



EDITORIAL: WAYS OF WORKING

Christopher Fox

This issue is devoted to compositional method: the how (and sometimes why) of what composers do. Paul Norman's article on the German-born, but Birmingham-based, composer Michael Wolters talks about Wolters' music as representing 'that "other" way of working', but in 2023 perhaps every way of working is being 'othered' by the proliferation of different compositional methods. The 'other', after all, implies some sort of norm. Yet there are also composers and theorists who want to establish a new norm. Like Harry Partch, for example, they first develop a critique of the shortcomings of current musical practices and then propose a system that will put things right. Simon Kaplan's article on 'Diahemitonic modality: a quarter-tonal composition system' does just that: careful analysis leading to the prescription of a new way of thinking about how to write quarter-tone music. Ryan Pratt's article on 'Relative intonation: non-symmetrical implications of linear and logarithmic intervallic measurement' is less prescriptive in its eventual conclusions but also derives new ideas about composition from a close analysis of acoustic phenomena and the ways they have previously been implemented in music.

Other articles here are more obviously fanciful. The brilliant Australian trumpeter Callum G'Froerer discusses how he has used the process of weaving textiles as a model for the 'expanded sonic practice' of his own work, and the Romanian composer and musicologist Livia Teodorescu Ciocanea introduces two operas by her German-based compatriot Violeta Dinescu. In Dinescu's work Teodorescu Ciocanea finds a rich network of dramatic references, reaching back from twentieth-century absurdism to the characters of Homer's *Odyssey*, given voice in music that similarly has many roots, in contemporary and ancient traditions from across the world. José L. Besada and Carles Vicent Pascual's exploration of the distributed creativity of recent Spanish opera reveals that 'putting ego aside' in an apparently more pragmatic approach to the making of new work need not restrict 'co-creative' fantasy. Four of Anton Lukoszevics's richly atmospheric photographs of musicians complete this series of portraits.

In a departure from *TEMPO*'s normal practice this issue of the journal closes, not with a Profile interview, but with news of a recent discovery, the 'lost' original tapes of Harrison Birtwistle's *Chronometer*. This may come as a surprise to older readers. Birtwistle was one of the stars of the musical universe for many years, his work published by two major houses and his manuscripts safely stored in the archives of the Paul Sacher Stiftung in Basel. But, as Nicolas Hodges explains, the two four-track tapes that, played together, present *Chronometer* in its full eight-track glory were found in the cellar of Birtwistle's home in Wiltshire after his death. This is doubly significant. As Hodges explains, we now have access to a work that has only once been heard in the format that Birtwistle and his collaborator, Peter Zinovieff, originally created in 1973, and this original version turns

out to be over five minutes longer than the stereo and four-track surround versions that have been available on various commercial recordings. It is also a reminder that new technology and the concept of the ur-text, so beloved of music historians, are not necessarily compatible. Does this matter? Future issues of *TEMPO* will come back to this question.

It is with great sadness that we note the death of a long-serving member of *TEMPO*'s editorial board, Liudmila Kovnatskaya, who was born in Leningrad in 1941, just months before that city was besieged, and died in the same city, now St Petersburg, on 9 May 2023. Another member of the editorial board, Gerard McBurney, offers this tribute:

Liudmila Kovnatskaya was all her long professional life a voice of calm wisdom, urbane and international cultural outlook, deep and irreplaceable power as teacher, intellectual leader and mentor to generations of younger Russian musicians and musicologists, and a true friend and colleague – always known by her affectionate diminutive, 'Mila' – to swathes of European and American musical scholars and practitioners. She particularly prized her connections to the UK and the institutions in Aldeburgh connected to the life and work of Benjamin Britten. It was the flurry of Soviet interest in Britten's music in the early 1960s that awakened her fascination with his work: she played the organ in the first Soviet performance of the *War Requiem* and in 1974 published a pioneering monograph on his music in Russian. But while her interest in British music was subtle and genuinely curious, she had interests far beyond that, and was deeply shaped by the influence of her great teacher, Mikhail Druskin, best known as a scholar of Bach, Schoenberg and Stravinsky. Kovnatskaya adored Druskin and all who visited her grew accustomed to often hilarious stories which began: 'One day Mikhail Semyonovich said to me...'. From Druskin Kovnatskaya inherited a wary and questioning attitude towards Shostakovich, which gave her formidable contributions to Shostakovich scholarship in later years their sharp interest and critical tang; she was not someone who enjoyed a cult around a composer. And yet she loved composers of all different kinds and was unfailingly encouraging to those who were personal friends. She will be much missed.

Sadly we must also mark the passing of another major contributor to the musical life of Europe, Gisela Gronemeyer (1954–2023). With her partner Reinhard Oehlschlägel (1936–2104) Gisela was the founding editor of the journal *MusikTexte*, a journal metaphorically produced on a shoestring and literally produced on Reinhard and Gisela's kitchen table. Over four decades *MusikTexte* was consistently the most eclectic of all European new-music journals. The first issue appeared in October 1983 and those that followed were published initially at two-monthly intervals before shifting to quarterly publication around the turn of the present century. The February 2023 issue was the 176th and like most of its predecessors it is a mix of news, analysis, interviews, polemics and reviews.

Gisela and Reinhard were deeply involved with the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM), representing Germany in the ISCM's annual assembly and, in 1991, establishing the *World New Music Magazine* as an annual publication to disseminate information about the ISCM and the composers featured at its festivals. As well as journals they published books, usually anthologies of a composer's writings, under the imprint Verlag MusikTexte.¹ The first appeared in 1993 and the series includes many representatives from the American experimental tradition, including John Cage, Alvin

¹ MusikTexte books are available through www.buecher-zur-musik.de/musiktexte/index.php (accessed 1 August 2023).

Lucier and Christian Wolff, as well as volumes on composers from Giacinto Scelsi and Jo Kondo to Klaus Huber and Chris Newman. Although the Verlag MusikTexte catalogue was a male-only space, Gisela also established, with the pianist Deborah Richards, the Frau* Musica Nova (F*MN) festival in Cologne, which, from its first iteration in 1997, promoted the music of women composers. Her friendship, support and advocacy will be much missed by everyone who knew her.