

## NOTATION— INTERPRETATION, ETC.

by Cornelius Cardew

1—What follows is notes, made at various stages and on a variety of topics. Few of these remarks make any pretence to completeness, and I have not attempted to fill in the gaps and 'cover' any particular field thoroughly. Few of these remarks follow on from one to the next, so they may be read at random.

Perhaps it will be helpful to imagine in what rôles the various remarks are made; whether as composer, listener, interpreter, critic, publicity man, or simply theoretician. I have discussed only those things which concern, or have concerned me directly (and this may be taken as an apology).

At the time (Spring 1959 to Spring 1960) it was easier, as will be readily appreciated, to write notes about what I was doing, than to write music. To write notes about what I am doing at the moment, on the other hand, seems much more difficult than simply to do it. Also, all through that time and right up to October 1960 (when it received its first performance) I was working practically continuously on *Carré* by Karlheinz Stockhausen, and the experience of writing someone else's music could hardly fail to result in a considerable sharpening of the critical faculty (I wrote very little music of my own in that time).

Some terms seem to require elucidation:

*Indeterminacy*. (Cage: 'pieces which are indeterminate as regards their performance'.) I would say that a piece is indeterminate when the player (or players) has an active hand in giving the piece a form.

*Identity* (of a piece of music). A senseless but useful concept. What is *essential* to a piece of music constitutes its identity. Of course, ideally speaking, everything about a piece is essential to it.

*Time-space*. Here, the spacing and length of the notes on the page, are put into a more or less direct relation to the timing and duration of the sounds. Earle Brown rationalized the process and has used it fairly extensively (*Music for cello and piano* is an example). Cage (*Winter Music*, *Music for piano*), Bussotti and Stockhausen (*Zyklus*) also take advantage of it. The space can be measured or observed (depending on the instance), or the eye can travel along it at a constant or fluctuating pace (depending on the instance). The idea's attraction lies in the fact that it dispenses with any sort of symbolic time-notation.

2—The notation of music is a creative (or synthetic) activity, not to be confused with logical notation.

Notation and composition determine each other. Differentiate between creating a language in order to say *something* and evolving a language in which you can say anything.

A musical notation is a language which determines what you can say, what you want to say determines your language.

As a composer you have both aspects in your hand, but when you come to open your hand you find only one thing and it is not divisible.

3—'Time-space'. To place a dot in space is fun (*e.g.* in a drawing) because the time one does it in is free. But when placing a dot in time-space, there is no 'higher order' time in which to consider. The dimension which made drawing the dot a pleasure has now become space, and we know of no further dimension. Each point in time-space is 'seen' once only, irrevocably, and lo! one has either used it or not. Heavens, it is easy to use time-space, because music-writing takes paper-space, and it's no problem to give it the name 'time'. Something of course results. But what? 'Do you hear what I'm seeing?'.

For the view that time-space is a profitable speculation, one could argue that it is 'exciting' to treat time as if it were space; one reaches 'impossible' situations, and this is of course very interesting, stimulating, exciting: 'Groping for the ungraspable is the most satisfying of modern pastimes', where the satisfaction lies in the fact that satisfaction is impossible. v. '59.

4—Let us select five stages in the production of music:

- (1) what is written.
- (2) information gleaned by the player from (1).
- (3) the player.
- (4) the action to produce sound.
- (5) the sound.

I suppose many people imagine that this last is the material for composition. But one cannot 'write' sound; the best one could do would be to 'sound' the sound, which would superannuate the interpreter (and however much we may complain, we would not be without him for worlds). So one must write, and (1) is what one writes. (2) depends to a large extent on (3), who has been part of the notation only in exceptional cases (*5 pieces for David Tudor* by Sylvano Bussotti is an example. The words *David Tudor* in the title are in no sense a dedication, but rather an instrumental indication, part of the notation). But even without notating the interpreter, one can do a little more here than merely hoping for 'the best' (see 30). Most notations deal mainly in (4): 'do what I tell you and the right sounds will come of their own accord', which is not true of course, but there is no-one who is not reluctant to admit just how much he relies on (3). The attempt to describe (5) completely, resulted *originally* in electronic music (this has very little to do with electronic music to-day).—v. '59.

5—'Musical interpretation' has become more and more a single term with less and less in common with the everyday meaning of the word 'interpret'. Cage has re-opened the expression and utilized its implications in such fields as structure, notation, performance. His word 'indeterminacy' is like a conviction: the relation between musical score and performance *cannot* be determined. If this is not realized, difficulties will always be encountered in composing, rehearsing and performing (not to mention listening). The indeterminacies of traditional notation became to such an extent accepted that it was forgotten that they existed, and of what sort they were. The results of this can be seen in much of the pointillist music of the '50s (Boulez, Berio, Goeyvaerts, Pousseur, Stockhausen, Van San, etc.). The music seemed to exclude all possibility of interpretation in any real sense; the utmost differentiation, refinement and exactitude were demanded of the players. Just because of this contradiction it is stimulating work, and sometimes rewarding to interpret this music, for any interpretation is forced to transcend the rigidity of the compositional procedure, and music results (but the feeling is almost unavoidable that one is misrepresenting the composer!).

Now Cage is aware of the dangers of working within a tradition-given system whose functioning has become subconscious. And he is aware of the indeterminacy of the relations between compositional idea, notation, performance and audition. But whereas most European composers work on the reduction of the indeterminacy to a minimum, Cage sets out to *use* it. Consequent on this comes the fundamental difference in thinking about the 'identity' of a piece of music. For instance: constituting the identity of a European piece are, *e.g.*, the tones that occur in it and their characteristics (pitch, loudness, length, etc. in Boulez for example), or the themes that occur in it, their implications (harmonic and melodic) and modifications, etc., etc. On the other hand, constituting the identity of *e.g.* *Winter Music* is the fact that *there should be* more or less complex eruptions into silence, and that these should come from one or more pianos. This being the unmistakable identity of the piece, there is room for free interpenetration at all points in the process (composition, notation, performance, audition). 'Mistaken identity' is excluded, and 'anything may happen'. (Cage has opened the gate into a field.)

iii '60.

6—There can be no indeterminacy in the notation itself—that would mean a sort of blurred sign (as in Bussotti)—but only in the rules for its interpretation (as in Cage's piano concerto: · means soft or short).

x '59.

7—One point is, that every sign should be active (compare the barlines in Feldman and Boulez). Here are openings for indeterminacy, or freedom for the player: he must decide which signs he will give activity to, or allow to act. The composer can bring this about in a variety of ways: by overloading the player with so many rules that they begin to contradict each other; or by using the same sign in a variety of contexts where it *cannot* mean the same (paradoxical notation); or by giving no rules whatever and obliging the player to seek out just such rules as he needs or as will make sense of the notation. (This last is very important, and often seems the case with Feldman.) All these are psychological obscurities directed at the player in the hope of waking him up.

The whole question of determinacy is liable to melt into thin air under scrutiny. Take the sign '-' (written over a note): in 4 different systems of notation (starting with the most determinate), it means (1) 5 secs., (2) long, (3) a length of time, and (4) what you will. This sort of 'absolute' indeterminacy (but note that in (4) your decision in one case will determine other cases) has been attempted by Bussotti (but even his picture is still *e.g.* read from left to right). In the case of Bussotti it is important to remember that you are dealing with a drawing, not with writing, that you therefore *require* neither dictionary nor rules for its interpretation. But in a notation, as in writing, fluctuations of typography or handwriting should not prejudice its determinacy. An indeterminacy here would be the case where you ask 'is that an A or an O?', or in music 'is that a line or a dot?' (it's no answer to say 'it's a mark, anyway'! That would again make it into a drawing).

'I can't read it, but it looks great.' Drawings *suggest* their own interpretation.

In how far your 'notation plus rules' determines the sound, is a matter of your system's completeness (illusory: a system can be closed but not complete).

x '59.

8—Suppose the player to behave as follows: he reads the notation and makes himself a picture of the sound (in his mind—the hypothetically imagined sound). He then attempts to reproduce this picture in sound; he plays, and then listens to the sound he has made; he compares it with the picture of the sound he had in his







9—Such a notation as Wolff's 6 *players* is no longer a notation that one can read. It is more like material for composition—it must be translated into a notation. This in connection with the frequent 'impossible' situations in the piece, as—imaginary example:—viola must play nine tones, amongst which two pizzicato and two harmonics, in half a second. One interpretation of this—and it is a fundamental interpretation; one that requires a notation if the piece is to be brought to performance—is to have the player play as many notes as he can in half a second, while the remainder he is free to distribute over the whole of the rest of the piece. In this interpretation we have taken the time ( $\frac{1}{2}$ " as binding. Now imagine three such events in succession, lasting respectively  $\frac{1}{2}$ ",  $2\frac{1}{2}$ ",  $\frac{2}{3}$ "; in another interpretation these do not add up to  $3\frac{1}{2}$ ", because we can take the *events* as binding (see note 11). Thus the 9 tones in the first  $\frac{1}{2}$ " form an indivisible agglomeration of sound, which the player must *aim* to achieve in half a second (he won't succeed). For this too a notation must be sought, and this presents a serious problem because it often happens in the piece that two or more players must reach the same point at the same time. One then attempts to fit a conductor into this picture, etc., etc. v '60.

10—Here one is seeking a notation for a pre-existing situation, so one's problems are largely logical, and the difficulty is to see the situation clearly.

Wolff's notation could be called an experimental notation (as could 'time-space'). One reason why one could call it experimental is that what can happen to the signs is not predetermined in the signs themselves (it is as though his signs were pre-symbolic). Thus you may find yourself having to play  $3\frac{1}{2}$  tones in 0 seconds (!!). (Christian would frown faintly, and then smile a solution.)

11—One can establish a hierarchy among the rules and make general decisions about which rule takes precedence (where two rules seem mutually exclusive). Alternatively one can decide for each particular situation which rules are binding. (This applies particularly to Wolff and Feldman. Wolff's 'instructions' consist largely of suggestions.)

12—One is often warned about the dangers in giving a new meaning to an old sign. I find, however, that it is reassuring to be familiar with the sign, even though not with its meaning. The old meaning forms a sort of magnetic pole which tugs the new interpretation out of the square (and incidentally, detracts from the banality of so-called 'new meanings'). Apart from this, I feel that things which are difficult to understand should be said in such a way that at least they are easy to read; otherwise the difficulty encountered in reading prevents you from even starting to understand. (But beware of separating 'reading' and 'understanding' completely.)

Another point is that a familiar sign is much more easily recognized (identified), and consequently one does not have to waste time comparing the sign with a model in order to be sure that you are interpreting the right sign. The musician's eye is trained to recognize the difference between  and , but not that between *e.g.* 0 and o (meaning, for example, that the note is  or ), although there is a more significant difference between these. It is misguided (I find, at least, that 'it doesn't do you any good') to insist on such 'improvements' on the grounds that they present a more economical transmission of 'information' because to a musician they patently don't. If the composer's intention is to disorientate the musician, then of course by all means.

Such a composer would be a composer of human rather than musical situations (there is much to be discussed here; too much). This means devising a human notation rather than a musical one; that is to say, placing more emphasis on the human aspect of notations. The Americans (Cage, Wolff, Brown, Feldman) have long been this way inclined, and the prime example is the young American Lamont Young, whose *Poem* may be familiar to some. Lamont dispenses with musical notation altogether and 'writes' his pieces in the language of everyday.

13—A notation should be directed to a large extent towards the people who read it, rather than towards the sounds they will make. v '60.

14—Imagine a piece of music with the title 'about music'. Any performance of this would then have the title 'music'.

15—The only criterion for a sound is: 'was the player expecting (intending) to make it?' (see note 8). If not, it was a mistake, and makes a different *sort* of claim to beauty. As a mistake, it comes under criteria for action: mistakes are the only truly spontaneous actions we are capable of. x '59.

16—Compare 'that seems natural' with 'that seems logical' with 'there is a sort of severe logic in it' meaning it's not natural but it's 'right'. 'Ugly' sounds (cf. James) get beauty through their logical positioning. Form, temporal logic, memory, expectation: these form an agenda to ignore which gives you generality at the expense of intensity. x '59

17—Imagine a notation with the following point of departure: interesting actions have interesting, nice-and-easy-to-write notations, whereas boring ones have boring, difficult-or-impossible-to-write notations. (Russell's idea—that complexes must be designated by complex signs—would have to go by the board here.)

18—Concerning some non-musical durations; durations not carrying a change. One such is 'the length of a breath'—it *need* not carry a change, though of course it *can*—one uses the human frame for no other reason than that it is there. 'The length of a breath' can have no *musical* significance (here again—as in note 25—it cannot really represent a duration, since it must allow for the most diverse human frames, including those which can breathe in through their noses while still blowing through their mouths, though in theory this is only a menace when the prescription is 'as long as possible').

Another such duration is the silence (or accidental noises) needed for the preparation of a sound (e.g. taking silent notes, making literal 'preparations', getting your fingers round a difficult chord, etc.), which makes no musical sense in the moment of its existence, and the reason for its duration becomes clear only afterwards, when the sound has manifested the effect of the preparation.

In both cases it is an acoustical change that is missing, and that is why I call them non-musical durations. However, this lack suits them very well to sustaining the impression of a time-structure. This 'feeling of structure' relies on the occurrence of things *for no immediately apparent reason*, and this 'feeling' seems to be all one can achieve in the way of time-structure, since perception as a whole (seeing the temporal structure of the piece laid out in front of you) cannot be the case in music (memory and expectation to be considered elsewhere). ix '59.

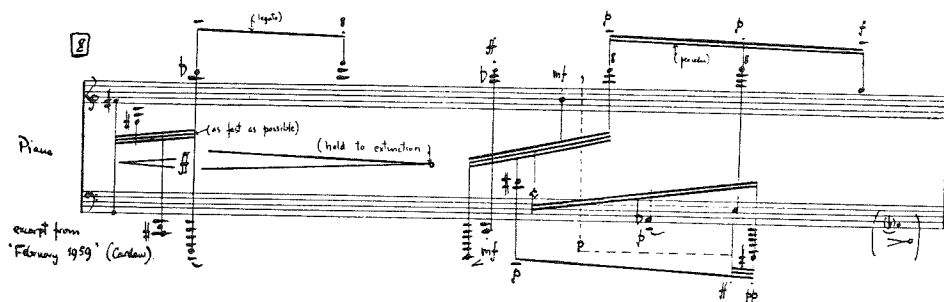
19—Towards a music without structure! The 'feeling of structure' is not a very important *feeling*, I should say, and it is therefore fine if a note goes, say, flat or sharp at the end of a breath. It gives an apparent reason for stopping (the *real* reason, after all). ix '59.

20—Note found in the score of my *octet* 1959: 'control the registers here! Octaves seem to predominate'. I misread this as 'control heightens here, octaves seem to predominate' and wondered at my own insight! The apparition of the unreasonable (octaves!) in the score, suggests that there are *hidden* reasons, and this too is the 'feeling of structure': seeking the sense in the apparently senseless. This note is followed by: 'how to make the form a necessity and not a form'. But this 'necessary form' (organic form) is the greatest hindrance to the 'feeling of structure'.

21—Differentiate between 'not seeing the sense' and 'finding something senseless'. Having once found something sensible, it carries weight to declare it senseless. 'I refuse to call it senseless until I have seen the sense of it' is therefore a reasonable sentence.

x '59.

iii '60.



22—One feature of this piece is the method used for controlling the length of tones: a tone is struck at a particular dynamic, and is released when it has reached another. So for example, the length of a tone is the time taken by this particular tone to make the diminuendo from *mf* to *pp*. Such tones are sometimes accompanied by a sign meaning e.g. 'relatively long', and it becomes clear that our interpretation of the signs *mf* and *pp* will also have to be relative, and we come up against the question: 'are the dynamics controlling the durations, or are the durations controlling the dynamics?'. Neither, for the player controls both, that is he controls their interaction. This is the real meaning of such signs as 'long', 'loud', etc.: their function is to put the player in a position where he is conscious of himself, of his own experience of 'long', 'loud', etc. He is conscious of what he is doing and of the capacities of the instrument at which he sits. The function of such signs is to bring the pianist to life. The piece is also so devised that the pianist can respond correctly (to the stimuli which are the signs) under any circumstances. These circumstances include size and quality of instrument, hall, pianist, audience, etc. (Actually various combinations of unfortunate circumstances have, at various times, made it almost impossible to keep the piece identifiable, but these were 'unreasonable circumstances'.)

I have heard people criticizing interpretations of music in a variety of ways, 'he played some wrong notes, but was faithful to the composer's intention', or 'he played correctly but seemed to miss the point'. Such criticism disturbs me (though I have often found it valid) because it implies that there is something behind the notation, something the composer meant but did not write. In my piece there is no intention separate from the notation; the intention is that the player should respond to the notation. He should not interpret in a particular way (e.g. how he imagines the composer intended) but should be engaged in the act of interpretation.

(NOTE: what I really meant to say, was that the piece could be played correctly by a pianist having no previous acquaintance with western music. But such methods belong to logic. The animal doesn't exist anyway; in getting acquainted with the piano you get acquainted with western music.)

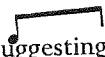
A wrong note in this piece is unambiguously a mistake, since the only indication of tempo is 'as fast as possible' (for some short groups), and only playing 'faster than possible' can result in a wrong note. It is clear that playing 'faster than possible' is a wrong interpretation of 'as fast as possible'; a wrong interpretation resulting perhaps from the consideration that the composer intended a particular *speed* when he wrote 'as fast as possible' (which cannot be the case: a particular speed is given by a metronome indication and note-values). 'As fast as possible' does not even imply that you must give an *impression* of speed (e.g. by playing wrong notes), it is simply an incentive to action.

23—The last word about 'as fast as possible'. It is impossible that the composer intends any particular speed by it, or any particular durations, so any speed will satisfy him. So instead of 'as fast as possible', write 'as fast as you like (not periodic)'.

'With that do you intend to say that the prescription "as fast as possible" has no further use?'.

'On the contrary; it is a very efficacious prescription when the effect desired is one of confusion.'


x '59

24—Concerning the 'feeling of structure' in this piece. The notation  for durations (!) almost forces you towards an 'organic' structure, by suggesting that something should coincide with the end of the note. The ceasing of one note generates the attack of another (legato). The other notation used in the piece for durations (., τ, -, ~) tends on the other hand to boost the 'feeling of structure'; for these signs say nothing about where—at what point *in the music*—the note should cease, and in consequence it seems to cease arbitrarily (arbitrariness is characteristic of the 'feeling of structure'). Sometimes the uses of the two types of sign 'overlap', and this as it were gives the player his second wind; he is again free to choose.

25—The notation of indeterminate events is problematic. It is both a criticism and an asset of *February 1959* that an indeterminacy could creep in without my noticing it. If you want to notate an indeterminate length (of time), the sign for it cannot have length (on paper); i.e. you must use a 'dot'-type sign.

Remember that all signs meaning 'long', 'medium', 'short', etc. are *only* incentives to the player; the situation you have composed must allow him to find *any* length 'long' (i.e. he must be free in his experiencing of length), except where length is otherwise determined (e.g. by diminuendo in *February 1959*).

x '59.

26—'Refrain' by Karlheinz Stockhausen is an example of the signs having length where the sounds have length, and, because in addition to this the various dynamics are given by the thickness of the line and the instruments involved (vibes, piano, celesta) all produce decaying sounds, it is almost impossible to avoid the feeling that you are looking at a picture of the sound and consequently interpreting it visually. Take an imaginary example: . Suppose this to represent a tone struck *mf* and held until you can only just hear it (*pppp*). Now at the point indicated in this sound another player is to enter, so he takes out his ruler and measures the thickness of the line at the point where he is



Piano  
x = wood blocks

Celeste  
x = crotales

Vibraphone  
x = cow bells

tɛɪ (shouted)

weich

hart !

einander unabhängig

notes in circles are held through to next barline.

x = velar click (consult London University Phonetics Dept. also for "tɛɪ")  
2... = octave higher.

excerpt from 'Refrain' by Karlheinz Stockhausen

supposed to enter (shown by arrow). He finds it has a thickness (.4mm, say) corresponding to the level *ppp*. But what 'indicates'? Time and again in rehearsal I have played in this way, only to have Karlheinz shout 'wait! wait!'. 'I did wait—until it was *ppp*.' 'But look at that line! The time before your entry is about twice as long as the time after it, and his sound still has a long way to go before it reaches its minimum'. Really, one is tempted to say that some composers don't understand their own notations! Here the case is clear; the sound of a piano decays rapidly at first, and then much slower, so that if we postulate that *mf*, *mp*, *p*, *pp*, *ppp*, *pppp* are 6 evenly spaced dynamics, the sound takes longer to decay from *ppp* to *pppp* than it does from *mf* to *mp*. Everybody knows this, and Karlheinz in particular; but his notation has misled him—in his drawing of the sound he has used a straight line diminuendo. Thus, though the score has the appearance of a 'drawn' notation, it is actually a written one. This does not mean it is impossible to interpret, but merely that it is very difficult to interpret in the presence of the composer (composers always think they own their pieces). Actually this notation poses some very nice problems and could be very enlivening in the life of an interpreter.

27—*Refrain* again. Measurement is part of the notation process (for the dynamics), but is not evident in the visual result, which means that the player has to go through the measuring process in reverse in order to find the sound. Thus, composer (or his copyist) and interpreter have to make the same measurements at different stages. Very uneconomical (is this such a savage criticism?). A measurement once made should be made so as to stay made. ii '60.

(Cage, in his instruction for *Variations*: 'measure, or simply observe distances from points to lines'.)

28—A musical notation that looks beautiful is not a beautiful notation, because it is not the function of a musical notation to look beautiful (functionalism).

Any attempts in this direction (Bussotti) could be called 'aesthetic notations'. Notation for its own sake, but in a different sense from say, pure mathematics.

ii '60.

29—Russell: 'a perfect notation would be a substitute for thought'. Stockhausen: 'a perfect notation? Would that be one where you can immediately imagine 'how it sounds'? Then order me one right away. But because it will always be imperfect, we have to go on thinking through a lot of rubbish. When you read music, it's better to imagine music than to *think* all the time what the signs mean'.

But there is a limit to the music that can be drawn.

vii '59.

30—The question of the correctitude of a performance (to recapitulate). About a performance of a piece of classical music one person says 'he played correctly but failed to see the intention', and another 'he did not play all the notes but was faithful to the composer's intention'. Fidelity to the intention of the composer thus appears to be separate from fidelity to the notation. As much as to say, the composer does not notate what he intends! It is a personal success or failure of the interpreter, whether or not he can divine the intention behind the notation (for the view that this intention is expressed in the rules for the notation, see below).

It comes to this; in classical music one can obey all the rules for the interpretation of the notation, and still not give a correct performance. Can we imagine a music where it is possible to give a correct performance merely by following these rules? These rules must be such that they can be obeyed under any circumstances; these may affect the result, but do not hinder the player's obedience to the rules. To make, too, rules which may be obeyed *differently* according to the circumstances. (I seem to be saying in fact that it is the rules, here, which are being interpreted, and not the notation. And would one not find behind these rules an intention (not notated) as to how these rules were to be interpreted e.g. under certain circumstances, etc., etc. . . . ? ?).

I do not wish to write music which *anybody* can play as well as, say, David Tudor, but that somehow, as a result of the notation (plus the accompanying rules, plus the rules for the interpretation of the rules, plus . . . the NOTATION) it would never occur to anyone who had not the capacity to do it correctly to attempt the piece (just as no-one but a genuine dilettante would independently have the idea to play Feldman. This 'independence' is an essential feature of my dilettante).

Here we are in a similar situation to that where things are left 'free', and then the composer tells the player afterwards that he played well or badly ('used' the freedom well or badly). If there exist criteria for making such a judgment, then there is no freedom. Playing a piece in which the dynamics are free, it should make no difference whatever to the piece (its identity) (its value) if I play *mp* continuously.

viii '59.

31—'Rules' and 'notation' are inextricably intermingled, and it is misleading to separate them. There never was a notation without rules—these describe the relationship between the notation and what is notated. The trouble in classical music is that so many of the rules are inexplicit—given by tradition, and obeyed to such an extent subconsciously that they would be difficult to formulate.

viii '59.

32—The notation should put the player on the right road. He can rise above the notation if he works through the notation. Interpreting according to the rules should lead him to the identity of the piece; this grasped, he may slough off the rules and interpret freely, secure in the fact that he knows what he is doing—he 'knows' the piece.

33—A dilettante musician is one who has a weakness for music. He takes a delight in doing it and consequently has a more than even chance of doing it properly. An amateur on the other hand, is incompetent and incapable of understanding. These definitions are of course irrespective of whether he practises music for bread or for love or both.

34—'Dynamics are free' does not mean that there are to be no dynamics, or one constant dynamic, but invites the player to ask himself 'what dynamic(s) for this sound?', thus bringing him into the situation of having to take care of the sound, putting it in his charge, making him responsible.

ii '60.

9

(Durations are free, or determined by the situation)

excerpt from February 1960 (Cardew).

Excerpt from "Third Orchestra Piece 1960" (Cardew)

35—Two instructions for the piano piece are: 'the duration of each "quaver" is free, or determined by the situation', and 'each "quaver" is one sound in a natural process of decay, therefore (!) the prescription "legato"'








should be observed wherever applicable'. This last is an example of an 'obscure' rule, designed to make it impossible to study the rules separately from the music (is this a telling victory?). The explanation of 'therefore': because if two sounds are separated, a different sound—where tones are tied—or a pause appears in the hiatus. (Rules which send the player packing back to the music.)



36—The fact that the conductor is free should not suggest to him any vulgar images of spontaneity. The feeling of arbitrariness should be avoided (as far as possible). Real freedom lies in the recognition of one's responsibilities. (It is only in the score that the composer can talk to the conductor in this way—he is by nature shy and unassuming in rehearsal—so this too is part of his notation.)

xii '60

37—The proper way, write something down, and then play it, without looking at what you have written. Just the two—writing and playing; no reading! You must remember what you wrote—then you will remember what is significant about it and with time leave out what is unmemorable and insignificant—and that is writing. And then you must play *with* it—that is, with what you remember. Playing is necessarily an elaboration; it is so concrete—things must be tied together, balanced, arranged, made to fit.

38—Loudness is not necessarily an *important* characteristic of the sound, *ff*, *f*, *p*, *pp*, do not necessarily belong to the same class of sign. For instance: *ff* means 'everything you've got', *f* means 'louder than the context', *p* means 'with a "beautiful" quality', *pp* means 'extreme *espressivo*'. Naturally they are the same type of sign, but they do not form a class.

39—Some rules for my *third orchestra piece 1960*: play each group over and over; refer back to groups (the example shows one group).  is on the beat,   is just after the beat,   is between beats,   is just before the beat. No beat should be twice as long or short or more than those on either side of it. No beat should be sub-divided. Each tone may be played or not, and generally speaking this is to be decided by the player on the spur of the moment. No tone *has* to be played, and from this it follows that a smaller orchestra may be used than that listed; but this should not be taken to extremes, it is a piece for orchestra (see Ex. 5, p. 31).

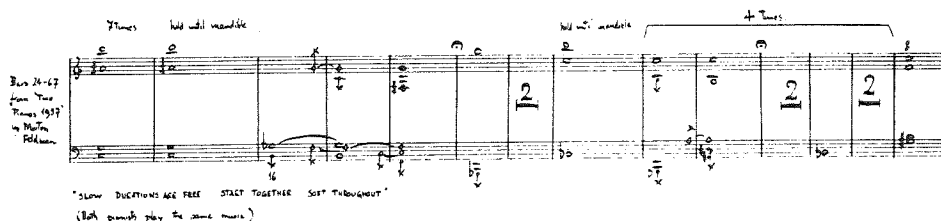
Together with the freedom either to play or not to play, must come the freedom to do anything in between—almost to play, or almost not to play, to play, *more or less*, i.e. the freedom to play soft or loud, and short or long. However, I can suggest *f* or *p* (by the simple expedient of writing it in the score), or  ('longer') or  ('portato'), etc., just as I can 'suggest' that a particular tone should be played, by scoring it for five or six instruments.

One more rule: 'the conductor may make suggestions to the musicians (about dynamics, durations, who should play, "no pitches above middle C in this group", etc.), but after rather than before studying the score'. (I am not insulting the conductor, but rather guarding against far-out, 'modern' interpretations.)

40—The aura surrounding a modern score. The pre-publication history of a piece should be published along with the score. A modern score is such an enigmatic phenomenon, however detailed, or precise, or illuminating the instructions for playing it. It is difficult to focus on it; its features are so elusive. Juries leafing through a modern score say 'nothing seems to happen in it', forgetting that it consists of notes which must be read and heard. The modern score has a concentration that defies lecture.

A chronicle of the first performance, the experience gained from it, subsequent changes listed, different aspects shown by different performances as available, reactions of conductors and players—all this could help to bring the music into focus. And by surrounding the score with apparently *irrelevant* details—and I am not thinking of an ‘analysis’ (as the construction methods of ‘serial’ scores used to be called), but, for example, of the circumstances in which it was written, or your financial status at the time, or the climate, etc., etc. (these are after all *also* reasons why the piece shows the features—or lack of feature—that it does)—it would be possible to give it a sort of approachable personality.

41—The following example of Morton Feldman’s work is so rich that I find myself unable to comment on it.



42—Availability of scores. All Cage’s work may now be obtained through Peters Edition (with some delay). His *Winter Music*, on the other hand, can be viewed *immediately* in the magazine “*New Departures 2/3*”, obtainable from Otto Schmink, 57, Greek Street, W.1.

A selection of Bussotti’s works has been published by Universal Edition (signed copies are more expensive), from whom Stockhausen’s *Refrain* may also be obtained, if not now, then in the near future. *Carré* on the other hand—which is a work for 4 orchestras and 4 choruses under 4 conductors and lasts 35 minutes—is unlikely to be available for some time.

Isolated pieces by Wolff and Feldman have appeared in the American ‘New Music Publications’, which may be borrowed from the library of the American Information Service. Feldman’s *Piano 3 Hands* may appear shortly in the Leeds magazine *Accent* together with my comment on it.

My February 1959 appeared in *New Departures 1* which is now a collector’s item, but February 1960 is to be found amongst the *Darmstädter Beiträge zur neuen Musik 1960* which is obtainable, at a price, from Schott’s Music Publishers.

London v ’61.

## WHO ARE YOU, OLIVIER MESSIAEN?

The following discussion between Olivier Messiaen and Bernard Gavoty, music critic of *Figaro*, took place at a Youth Music concert in Paris in February of this year immediately before a performance of Messiaen’s *Trois petites Liturgies de la présence divine*. It was subsequently published in the *Journal Musical Français* to whom we are indebted for permission to print the following translation.

B.G. Who are you, Olivier Messiaen?

O.M. A musician—that is my profession. A rhythmologist—that is my speciality.

An ornithologist—that is my passion.