?

CS: Yes. I can see the links. I'm not sure how many people in CoMA see the links. I'm not sure how many are aware of the sort of things we've been talking about. We don't have an education programme trying to set ourselves in a historical context. Although there are people within CoMA, and on the board, who are interested in our historical context. People like Mick Peake, who's an amateur musician, but is also chair of HCMF and was chair of CoMA for a while. Stephen Montague believes it's a very important body of work that's being commissioned and wants to make sure that when he's involved in choosing anyone to be commissioned that the name is recognized in the score. He sees this as an historical moment in time.

TH: CoMA inhabits a position where you can both support and challenge the contemporary music establishment. What's the balance? Are you an advocate or a subversive?

CS: It does occur to me that we could be more campaigning. My background is subversive. I suppose that it can be quite un-constructive to be entirely that. So we've been advocates – I think that's the general tone of the organization. And I think that is a good thrust, but I think we could be much more challenging about why people think it's the greatest success to write for the BBC Symphony Orchestra, or the London Sinfonietta, than writing for their local orchestra. Of course, I don't have evidence that composers do think like that. When we've gone to commission, composers have been only too happy to write for us. I think Cardew was much more challenging but I think that was easier for him because he was a trained musician, at the Royal Academy, he was part of the establishment. So in a sense it was his role to get people to question. This is an amateur led organization – you're not quite in the same position. It can sound like sour grapes. That's why we've had to be advocates rather than subversives. But on the other hand, if we can spread our influence as widely as possible with as many influential people as possible, then that is subversive in action rather than lots of brave words and manifestos.

That's one of the reasons for the Open Score project – to try and get the best young composers in the UK to write for an amateur ensemble as part of their curriculum, and right from the start so they actually see this as one of the most important compositions they've done in their student days. Hopefully it will change their thinking. So, at one level, trying to influence that next generation. One of the reasons why lots of well established composers are commissioned is so that they act as role models. It's seen that what we do is legitimate and not side-lined.

TH: Have you had any experienced composers who have been unable to meet the requirements of writing for CoMA?

CS: Oh yes. The people who generally get it right are those who come and listen to us and work with us, test out the ideas with us. So some of the best pieces have been from students at the Royal Academy for example, where in their post-graduate portfolio they're given seven or eight projects, including the BBC Chorus, London Sinfonietta, a string quartet – extremely prestigious names – and then there's CoMA which for most of them might be a big surprise. But they've always come away from that with a mind

opened and enthused. It's a course requirement that they come along, they listen to us giving a concert of a whole range of pieces, some of them student pieces, and then they come back with their ideas, test them, go back, write it, come back, test it and so on. So their pieces often have been some of the best.

- TH: Do you find that some high profile composers actually have quite limited strategies for engaging amateurs with the music? I found this with Phil Cashian's work with CoMA Birmingham – he seemed to struggle to find a range of ways in and, interestingly in discussion with him, he had no background or sympathies with a Cardew aesthetic.
- CS: Yes, but Phil Cashian has also written some of the best pieces for us. I do think he's a very fine composer. I would say that if you saw Phil's eyes being opened at that time, he is now massively sympathetic and has written some terrific music for us. He's one of the successful ones. There are others, for example Michael Nyman, who never heard us but got it dead right. Pure Nyman, but absolutely playable by amateurs. Great curtain raiser. John Tavener, who's not heard us, actually wrote a pretty good piece though not quite right. I think if he'd worked with an ensemble he'd have got it dead right. These are people of tremendous stature and success. There are some who've not got it right, but on the whole it's pretty good.
- TH: What sort of qualities do you look for in those composers you commission?
- CS: I've been the main commissioner up until very recently and my philosophy has been to try and draw on the widest range of styles of musical thinking possible and try to find the best exponents, and the most well known. I'm not trying to sit there and make massive judgements about the nature of the music. That's why such a wide range of composers have been commissioned. So I'm looking for somebody who is dedicated to finding their voice, have got some consistent record of having found something, and have been successful exponents, or their music has been recognized sufficiently for people to want to play it and so on, so they can be acting as a role model. And somebody who understands the brief, is willing to respond to it without artistic compromise, but taking into account the technical challenges for amateur musicians. Normally when commissioning, one spends a bit of time talking to them about this, and most people have thought it was a worthwhile thing to try. You could ask why have I gone back to certain people, because some people have been commissioned more than once. That's where personal judgement comes in. I hear what other people are saying, you can see how much it is engaging people. For instance, some pieces might be quite interesting but most people aren't doing anything. I wouldn't re-commission on something like that. I'm looking for pieces that engage everybody – if you've got an ensemble and they all feel they've got a role most of time and they can hear their contribution. Certain people have been re-commissioned because they have a distinctive sound-world, competent writing, and music that one finds exciting. So Phil Cashian has been commissioned several times, for example. He gets rid of all the crap, he doesn't hide behind lots of notes, it's very clear what he's trying to say. It might be nice to talk to Paul Burnell ... it's very clear writing, very distinctive. He's in one of our ensemble so he doesn't actually get commissioned, poor guy. But he is quite an amazing person and I think deserves a wider reputation. I think it will one day come perhaps, but he's so modest.
- TH: To what extent do you see Cardew's influence on the composers who write for CoMA?
- CS: I don't know whether I can even answer that. You'd have to go to them. The thing about Cardew's music ... there was the *Treatise* type of thinking; then I'm aware of the Scratch approach which isn't necessarily Cardew music but there's a whole concept about how people bring music together in a particular setting, the nature of the people taking part and the credence you give to that activity which is a very distinctive part of Cardew. *The Great Learning* I think is an amazing piece. So those are three elements which I think are quite separate. And then you've got this political thing. It's a pity he died when he did because I'd have liked to think he'd have come through that and ended up being a

musician again. I have to say I think some of that stuff is just utter crap. It's just crap. He was abandoning all that other stuff, this is crap, this is crap, this is the way forward, revolution ... It's such bad music, so pathetically out of touch with the working class and its aspirations in my view. It's an embarrassment. If he hadn't said anything about this other stuff [the earlier works] it wouldn't have been so bad. You kind of end up thinking that his legacy is prior to that. I went to this communist party thing with Michael Chant [the 70th birthday anniversary event in 2006]. Deary me ...

TH: It's all very much steeped in that 1970s revolutionary rhetoric. A time warp.

CS: It's just awful. And John Tilbury, who's fantastic, but he stands up and talks about how he's been with his revolutionary brothers in some bloody housing estate in Berlin. Then he plays this cock-eyed piece of music, where you have to try and fit these words in. Oh god, unbelievable. I couldn't stay to the end, I had to leave.

TH: I found it all very patronizing. Preaching the woes of the working class to a bunch of middle class white people and playing nineteenth-century parlour music. Myself and a friend left and went round the corner to a pub. This was where all the 'people' were, listening to rock music. There was a curious mismatch.

CS: So when I'm talking about Cardew, just to make that absolutely clear, that's not what I'm talking about!

TH: Having got to grips more with Cardew's understanding of Marxism, I'm starting to become more sympathetic as to why he went down this route. Misguided perhaps, but what he was drawn to in Marxism is the purity of the logic. If you start with that and trace it back he probably had no other course of action other than to repudiate all the earlier stuff as an embodiment of the bourgeois elite and so on, and trying to find a new musical landscape. He didn't find the landscape however.

CS: He didn't because he was in the process ... it was his first sketches if you like at that kind of thinking. Unfortunately it never went anywhere.

TH: I think he would have returned to some earlier ideas. In many ways *The Great Learning* has far more political punch. I think he would have reconciled the two.

CS: Yes, I think he would. It's a tragedy that he died so early in that respect. That's probably one of the reasons why perhaps he's not recognized or referred to sufficiently. It did damage, but also the fact that he didn't do enough of it. He could have made more impact just by living longer.

TH: Which of Cardew's pieces have been done by CoMA ensembles and what draws them to those particular pieces?

CS: *Treatise* has been done several times. It was done with John Tilbury for example. There's a recording of that. That's done a lot one way or another. Various Paragraphs, indeed the whole of *The Great Learning*, but some more than others. These are the two main pieces I have to say. We have done *Autumn '60*, *Octet '61*.

TH: *Schoolltime Compositions*?

CS: No, not that I'm aware of. Talking about a composer's legacy and how conscious CoMA members are of it, how much do we use that material and so on, another person who we've brushed alongside is Cage. But when I consider the body of work there – I could quote a number of Cage pieces we've done, quite a number, but it's vast body of work.

TH: What sort of reactions have you had to Cardew's music from performers and audiences?

CS: We always talk about getting proper evaluation from audiences but ... When we did *The Great Learning*, for example, I think there were aspects which people found very embarrassing. There are a couple of places where you have to go bonkers. Michael Parsons had a silly walk and people were just buckling up. It was anarchy actually. There were some people feeling absolutely, totally embarrassed. But, on the whole as a body of work, people went through that thinking this is quite amazing and were profoundly affected by that piece. There's the one with the organ, when they beat the cushions ... that's one of the most amazing things. I know when I was sitting in the audience for that with other CoMA members, as there are only about 20 people taking part at that moment, I know some people were getting very embarrassed about it. It's quite threatening – dust flying everywhere and people walking around playing bells, and this organ – a gothic, terrifying structure being built up. I was amazed by this piece, but some people found it tedious and embarrassing. The most embarrassing part was that it was part one of a concert and it lasted nearly two hours. I said to Tilbury at the end of it, are you trying to sabotage the concert! He said it's as long as it takes, he didn't care a toss really! The music couldn't be contained in that way, it took as long as it took. I suppose I feel that people are astounded by it. There are certain paragraphs that are done again and again, Paragraphs 2 and 7 because they're relatively easy to put on. They work: Paragraph 7 is very beautiful.

TH: There is also the physical impact of performing it. The draining effect.

CS: Absolutely true. These other Paragraphs need to be heard more but they're much harder to put on. So I think people have been generally well disposed. I've never had people saying oh we'll never do that again.

[Shurety talks off the record about a well-known composer who was not effective at meeting the requirements of a CoMA commission]

It's almost as though if someone thinks they understand [Cardew's] legacy and then they think they can apply it somewhere else without responding to what they're now applying it to, they get it wrong. Here was somebody who wrote for us, who thought they understood the model and then applied it to us without listening or working with us, and it didn't work. That's the danger of any legacy, one recognizes it for what it is but you don't worship it – you can be inspired by it, you can respond to it in any way you like but you don't force it on what you're doing. One of your earlier questions about the influence of Cardew – I'd say it's philosophical, it's affirming in terms of other people working in these areas, but we don't use it as the model.

TH: Do you think composers have a responsibility to society beyond just composing music for the concert platform?

CS: As individuals everybody should have a responsibility socially. You could say that of anyone in any job. If your question is should their music in some way serve, there's not much evidence that that has ever been very successful, to be frank. Unfortunately some of the most successful pieces in terms of catching the human imagination are pieces that are not addressing social concerns but rather reinforcing the status quo. I'm thinking *Pomp and Circumstance* – massively popular but they embarrass in their jingoism – and exciting pieces of music like the Hanns Eisler pieces which were used by the Communist Party in Germany for a while. At the end of the day you can't hook on to those any more. Maybe they had a small impact at the time, maybe a considerable impact. I'm not convinced by the arts being used for political purpose. If one takes the visual arts – once you put it in a museum or you say this is a piece of art a whole series of new criteria come into play. It's the graffiti, the illegal posters that maybe have the impact on social concerns. Yet, even then they're taking whole bits of wall down now and selling it on – you can't win! I tend to be art for art's sake. The radical nature of art is what it does to us at an emotional and intellectual level as individuals, the affirming nature of the arts as

practitioners, or observers, or listeners. That is the most radical thing as it's such an energizing force.

TH: But within Cardew's communist context, being an individualist was the worst thing you could be.

CS: But it doesn't mean you can't come together collectively. It's a big issue. I do a certain amount of painting. I go to a group and one person has political messages in her paintings. They fail utterly because one doesn't want to be preached at, for a start.

TH: And perhaps would only touch you if you were already sympathetic to that politic?

CS: Absolutely, and then when they do they're not adequate, as it's much deeper and more complex and your understanding of it is far greater.

TH: Is CoMA politically motivated in any way?

CS: You'd have to ask the various organizers. For myself, it depends what you mean by politically motivated. There's a very clear agenda. In a political context, which in a sense when we are applying for grants it is, then we are political. We're stating a series of aims and purposes and are justifying these as important outcomes in the musical world and therefore are worthy of funding. So in a way we have to engage at that level of politics anyway. We're not political in the sense that we spend our time lobbying MPs or anything. We have, where we've managed to get a voice, tried to state what our cause is. We've done that in various ways. I could say that we are politically motivated. We're trying to establish ourselves by professionalizing our performances and by trying to do it well, and in public – we try to be at the big festivals. The more I think about it I think we're very political actually! We are trying to say this is worth doing, and worth listening to. Highly political without anybody sitting down thinking 'we are political'. I think some ensembles, even those I've criticized for doing just their own music, in a way they are being massively political. They are saying we are as important as those other composers. Anyone can come and join our group and this is what we've done. Judging it on the quality of the music, I'm not overly happy with that narrow interpretation, but they are being very political. All our ensembles in all their ways are massively motivated and proud of what they are trying to achieve. It's good that it's happening, and one of the good things in terms of financial strategy. Right from the beginning you've got to make sure that the subs people pay make it self-financing. If you become funded you're doomed. All the problems with people not wanting to pay have been overcome, they're paying their way. The Arts Council can take its grant away but we're still here. That is one of our big achievements. The difficulty then is keeping ourselves together as a body, and to try and keep a sense of common purpose. I've sometimes referred to CoMA as a movement – we are one of the leading edges. We're having some stickers done for this last summer school which say – CoMA: Leaders in Contemporary Music. Don't know whether Cardew would approve! Leaders is a bit dodgy but we thought bugger it. We need to free ourselves from the requirements of state funding.

TH: What does CoMA actually mean by contemporary music?

CS: What we mean is literally contemporary – this is living, the music that's being created by those performers or people setting themselves out as composers. It is definitely contemporary in that respect. Another uniting factor, we are talking about people working with instruments that are commonly associated with the western orchestra tradition. That's not to say we don't have ensembles with accordions in and electronics. But broadly our core instrumentation is based around orchestral instruments and keyboards. That, in itself, starts affecting people's thinking about what they're writing. We're not a jazz oriented group, none of our history, none of the people who write, draw from that tradition or use that way of improvising. Where improvisation comes into it, people have adopted a free improvisation approach. One can only talk about 'most of' –

most of CoMA's music is music that has been structured by an individual, in some way or another, whether aleatoric, through-composed or mixtures, the reality is an individual setting out the concept within which people operate. And that can range from graphic scores to very conventional notation. Those are the main characteristics and because people are dealing with those kinds of instruments people are aware of a particular kind of tradition. People do draw on other kinds of tradition. A student at the Royal Academy has drawn on the music of Ecuador, purposely out of tune wind instruments. We played this absolutely riotous piece, it's certainly not in the western tradition, but it's a great deal of fun. Nobody in CoMA London said this is not the sort of music we should be playing, so the attitudes within CoMA are very open minded. People will try and accept anything but the reality is the people who are getting involved tend to see the western links.

TH: To what extent is CoMA really open to everyone? There are certain shared understandings among members – reading music to some degree and a basic notion of what we mean by contemporary music. Have you strived to diversify?

CS: Yes, that's true. Where we've tried to introduce other areas of thinking as much as possible is at the summer school. I think one of the weaknesses of the ensembles is that much of the music is quite safe. The whole idea of the summer school is to try and shake people around a little bit. We've always had a free improvisation element. We've tried to construct the timetable so people can't just go into their cosy area. They have to try something else. People are not very adventurous on the whole, so we've certainly tried to get people to open up. In terms of CoMA operating within the wider community I think we haven't. I'm very conscious of the community music type approach, which is very successful. But that is not what we're about. There are lots of people doing that extremely well, creating communal music often with a one-off purpose, often with a social purpose, social cohesion, opening up imagination and ambition. It has a tremendous role, but CoMA doesn't do that. CoMA does operate in the slightly bounded context of the contemporary music field. We are part of that scene and I don't think we're much out of that. I don't think that's a problem. It doesn't worry me. I do think all musical traditions are important. The fact that there is a loss of confidence in the western musical tradition at the moment, the contemporary end in particular, but even in the less contemporary end as it's all seen as elitist and should pay for itself. From the funding bodies there's very little confidence in western music. An absolute travesty and a real mistake and it won't last forever – we must respect our artist traditions. They get modified and they adjust but I don't think there's any problem in seeing CoMA as part of the western musical tradition. And an important part: arguably, a very important part. Returning to advocates or subversives – our most effective form of advocacy is performing competently to as wide an audience as possible, and to involve as many people as possible. We should do that as much as possible.

TH: What have been CoMA's greatest successes and how are they evidenced?

CS: The ensembles. Still the only dedicated amateur contemporary music ensembles in the UK. About nine ensembles now. There's one in Edinburgh. Someone wants to set one up in Limerick. I think that's a very distinctive achievement and I think not to be underestimated. I think the summer school has been a great achievement as it's acted as a stimulus for these things and has had tremendous influence on a lot of people, both professional and amateur. It will be a bit of a loss not having it operate for a while, or again. We'll find things to replace that. Then, establishing a core repertoire which exists, can be properly researched, gathered together, can be archived and organized and discussed. I think we've created an historic body of work already, and there's no evidence of that drying up. That's a real measure. This project with students – with some it's very established, the Royal Academy for instance. Absolutely locked in, if they mess up CoMA it's as bad as messing up on London Sinfonietta. Trinity are going down the same level. The others pay more lip service to it though Joe Cutler seems to be incorporating things [at Birmingham Conservatoire]. The model is established though it needs more work. In a way, what else are you asking for? We've got this relationship

between the trained and untrained. The important thing is to keep it going and most of it is now self-financing. Distinctive achievements.

The danger of honing in on 'the composer', Cardew or anyone else, is once they're dead, or brought into disrepute or unfashionable or something, a whole area of thinking can disappear. I've always been conscious in CoMA of how important it is to democratize what you're doing and to have as many people working on it as possible. And that's why lots of composers are commissioned and why there's lots of ensembles rather than one – so that however it develops it's not so vulnerable. I'm pretty serious about this being important. If it had been centred around one or two individuals or one ensemble it would have been very vulnerable. But now it feels like it's kind of unstoppable.

Selected Scores

- Cage, John. *Concert for Piano and Orchestra*. Edition Peters, 1960
- Cardew, Cornelius. *String Trio No 1*. BMIC collection, 1954
- Cardew, Cornelius. *Three Rhythmic Pieces*, for trumpet and piano. BMIC collection, 1955.
- Cardew, Cornelius. *Piano Sonata No.3*. BMIC collection, 1958
- Cardew, Cornelius. *February Pieces for Piano*. Hinrichsen, 1961
- Cardew, Cornelius. *Octet '61 for Jasper Johns*. Hinrichsen, 1961
- Cardew, Cornelius. *Memories of You*, piano solo. Universal Edition, 1964
- Cardew, Cornelius. *Four Works*. Universal Edition, 1966
- Cardew, Cornelius. *Sextet – The Tiger's Mind*. Hinrichsen, 1967
- Cardew, Cornelius. *Schoolltime Compositions*. BMIC collection, 1968
- Cardew, Cornelius. *Treatise*. Gallery Upstairs Press, 1967, assigned to Edition Peters, 1970
- Cardew, Cornelius. *Volo Solo*. Published in *Treatise Handbook*, Edition Peters, 1971
- Cardew, Cornelius. *The Proletariat Seeks to Transform the World*. BMIC collection, 1971
- Cardew, Cornelius. *Soon*. BMIC collection, 1971
- Cardew, Cornelius. *The Red Flag*. BMIC collection, 1972
- Cardew, Cornelius. *Va Pensiero*. BMIC collection, 1972
- Cardew, Cornelius. *Three Bourgeois Songs*. BMIC collection, 1973
- Cardew, Cornelius. *The Great Learning*. Cornelius Cardew Committee, 3rd printing, 1984
- Cardew, Cornelius. *Thälmann Variations*, for solo piano. The Cornelius Cardew Foundation, 1989
- Cardew, Cornelius. *Piano Album 1973*. The Cornelius Cardew Foundation, 1991
- Cardew, Cornelius. *Piano Album 1974*. The Cornelius Cardew Foundation, 1994
- Cardew, Cornelius. *BooLavogue*, for two pianos. The Cornelius Cardew Foundation, 1994
- Parsons, Michael. *Walk*. Experimental Music Catalogue, 1969

- Parsons, Michael. *Rhythmic Studies*. BMIC collection, 1970
- Parsons, Michael. *Rhythmic Studies 1 and 2*. BMIC collection, 1971
- Parsons, Michael. *Rhythmic Studies 3 and 4*. BMIC collection, 1973
- Parsons, Michael. *Echo Piece*. BMIC collection, 1974
- Parsons, Michael. *Apartment House Suite 1*. BMIC collection, 1998
- Parsons, Michael. *Piano Piece December 2000*. Manuscript copy from the composer
- Parsons, Michael. *Piano Piece August 2001*. Manuscript copy from the composer
- Parsons, Michael. *Piano Piece May 2003*. Manuscript copy from the composer
- Russell, Barry. *Icarus, taking advantage of recent developments in wax technology, flies on past the sun, and on*, symphony for large ensemble. BMIC collection, 1997
- Russell, Barry. *Arcade Games*, for wind players, tape and movement. CoMA Collection, 1997
- Russell, Barry. *Everything Put Together Sooner or Later Falls Apart*, for unspecified ensemble. BMIC collection, 1998
- Russell, Barry. *songlines & LONGlines*, concert for prepared piano and orchestra of keyboards. BMIC collection, 1998
- Russell, Barry. *Snow falling on the wrong kind of leaves*, an opera for performance in pubs. Edition Peters, 1999
- Russell, Barry. *Stags, hens and inflatable sheep*, an opera for performance in pubs. Edition Peters, 2000
- Russell, Barry. *Foundscapes and soundscapes*, graphic score. Sing Up, 2008 [online]
Available at: <http://www.singup.org/songbank/song.php?id=292>
- Skempton, Howard. *Chamber Concerto*. Oxford University Press, 1995
- Skempton, Howard. *Collected Piano Pieces*. Oxford University Press, 1996
- Skempton, Howard. *Ben Somewhen*. Oxford University Press, 2005
- Stockhausen, Karlheinz. *Carré*, for 4 orchestras and choirs. Universal Edition, 1960

Selected Discography

AMM, *The Crypt – 12th June 1968: The Complete Session*. Matchless Recordings, MRCD05, 1992

(A comprehensive collection of recent and re-issued AMM recordings is available from: <http://www.matchlessrecordings.com/amm>)

Cornelius Cardew, *Cornelius Cardew Memorial Concert: 16th May 1982*. Impetus Records, 1985.

Cornelius Cardew, *Piano Music*. B&L Classical, BLCD011, 1991

Cornelius Cardew, *Piano Music 1959–70*, John Tilbury, piano. Matchless Recordings, MRCD29, 1996

Cornelius Cardew, *Treatise*, Art Lange, conductor. Hathut, hat(now)ART 2 1-22, 1999

Cornelius Cardew and Peoples' Liberation Music, *We Only Want The Earth*. musicnow, MNCDx004, 2001

Cornelius Cardew, *Chamber Music 1955–1964*, Apartment House, Anton Lukoszevicz. Matchless Recordings, MRCD45, 2001

Cornelius Cardew, *Four Principles on Ireland and Other Pieces*, Cornelius Cardew, piano. Ampersand, ampere 7, 2001

Cornelius Cardew, *We Sing For The Future*, Frederic Rzewski, piano. New Albion Records, NA116, 2001

Cornelius Cardew, *The Great Learning: Extracts from Paragraphs 3 and 4*, A Scratch Orchestra, Almeida Festival 1984. *On Bloody Amateurs*, Unknown Public 14, 2002

Cornelius Cardew, *The Great Learning, Paragraphs 2 and 7*, The Scratch Orchestra. Deutsch Grammophon, 256 107, 1971. Re-issue, 471 5722, 2002

Cornelius Cardew, PLM, PCA Band and others, *Consciously*. musicnow, 2007

Cornelius Cardew, *Treatise: Prague 1967*, Quax Ensemble. Mode Records, mode 205, 2009

The Cornelius Cardew Ensemble, various live recordings, 1995–2002, private archive

Morton Feldman, *Morton Feldman*, Cornelius Cardew and Cantilena Chamber Players. Edition RZ, ed. RZ1010, 1994

Barry Russell, *songlines & LONGlines: Canterbury Festival 2001*, Tony Harris, piano. Zonda Music, available from the composer

Barry Russell, *Foundscapes, Soundscapes and Wor(l)dplays: Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival 2002*. Available from the composer/HCMF

Barry Russell, *Everything put together sooner or later falls apart*, CoMA Summer School Ensemble. On *Bloody Amateurs*, Unknown Public 14, 2002

Barry Russell, *Dictionary of Imagined Places: A CBSO Education Project* (DVD). Jonathan Lee, 2006, available from the composer/CBSO

Howard Skempton, *Lento*, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Mark Wigglesworth. NMC, D005, 1992

Howard Skempton, *Well, Well, Cornelius*, John Tilbury, piano. Sony Classical, SK66482, 1996

Howard Skempton, *Ben Somewhen: Choral and chamber music*, BCMG, EXAUDI: James Weeks, conductor. NMC, D135, 2007

David Tudor, *Piano Avant-Garde: Recordings 1956–60*. Hatut, hat ART CD 6181, 1996

Bibliography

- Adorno, T. (1973) *Negative Dialectics* (orig. published Frankfurt, 1966), trans. E. B. Ashton. London: Routledge.
- Adorno, T. (1991) *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture* London: Routledge.
- Adorno, T. (1992) *Notes to Literature Vol. 2* (orig. published Frankfurt, 1974), trans. NicholSEN, S. W. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Adorno, T. (2002) *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments* (orig. published Frankfurt, 1946), trans. Jephcott, E. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press
- Adorno, T. (2005) *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life* (orig. published Frankfurt, 1951), trans. Jephcott, E. London: Verso.
- Adorno, T. (2004) *Aesthetic Theory* (orig. published Frankfurt, 1970), trans. Hullot-Kentor, R. London: Continuum.
- Adorno, T. (2004) *Philosophy of Modern Music* (orig. published Frankfurt, 1958), trans. Hullot-Kentor, R. London: Continuum.
- Aharonián, C. (2001) 'Cardew as a Basis for a Discussion on Ethical Options'. *Leonardo Music Journal* Vol. 11, 13–15.
- Althusser, L. (1971) 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)', *Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster. New York: Monthly Review Press.
Available at: <http://www.marx2mao.com/Other/LPOE70ii.html#s5> [accessed 7/12/2009].
- AMM (c1970) *The Crypt*. Matchless Recordings MR5 [LP sleeve notes].
- Anderson, V. (1983) *British Experimental Music: Cornelius Cardew and His Contemporaries*. MA thesis, University of Redlands, California. [Available through the Experimental Music Catalogue].
- Anderson, V. (2001) 'Cornelius Cardew: A source guide and personal tribute on the anniversary of his death'. *Experimental Music Catalogue* [online].
Available at: <http://www.users.waitrose.com/~chobbs/cardew.html> [accessed 21/06/2002].
- Anderson, V. (2004a) 'Chinese Characters and Experimental Structure in Cornelius Cardew's *The Great Learning*'. *Journal of Experimental Music Studies*. [online].
Available at: <http://www.users.waitrose.com/~chobbs/Chineseegl.html> [accessed 21/06/2002].
- Anderson, V. (2004b) *Aspects of British Experimental Music as a Separate Art-Music Culture*. PhD thesis, Royal Holloway College, University of London.
- Anderson, V. (2006) 'Cornelius Cardew Lives'. *Open Democracy* [online].
Available at: http://opendemocracy.net/arts-Music/cardew_3509.jsp [accessed 02/04/2007].
- Anderson, V. (2009) 'Made From Scratch'. *Bookforum.com* [online].
Available at: http://www.bookforum.com/inprint/015_05/3289 [accessed 18/11/2009].
- Armstrong, T. (1992) 'Interviewed by Rosemary Rapport'. *Musicnow* [online].
Available at: <http://www.musicnow.co.uk/cardew/html/bits.html> [accessed 04/02/2007].

- Ascough, R. (1999) 'The Scratch Orchestra and the Counter Culture' in Ascough, R., Parsons, M. & Chant, M. *Symposium on the Scratch Orchestra on its 30th Anniversary*. London: Progressive Cultural Association, 7–16.
- Ashworth, D. (2007) *Electrifying Music: A guide to using ICT in music education*. London: Paul Hamlyn Foundation.
Available at: www.musicalfutures.org.
- Attali, J. (1985) *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, trans. Massumi, B. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Bailey, D. (1993) *Improvisation: Its Nature and Practice in Music*. 2nd ed. Cambridge MA.: Da Capo Press.
- Barrett, R. (1987) 'Cornelius Cardew' in Finnissy, M. & Wright, R. (ed.) *New Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 20–33.
- Barry, M. (1975) 'Stockhausen the Imperialist?' *Music and Musicians*, March 1975, 30–31.
- Battcock, G. (1981) *Breaking the Sound Barrier: A Critical Anthology of the New Music*. New York: Dutton.
- Beaumont, T. (1971) '4-letter musicians get art director's support' in *The Daily Telegraph*, 26 June, 1971.
- Bedford, D. & Cardew, C. (1966) 'A Conversation'. *Musical Times* Vol. 107: 1477, 198–202.
- Bedford, D. (1982) 'Cornelius Cardew: An Appreciation' in *Performance*, April-May 1982, 11.
- Benjamin, W. (1968) *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World.
- Benjamin, W. (2008) *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writing on Media*. Jennings, M.W., Doherty, B., Levin, T.Y. (eds) Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Text also available online at:
<http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/ge/benjamin.htm> [accessed 12/09/2009].
- Benjamin, W. (2007) *Walter Benjamin's Archive*, trans. E. Leslie. London: Verso.
- Bergeron, K. & Bohlman, P.V. (ed.) (1992) *Disciplining Music: Musicology and Its Canons*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bloch, I. (2002) *Marquis de Sade: His Life and Works*. Amsterdam, NL: Fredonia Books.
- Bohlman, P.V. (1992a) 'Ethnomusicology's Challenge to the Canon: the Canon's Challenge to Ethnomusicology' in Bergeron, K. & Bohlman, P.V. (ed.) (1992) *Disciplining Music: Musicology and Its Canons*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 116–136.
- Bohlman, P.V. (1992b) 'Epilogue: Music and Canons' in Bergeron, K. & Bohlman, P.V. (ed.) (1992) *Disciplining Music: Musicology and Its Canons*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 197–210.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984) *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Brecht, B. & Willett, J. (ed. and trans.) (1964) *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*. New York: Hill and Wang.

- Cage, J. (1967) *A Year From Monday: New Lectures and Writings*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- Cage, J. (1968) *Silence: Lectures and Writings*. London: Marion Boyars.
- Cage, J. (1973) *M: Writing '67 – '72*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- Cage, J. (1981) *For The Birds: In Conversation with Daniel Charles*. London: Marion Boyars.
- Cage, J. (1983) *X: Writings '79 – '82*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (1982) *The Arts in Schools: Principles, practice and provision*. London: Oyez Press.
- Cardew, C. (1959) 'Unity of Musical Space'. *New Departures*, Summer 1959. Reprinted in Prévost, E. (ed.) (2006) *Cornelius Cardew: A Reader*. Harlow: Copula, 1–4.
- Cardew, C. (1961a) 'Report on Stockhausen's *Carré*'. *Musical Times* Vol. 102: 1424, 619–22.
- Cardew, C. (1961b) 'Report on Stockhausen's *Carré* Part 2'. *Musical Times* Vol. 102: 1425, 698–700.
- Cardew, C. (1961c) 'Notation - Interpretation, etc.'. *Tempo* No. 58, 21–33.
- Cardew, C. (1961d) *Octet '61 for Jasper Johns*. London: Hinrichsen [introductory notes].
- Cardew, C. (1961e) *February Pieces for Piano*. London: Hinrichsen [introductory notes].
- Cardew, C. (1962a) 'The American School of John Cage'. Radio broadcast: WestDeutsche Rundkunke 27 December 1962. Transcribed in Prévost, E. (ed.) (2006) *Cornelius Cardew: A Reader*. Harlow: Copula, 39–48.
- Cardew, C. (1962b) 'Autumn '60 – a lecture given to the Heretics Society, Cambridge'. Transcribed from notebooks in Prévost, E. (ed.) (2006) *Cornelius Cardew: A Reader*. Harlow: Copula, 49–54.
- Cardew, C. (1962c) 'In re La Monte Young'. *New Departures* No. 4. reprinted in Prévost, E. (ed.) (2006) *Cornelius Cardew: A Reader*. Harlow: Copula, 55–57.
- Cardew, C. (1962d) 'Piano (Three Hands) – Morton Feldman'. *Accent* No. 4: Leeds College of Art and School of Architecture. Reprinted in Prévost, E. (ed.) (2006) *Cornelius Cardew: A Reader*. Harlow: Copula, 58–64.
- Cardew, C. (1964a) 'Darmstadt 1964 – New Music has found its feet'. *The Financial Times*, 31 July 1964. Reprinted in Prévost, E. (ed.) (2006) *Cornelius Cardew: A Reader*. Harlow: Copula, 65–66.
- Cardew, C. (1964b) 'Cage and Cunningham'. *Musical Times* Vol. 105: 1459, 659–60.
- Cardew, C. (1965a) 'Rome Letter – Nuova Consonanza'. *The Financial Times*, 25 May 1965. Reprinted in Prévost, E. (ed.) (2006) *Cornelius Cardew: A Reader*. Harlow: Copula, 69–70.
- Cardew, C. (1965b) 'Composed Laughter'. *New Statesman*, 10 December 1965. Reprinted in Prévost, E. (ed.) (2006) *Cornelius Cardew: A Reader*. Harlow: Copula 71–72.
- Cardew, C. (1966a) 'Stockhausen in London'. *Musical Times* Vol. 107: 1475, 43–44.
- Cardew, C. (1966b) 'One Sound: La Monte Young'. *Musical Times* Vol. 107: 1485, 959–60.
- Cardew, C. (1966c) *Four Works*. London: Universal Edition [introductory notes].
- Cardew, C. (1967a) 'The Sounds of La Monte Young'. *London Magazine*, April 1967, 88–90.

- Cardew, C. (1967b) 'Stockhausen's Plus-Minus'. *London Magazine*, April 1967, 87-88.
- Cardew, C. (1967c) 'Sextet – The Tiger's Mind'. *Musical Times* Vol. 108: 1492, 527–30.
- Cardew, C. (1968a) 'Towards an Ethic of Improvisation' in Cardew (1971a) *Treatise Handbook*. London: Peters Edition, and elsewhere.
- Cardew, C. (1968b) 'Sitting in the Dark'. *Musical Times* Vol. 109: 1501, 233–34.
- Cardew, C. (1969a) 'A Scratch Orchestra: Draft Constitution'. *Musical Times* Vol. 110: 1516, 617-19, and elsewhere.
- Cardew, C. (1969b) Agenda for the first meeting of the Scratch Orchestra, 1 July 1969. Private collection.
- Cardew, C. (1970) 'The Rite: Advice'. *Pages No. 2*, Winter 1970. Reprinted in Prévost, E. (ed.) (2006) *Cornelius Cardew: A Reader*. Harlow: Copula, 135–140.
- Cardew, C. (1971a) *Treatise Handbook*. London: Edition Peters.
- Cardew, C. (ed.) (1971b) *Nature Study Notes*. London: Scratch Orchestra.
- Cardew, C. (ed.) (1972) *Scratch Music*. London: Latimer New Dimensions.
- Cardew, C. (1972b) *Va Pensiero*. BMIC Collection [introductory notes].
- Cardew, C. (1973) *Piano Album 1973*. London: Cornelius Cardew Foundation [introductory notes].
- Cardew, C. (1974a) *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism*. London: Latimer New Dimensions. Digitised ubuweb publication (2004) also available online at: http://www.ubu.com/historical/cardew/cardew_stockhausen.pdf
- Cardew, C. (1974b) 'The Situation and Prospects of Art Students Today'. Talk given at Falmouth College of Art, 13 June 1974, and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 8 January 1975. Reprinted in Prévost, E. (ed.) (2006) *Cornelius Cardew: A Reader*. Harlow: Copula, 228–32.
- Cardew, C. (1976a) 'Wiggly Lines and Wobbly Music'. *Studio International* Vol. 193: 984, 247–55.
- Cardew, C. (1976b) 'Struggle Sounds'. *Time Out*, 16 January 1976. Reprinted in Prévost, E. (ed.) (2006) *Cornelius Cardew: A Reader*. Harlow: Copula, 246–48.
- Cardew, C. (c1978) 'Role of the Composer in the Class Struggle'. Talk transcribed in Prévost, E. (ed.) (2006) *Cornelius Cardew: A Reader*. Harlow: Copula, 267–71.
- Cardew, C. (1980) 'Speech of Party representative at Internationalist Youth Concert, London, 9 August 1980'. Transcribed in Prévost, E. (ed.) (2006) *Cornelius Cardew: A Reader*. Harlow: Copula, 272–74.
- Cardew, M. (1989) *A Pioneer Potter*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Caudwell, C. (1965) *The Concept of Freedom*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Chant, M. (1999) 'A Turning Point in Music History', in Ascough, R., Parsons, M. & Chant, M. *Symposium on the Scratch Orchestra on its 30th Anniversary*. London: Progressive Cultural Association, 35–47.
- Chant, M. (2006) 'The Spirit of the New and the Movement which Cornelius Cardew Joined', paper delivered at the Cornelius Cardew 70th Birthday Anniversary Festival, 7 May 2006. *Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)* [online].

Available at: <http://www.rcpbml.org.uk/wdie-06/d06-039.htm> [accessed 14/02/2007].

Chase, S. (2003) 'Treatise – An Enigmatic Challenge'. *Contemporary Music Making for Amateurs* [online].

<http://coma.org> [accessed 13/01/2003, article no longer available].

Citron, M.J. (2000) *Gender and the Musical Canon*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2000) *Research Methods in Education*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Coleman, C. (2006) 'With Cardew in PCA and RCPBML', paper delivered at the Cornelius Cardew 70th Birthday Anniversary Festival, 7 May 2006. *Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)* [online].

Available at <http://www.rcpbml.org.uk/wdie-06/d06-039.htm> [accessed 14/02/2007].

Cott, J. (1974) *Stockhausen: conversations with the composer*. London: Robson Books.

Cowley, J. (2001) 'Cornelius Cardew'. *The Wire*, December 2001, 27–31.

Cox, G., Krysa, J. & Lewin, A. (ed.) (2004) *Economising Culture: On 'The (Digital) Culture Industry'*. New York: Autonomedia [online]

Available at: <http://www.data-browser.net/01> [accessed 09/11/2009]

De Lio, T. (ed.) (1985) *In Contiguous Lines: Issues and Ideas in the Music of the '60s and '70s*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Dennis, B. (1970) *Experimental Music in Schools: Towards a New World of Sound*. London: Oxford University Press.

Dennis, B. (1971) 'Cardew's *The Great Learning*'. *Musical Times* Vol. 112: 1545, 1066–68.

Dennis, B. (1972) 'Experimental School Music'. *Musical Times* Vol. 113: 1554, 754–57.

Dennis, B. (1975) *Projects in Sound*. London: Universal Edition.

Dennis, B. (1991) 'Cardew's *Treatise* (mainly the visual aspects)'. *Tempo* No. 177, 10–16.

Eagleton, T. (1991) *Ideology: an Introduction*. London: Verso.

Eley, R. (1974) 'A History of the Scratch Orchestra 1969-1972' in Cardew (1974a) *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism*. London: Latimer New Dimensions.

Everitt, A. (1997) *Joining In: An Investigation into Participatory Music*. London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

Feld, S. (1999) 'Cultural Responsibility: Steven Feld interviewed'. *Resonance* Vol. 7: 2, 18–22.

Feldman, M. (1967) 'Conversations without Stravinsky'. *Source* 2, 42–45, and elsewhere.

Feldman, M. (1982) 'Dedication to Cornelius Cardew' in *Cornelius Cardew Memorial Concert Programme*, 16 May 1982, 26.

Fletcher, P. (1989) *Education and Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Finnegan, R. (2007) *The Hidden Musicians: Music-Making in an English Town*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

- Forgacs, D. (1988) (ed.) *A Gramsci Reader: selected writings 1916–1935*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Fox, C. (2001) 'Cornelius Cardew 1936-1981'. *Cornelius Cardew: Chamber Music 1955–1964*, Apartment House, Anton Lukoszevieze. Matchless Recordings, MRCD45 [CD notes].
- Fox, E. (1992) 'Death of a Dissident' in *The Independent Magazine*. 19 May 1992, 24–29.
- Freeden, M. (1996) *Ideologies and Political Theory: A conceptual approach*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Freire, P. (2004) *Pedagogy of Hope* (revised edn.). New York: Continuum.
- Freire, P. (2006) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (30th Anniversary Edition). New York: Continuum.
- Gann, K. (2003) 'Making Marx in Music: A HyperHistory of New Music and Politics'. *newmusicbox* [online]. Available at: <http://www.newmusicbox.org/page.nmbx?id=55tp01> [accessed 29/02/2008].
- Gibson, N. & Rubin, A. (2002) (eds.) *Adorno: A Critical Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Gracyk, T. (2002) 'Outline of Jacques Attali's Noise'. *Minnesota State University Website* [online]. Available at: <http://www.mnstate.edu/gracyk/courses/aesthetics%20of%20music/attali'snoise.htm> [accessed 28/11/2009].
- Graham, G. (2005) *Philosophy of the Arts: An introduction to aesthetics*. 3rd edn. Oxford: Routledge.
- Green, L. (1988) *Music on Deaf Ears: Musical Meaning, Ideology and Education*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Green, L. (1997) *Music, Gender, Education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Green, L. (2001) *How Popular Musicians Learn: A Way Ahead For Music Education*. London: Ashgate Press.
- Green, L. (2008a) *Music, Informal Learning and the School: A New Classroom Pedagogy*. London: Ashgate Press.
- Green, L. (2008b) *Music on Deaf Ears: Musical Meaning, Ideology and Education (revised 2nd edition)*. Bury St. Edmunds: Abramis Publishing.
- Griffiths, P. (1982) 'Cardew Memorial, Queen Elizabeth Hall'. *The Times*, 17 May 1982, 9.
- Griffiths, P. (1985) 'Cornelius Cardew, Bloomsbury Theatre'. *The Times*, 7 March 1985, 13.
- Griffiths, P. (1994) *Modern Music: a concise history*. Revised ed. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Griffiths, P. (1995) *Modern Music and After: Directions since 1945*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Harris, T. (2004) 'Continuing the Experiment'. *SPNM New Notes*, January 2004, 1–2.
- Harris, T. (2008) 'Back to the fore for the avant-garde'. *Sounding Board* 2008: 2, 9–11.
- Harrison, C. & Wood, P. (ed.) (2003) *Art in Theory 1900–2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*. 2nd Edn. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Harrison, M. (1971) 'John White/Cardew, Queen Elizabeth Hall'. *The Times*, 18 May 1971, 12.

- Harvey, J. (1975) *The Music of Stockhausen*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Hegel, G. W. F. (1977) *Phenomenology of Spirit* (orig. published 1807), trans. A.V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Text also available online at: <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/hegel/phindex.htm> [accessed 5/11/2009].
- Henze, H. W. (1982) *Music and Politics: Collected Writings 1953–81*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Hobbs, C. (1981) 'Cardew as Teacher'. *Perspectives of New Music* Vol. 20:1, 2–3.
- Jack, A. (1975) 'Cornelius Cardew – interviewed by Adrian Jack'. *Music and Musicians*, May 1975, 30–34.
- Jarvis, S. (1998) *Adorno: A Critical Introduction* Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Kerman, J. (1984) 'A Few Canonic Variations' in Von Hallberg, R. (ed.) *Canons*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 177–95.
- Kaderkay, A. (1995) *The Lukács Reader*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Kerman, J. (1985) *Contemplating Music: Challenges to Musicology*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Kolakowski, L. (2008) *Main Currents of Marxism*. New York: Norton.
- Kurtz, M. & Toop, R. (1994) *Stockhausen: A Biography*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Lauter, P. (1991) *Canons and Contexts*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Laycock, J. (2005) *A Changing Role for the Composer in Society*. Oxford: Peter Lang.
- Lebrecht, N. (2000) *The Complete Companion to 20th Century Music* revised edn. London: Simon & Schuster.
- Lenin, V. I. (2001) 'Party Organisation and Party Literature' (orig published 1905) in 'Lenin Collected Works Vol 10', *Marxists Internet Archive* [online].
Available at: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1905/nov/13.htm> [accessed 30/11/2009].
- Lukács, G. (1971) *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics* (trans. By Livingstone, R.). Great Britain: The Merlin Press Ltd.
- Lukoszevieze, A. (2001) 'Cornelius Cardew Early Works'. *Cornelius Cardew: Chamber Music 1955–1964*, Apartment House, Anton Lukoszevieze. Matchless Recordings, MRCD45 [CD notes].
- Lynch, M. (2004) *Mao*. Oxford: Routledge.
- McLellan, D. (1977) *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McLellan, D. (1995) *Ideology*. 2nd edn. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.
- Maconie, R. (1976) *The Works of Karlheinz Stockhausen*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Maconie, R. (2005) *Other Planets: The Music of Karlheinz Stockhausen*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.
- Mao Tse-tung (1978) *Collected Works (1917-1949)*. Washington DC: US Government Joint Publications Research Service.
Available online at: <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/works/collected-works-pdf/index.htm>

Mao Tse-tung (2004a) 'Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art May 1942'. *Maoist Documentation Project* [online].

Available at: www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-3/mswv3_08.htm [accessed 04/03/2008].

Mao Tse-tung (2004b) 'Talk at a meeting of the Central Cultural Revolution Group, January 9, 1967'. *Maoist Documentation Project* [online].

Available at: http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-9/mswv9_71.htm [accessed 04/03/2008].

Mao Tse-tung (2004c) 'The Great Union of the Popular Masses'. *Maoist Documentation Project* [online].

Available at: http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-6/mswv6_04.htm [accessed 04/03/2008].

Mao Tse-tung (2004d) 'Where do correct ideas come from?'. *Maoist Documentation Project* [online].

Available at: http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-9/mswv9_01.htm [accessed 06/04/2008].

Marcuse, H. (1991) *One-Dimensional Man*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge.

Marx, K. & Engels, F. (1998) *The German Ideology* (orig published 1932). Amherst, NY: Prometheus. Text also available online at:

http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/Marx_The_German_Ideology.pdf [accessed 13/11/2009].

Marx, K. & Engels, F. (2004) *The Communist Manifesto* (orig. published 1848). London: Penguin.

Marx, K. (1970) *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (orig. published 1843) ed. J. O'Malley. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Text also available online at:

http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/Marx_Critique_of_Hegels_Philosophy_of_Right.pdf [accessed 5/11/2009].

Meyer-Denkman, G. (adapted by Paynter, J. and E.) (1977) *Experiments in Sound*. London: Universal Edition.

Mills, J. (2005) *Music in the School*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Moliné, K. (2007) 'Demon Seed'. *The Wire*, October 2007, 20.

Morgan, R.P. (1991) *Twentieth Century Music*. New York: Norton.

Morgan, R.P. (1992) 'Rethinking Musical Culture: Canonic Reformations in a Post-Tonal Age' in Bergeron, K. & Bohlman, P.V. (ed.) (1992) *Disciplining Music: Musicology and Its Canons*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 44–63.

Mumford, M. (2009) *Bertolt Brecht*. Oxford: Routledge.

NCC Arts in Schools Project Team (1990) *The Arts 5-16: Practice and Innovation*. Harlow: Oliver & Boyd.

Nicholls, D. (ed.) (2002) *The Cambridge Companion to John Cage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Norton-Taylor, R. (2007) 'Revolution, flashmobs, and brain chips. A grim vision of the future'. *The Guardian*, 9 March 2007, 1–2.

- Nyman, M. (1972a) 'Cornelius Cardew's *The Great Learning*'. *London Magazine*, December 1971/Jan 1972.
- Nyman, M. (1973) 'Cage/Cardew'. *Tempo* No. 107, 32–38.
- Nyman, M. (1999) *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ofsted (2000) *Inspection Report: Champion School and Community College 10–13 January 2000*. Available at: www.ofsted.gov.uk
- Parsons, M. (1969) 'The Contemporary Pianist: John Tilbury Talks to Michael Parsons'. *Musical Times* Vol. 110: 1512, 150-52.
- Parsons, M. (1974) 'Some Aspects of an Experimental Attitude'. *Contact* 8, 20–25.
- Parsons, M. (1980) 'The Music of Howard Skempton'. *Contact* 21, 12–16.
- Parsons, M., Tilbury, J., Skempton, H. & Smith, D. (1984) 'The Great Learning – Programme Notes' in Prévost, E. (ed.) (2006) *Cornelius Cardew: A Reader*. Harlow: Copula, 317–32.
- Parsons, M. (1987) 'Howard Skempton: Chorals, Landscapes and Melodies'. *Contact* 30, 16–29.
- Parsons, M. (2001) 'The Scratch Orchestra and Visual Arts'. *Leonardo Music Journal* Vol. 11, 5–11.
- Paynter, J. & Aston, P. (1970) *Sound and Silence: Classroom Projects in Creative Music*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Paynter, J. (1972) *Hear and Now: An introduction to modern music in schools*. London: Universal Edition.
- Paynter, J. (1982) *Music in the Secondary School Curriculum*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Paynter, J. (1992) *Sound & Structure*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Peggie, A. (1997) *Musicians go to School: partnership in the classroom*. London: London Arts Board.
- Peggie, A. (2002) 'Bloody Amateurs' in *Bloody Amateurs*, *Unknown Public* 14, 29–31.
- Pitts, S. (2000) *A century of change in music education: historical perspectives on contemporary practice in British secondary school music*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Pitts, S. (2005) *Valuing Musical Participation*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Pitts, S. (2008) 'Monitoring music progress: approaches from the UK'. *Zeitschrift für Kritische Musikpädagogik*. [online]
Available at: <http://www.zfkm.org/sonder08-pitts.pdf> [accessed 21/01/2010].
- Potter, K. (1975) 'Some aspects of a political attitude: Cornelius Cardew Interviewed'. *Contact* 10, 22-27.
- Powles, J. (2002) 'Cornelius Cardew (1936–1981)' in Sitsky, L. (ed.) (2002) *Music of the Twentieth-Century Avant-Garde: A Biocritical Sourcebook*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 99–102.
- Prévost, E. (1982) 'Improvisation' in *Cornelius Cardew Memorial Concert Programme*, 16 May 1982. Reprinted in Prévost, E. (ed.) (2006) *Cornelius Cardew: A Reader*. Harlow: Copula, 293–96.
- Prévost, E. (1983) 'The Aesthetic Priority of Improvisation: A Lecture'. *Contact* 24, 32-36.

- Prévost, E. (ed.) (2006) *Cornelius Cardew: A Reader*. Harlow: Copula.
- Price, D. (2005) *Musical Futures: An Emerging Vision*. London: Paul Hamlyn Foundation.
Available at: www.musicalfutures.org.
- Price, D. (2006a) *Personalising Music Learning*. London: Paul Hamlyn Foundation.
Available at: www.musicalfutures.org.
- Price, D. (2006b) *Supporting Young Musicians and Coordinating Musical Pathways*. London: Paul Hamlyn Foundation.
Available at: www.musicalfutures.org.
- Price, D. (2007) *From Vision to Practice: Musical Futures Summary of Key Findings*. London: Paul Hamlyn Foundation.
Available at: www.musicalfutures.org.
- Rainbow, B. with Cox, G. (2006) *Music in Educational Thought and Practice: A survey from 800BC*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press.
- Randel, D.M. (1992) 'The Canons in the Musicological Toolbox' in Bergeron, K. & Bohlman, P.V. (ed.) (1992) *Disciplining Music: Musicology and Its Canons*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 10–22.
- Renshaw, P. (2005) *Simply Connect: 'Next practice' in group music making and musical leadership*. London: Paul Hamlyn Foundation.
Available at: www.musicalfutures.org.
- Ross, A. (2008) *The Rest is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century*. London: Fourth Estate.
- Rowe, K. (2001) 'An Interview by Dan Warburton'. *Paris Transatlantic Magazine* [online].
Available at: www.parisTransatlantic.com/magazine/interviews/rowe.html [accessed 29/02/08].
- Russell, B. & Harris, T. (2004) *The GCSE Composition Course Project Book 2: Minimalism, Serialism, Experimental and Electronic Music*. London: Peters Edition.
- Ryan, D. (2001) *Cornelius Cardew Chamber Music 1955–1964*, Apartment House, Anton Lukoszevieze. Matchless Recordings, MRCD45 [CD notes].
- Salzman, E. (1988) *Twentieth-Century Music: An Introduction* 3rd edn. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Sartre, J-P. (1949) *What is Literature?* (trans. Frechtman). New York: Philosophical Library.
- Sartre, J-P (2001a) *What is Literature?* 2nd edn. Oxford: Routledge.
- Sartre, J-P (2001b) *The Age of Reason* (trans. Sutton). London: Verso
- Sartre, J-P. (2004) *Critique of Dialectical Reason: Volume 1* (trans. Sheridan-Smith). London: Verso.
- Sartre, J-P. (2006) *Critique of Dialectical Reason: Volume 2* (trans. Hoare). London: Verso.
- Schafer, R. M. (1967) *Ear Cleaning: Notes for an Experimental Music Course*. Don Mills, Ontario: BMU Canada Limited.
- Schafer, R. M. (1969) *The New Soundscape*. London: Universal Edition.
- Schafer, R. M. (1970) *...When Words Sing*. London: Universal Edition.

- Schafer, R. M. (1975) *The Rhinoceros in the Classroom*. London: Universal Edition.
- Scott, D. B. (ed.) (2000) *Music, Culture, and Society: A Reader*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Scratch Orchestra (1994) 'The Scratch Orchestra Remembered' in *The Scratch Orchestra: 25 years from scratch*, 20 November 1994 [event programme].
- Self, G. (1967) *New Sounds in Class: A Contemporary Approach to Music*. London: Universal Edition.
- Self, G. (1976) *Make a New Sound*. London: Universal Edition.
- Shepherd, J et al. (1977) *Whose Music? A Sociology of Musical Languages*. London: Latimer New Dimensions.
- Singer, D. (2002) *Prelude to Revolution: France in May 1968*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.
- Skempton, H. (2003) 'email discussion between Howard Skempton and Malcolm Atkins 09/2002-02/2003'. *New Music Oxford* [online].
Available at: <http://nmo.studio282.com/HS-int.htm> [accessed 18/08/2006].
- Skempton, H. (2006) 'The Integrity of the Composer'. Talk given at the Cornelius Cardew 70th Birthday Anniversary Festival, 7 May 2006. Private collection.
- Small, C. (1996) *Music, Society, Education*. 2nd ed. Hanover, NH: Wesleyan.
- Stubley, P. (1996) 'AMM' *European Free Improvisation Page* [online].
Available at: <http://www.efi.group.shef.ac.uk/> [accessed 14/05/2004]
- Subotnik, R. R. (1991) *Developing Variations: Style and Ideology in Western Music*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.
- Sutherland, R. (1972) 'AMM Music: Beyond Electronics'. *London Magazine*, April/May 1972, 124-28.
- Swanwick, K. (1968) *Popular Music and the Teacher*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Swanwick, K. (1979) *A Basis for Music Education*. Windsor: NFER-Nelson.
- Swawwick, K. (1988) *Music, Mind, and Education*. London: Routledge.
- Swanwick, K. & Jarvis, C. (1990) *The Tower Hamlets String Teaching Project: A Research Report*. London: University of London.
- Szczelkun, S. (1995) '25 years from Scrtach: ICA Sunday 20th November 1994. *Stefan Szczelkun Homepage*. [online]
Available at: <http://www.stefan-szczelkun.org.uk/PHD-SCRATCH2.htm> [accessed 18/12/2009].
- Taylor, T. D. (1998) 'Moving in Decency: The Music and Radical Politics of Cornelius Cardew'. *Music and Letters* Vol. 79: 4, 555-76.
- Terrill, R. (1999) *Mao: A Biography* (2nd edn). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- The Times (1981) 'Obituary: Mr Cornelius Cardew'. *The Times*, 17 December 1981, 12.
- Thomson, P. & Sacks, G. (2006) *The Cambridge Companion to Brecht*. 2nd Edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tilbury, J. (1971) *Scratch Orchestra Discontent File*. Private collection.

- Tilbury, J. (1981) 'The Experimental Years: A View from the Left'. *Contact* 22, 16–21.
- Tilbury, J. (1982a) 'Cornelius Cardew 1936-1981'. *Soundings* 12, 12.
- Tilbury, J. (1982b) 'Cardew: The Last Phase'. *Performance*, April/May 1982.
- Tilbury, J. (1983) 'Cornelius Cardew'. *Contact* 26, 4-12.
- Tilbury, J. (1998) 'Some Reflections on Cardew's 'John Cage: Ghost or Monster?'. *Leonardo Music Journal* Vol. 8, 66–68.
- Tilbury, J. (2003b) 'On Indeterminate Notation'. *Contemporary Music Making for Amateurs* [online]. <http://coma.org> [accessed 13/01/2003, article no longer available].
- Tilbury, J. (2008) *Cornelius Cardew (1936–1981): a life unfinished*. Harlow: Copula.
- Tilbury, J. (n.d) 'On Playing Feldman'. *Chris Villars Homepage* [online]. Available at: <http://www.cnvill.net/mftilb.htm> [accessed 08/09/2007].
- Tormey, S. & Townshend, J. (2006) *Key Thinkers: From Critical Theory to Post-Marxism*. London: Sage.
- Transparent, T. (2007) 'Cornelius Cardew's 'Stockhausen Serves Imperialism'...or, Towards An Anti-Life Ethic of Composition'. *Belsona Strategic* [online]. Available at: <http://www.belsona-strategic.com/cardewrant.html> [accessed 02/04/2007].
- Truax, B. (n.d.) 'The World Soundscape Project' *Barry Truax Homepage*. [online]. Available at: <http://www.sfu.ca/~truax/wsp.html> [accessed 16/03/2010].
- Unknown (2001) 'Four Principles on Ireland and Other Pieces – Ampere 7'. *Paris Transatlantic Magazine* [online]. Available at: www.paristransatlantic.com/magazine/monthly2001/09sep_text.html [accessed 29/02/2008].
- Varela, D. (2004) 'A Question of Language: Frederic Rzewski in conversation about Cornelius Cardew'. *Journal of Experimental Music Studies* [online]. Available at: <http://www.users.waitrose.com/~chobbs/varelarzewski.html> [accessed 02/04/2007].
- Vella, R. (2000) *Musical Environments: A Manual for Listening, Improvising and Composing*. Strawberry Hills, NSW: Currency Press Pty Limited.
- Vulliamy, G. and Lee, E. (eds) (1976) *Pop Music in School*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Vulliamy, G. and Lee, E. (eds) (1982) *Pop, Rock and Ethnic Music in School*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Walker, S. (1995) *Eclecticism, Postmodernism, Subversion: New Perspectives on English Experimental Music*. PhD thesis, City University, London.
- Walker, S. (2001) 'Bracknell bus driver is unsung hero of new music' [online]. Available at: http://www.apu.ac.uk/music/rhoadley/courses/comp3/partch_cardew/scratch.htm [accessed 20/02/2001].
- Walters, J. L. (2002) 'Time for a little experiment'. *The Guardian*, 2 October 2002, 24.
- Weber, W. (1975) *Music and the Middle Class*. London: Croom Helm.

- White, M. (2005) 'Source List and Detailed Death Tolls for the Twentieth Century Hemoclysm' *Historical Atlas of the Twentieth Century*. [online].
Available at: <http://users.erols.com/mwhite28/warstat1.htm#Mao> [accessed 15/09/2009].
- Wikipedia (2008) *Cornelius Cardew* [online].
Available at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cornelius_Cardew [accessed on 12/06/2008].
- Williams, R. (1965) *The Long Revolution*. Revised edn. Hamondsworth: Penguin.
- Williams, R. (1977) *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Williams, R. (1983) *Culture and Society 1780–1950*. 2nd Edn. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Williams, R. (2005) *Culture and Materialism*. London: Verso.
- Winterson, J. (1994) 'An Evaluation of the Effects of London Sinfonietta Education Projects on their Participants'. *British Journal of Music Education* Vol. 11, 129–141.
- Winterson, J. (1999) *The community education work of orchestras and opera companies: principles, practice and problems*. D.Phil thesis, University of York.
- Winterson, J. (2002) (ed.) *The GCSE Anthology of Music*. Edition Peters.
- Wishart, T. (1975) 'Stockhausen Serves Imperialism'. *Contact* 11, 44–45.
- Wittgenstein, L. (1974) *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* revised edn. London: Routledge.
- Wolff, C. (1998a) 'Briefly on Cornelius Cardew and John Cage' in Prévost (ed.) (2006) *Cornelius Cardew: A Reader*. Harlow: Copula.
- Wolff, C. (1998b) 'Interviewed by Jason Goss'. *Perfect Sound Forever* [online].
Available at: <http://www.furious.com/perfect/christianwolff.html> [accessed 20/02/2001].
- Wörner, K. H. (1973) *Stockhausen: Life and Work*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Zuidervaart, L. (1991) *Adorno's Aesthetic Theory: The Redemption of Illusion*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Zwaanenburg, J. (2003) *Performing Octet '61* [personal email communication 21/05/2003].