a degree of repetition of ideas in the summarisation and re-summarisation at the end of the book. There is no mention of the influence of the Irish Diaspora on musical practice in Ireland. Michael Coleman, the highly influential fiddler player of the first half of the twentieth century, lived and recorded in the USA; the great collection of Irish instrumental music, the one instrumentalists actually use, was compiled by Captain Francis O'Neill of the Chicago Police; we profit from the fact that Marie McCarthy herself would seem to be one of those transatlantic scholars who has a desire to investigate the culture of the land of her forebears.

There are other problems. McCarthy seems to think that Hullah's system is fundamentally different from tonic sol-fa. Hullah's system was a flawed sol-fa system with a fixed doh. John Curwen's system improved on Hullah's and other people's work by making it possible to accommodate modulation through a movable doh. McCarthy seems to accept the myth of Protestants as non-music makers. Some Protestants did preach against secular music, but many excellent Protestant traditional musicians have been recorded over the years. I have other gripes, but on balance the book is a very worthwhile piece of work.

As someone who takes a particular interest in in the study of vernacular musics (basically the types of music people make for themselves), I sometimes think that they flourish best outside formal channels of learning and teaching. Formal music education seems to do little for the Carnival musicians of Trinidad and seems to have contributed little to the recent success of Irish music and musicians. On the other hand I recently heard Paddy Maloney, leader of the Chieftans, on the radio, rattling off a reel in tonic sol-fa (which he learnt from school) the only form in which he is able to write and communicate his music. Then I judged a music contest with some great young musicians playing all sorts of music. So I decided in some cases my thoughts are ill-founded, although I never feel it hurts to engage in radical doubt.

VIC GAMMON

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**Settling the Score: a Journey through the Music of the Twentieth Century** edited by Michael Oliver. London: Faber and Faber, 1999. Paperback, 338 pp. £16.99.

As Michael Oliver notes in his introduction to chapter 8 of this thought-provoking volume, 'Composers at the end of the twentieth century are writing music that not only sounds radically different from that written a hundred years earlier; the language of music and the raw materials from which it is made have themselves changed' (p. 110). Elsewhere, Oliver is more explicit in identifying the particular *bêtes noires* of most music lovers: '[the] harmonic language [of some twentieth-century music] bears little or no perceptible relationship to that of preceding centuries' (p. 125); worse still, 'Almost the commonest accusation . . . is that it is tuneless' (p. 139). That such views are perceived as wrongs needing to be avenged is made clear by the punning title of the book (and of the Radio 3 series on which it is based). I imagine that all those involved in the creation of and commentary on contemporary music will welcome this brave attempt 'to tell [its] story . . . by using the words of those who have made [its] music' (pp. x–xi), though whether they will feel equally happy to be associated with its cover image, depicting bedlam, is another matter entirely.

*Settling the Score* is arranged as a kind of club sandwich: the substantial filling consists of eighteen chapters on a plethora of coterminous topics; the bread comprises the contextualising first and last chapters – '1900' and '2000' – and various other items, including Nicholas Kenyon's 'Foreword', Oliver's 'Preface', an index, lists of contributors, sources quoted,

illustrations, and so on. (Oddly, the contents page also announces a 'Chronology' on p. xxiii, which seems not to be present. More serious in its omission is the surely obligatory bibliography which could otherwise have directed readers to further, more detailed, understanding of the many fascinating issues raised in the book's narrative.) For reasons alliterative, millennial, or possibly confectionary, all but four of the 'filler' chapters have titles turning on a double M – 'Music's makers', 'Music and mammon', 'Music and the movies', 'Music and the mind'. Most of these are appropriate to their topics, though a few feel distinctly contrived: 'Music and the marvellous' is hardly an adequate heading for a chapter dealing with the relationship between Western and non-Western musics, while 'Music and Motown' would be fine if Motown was one of the popular musics actually discussed in its fourteen pages.

Three of the four exceptions to the MM rule (the other being 'The Rite's century', a salutary exploration of a seminal work) are chapters 8–10, each of which deals with some aspect of 'The language of music', whether rhythmic, harmonic or melodic. It is here that some of the most helpful comments appear, whether from Aristoxenus (who in the fourth century BC concluded that 'Rhythm is concerned with time lengths and the perception of them' (p. 115)) or Thomas Adès (who evocatively defines melody as 'A line that begins to breathe at the start of the piece and stops breathing at the end of it' (p. 141)). Elsewhere, we find useful (albeit somewhat gnomic) advice from Morton Feldman – 'You have to end effectively; you're as good as your ending. Most people, they don't remember too far behind the ending' (p. 146) – and Harrison Birtwistle – 'There's [*sic*] two things that music can do: it can start and it can stop' (p. 124). Chapter 10 also includes an unusually reflective remark by Pierre Boulez, which reminds us all of the dramatic changes that have occurred in music since World War II: 'If you had asked me fifty years ago where music would be in 1998 I would have told you maybe a nonsense: ''Everything will be organized, serialized and so on'' – and it wasn't the case. At least experience makes you modest' (p. 148).

If the volume has two (probably inevitable) flaws, these are its basis in English experience and – when discussing art music – its privileging of Eurocentric modernism. The former, for instance, manifests itself in the otherwise excellent chapter on 'Music and the media', where the impact of radio, scholarship and journalism is discussed through purely English examples (the Third Programme, *Grove's Dictionary*, *The Times*). Detailed comparison with the situations in both American and continental Europe might have been illuminating. The privileging of Eurocentric modernism, meanwhile, is clear from the tendency to marginalise influential experimentalists such as John Cage (whom the historically insignificant Charles Wuorinen describes on page 136 as 'a very minor figure') while celebrating those (including Elliott Carter, Pierre Boulez, and Karlheinz Stockhausen) who have benefited from such experimentation. However, this should not detract from the many positive qualities of *Settling the Score*, not least its willingness to examine not only 'the raw materials of music' but also 'the many functions of music, the way that the musical profession and the musical public have changed, and the effect on both of them of politics, technology, the media and a growing awareness that the history of music is not just the history of Western concert music' (p. xi).

In many respects, then, *Settling the Score* is an extremely successful and eminently useful publication: readable and intelligent, it is at once a voluminous source of fascinating and provocative soundbites concerning the nature of twentieth-century music and music-making; a potentially valuable text for anyone – either within education or outside it – trying to make sense of the 'bewilderingly varied plethora of

new music' (p. x) that surrounds us; and a very welcome antidote to much of the nonsense written about contemporary composition. But in its failure to provide either a bibliography or proper citation of its sources (especially important given its heavy reliance on anecdotal evidence), it has missed a major opportunity to act as an educational catalyst to further exploration of the many important issues it raises.

DAVID NICHOLLS

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**Creating Ensemble – Australian Recorder Quartets.** (No author/editor cited). Petersham, Australia: In House Technologies, 1998. VHS Video, PC CD-ROM, Score, Parts and Workbook. No price supplied.

*Creating Ensemble*, 'An interactive multimedia package for self-paced learning about ensemble playing' is built around a recorded performance of five contemporary compositions, on Australian themes, for recorder quartet. Its stated aim is 'to challenge ideas that students might have about what music really is, by presenting a variety of viewpoints about music and its performance'.

When reviewing any teaching package the first essential is to establish the identity of the intended audience. The target audience here, however, is unclear, as neither age, level, Key Stage or pre-requisite skills are identified. Various clues do however emerge which suggest both GCSE and 'A' level applications would be appropriate in the UK.

The initial teacher guidance, which appears in the 'Workbook', is relevant but superficial, and similarly lacks details of both audience and application. It briefly discusses the processes that contribute to the preparation of a work for performance, before proposing a starting point for the project, e.g. watch the video, follow the score and attend to the questions focused on ensemble performance and interpretation. The 'Workbook' finally introduces the issues of 'Group preparation', 'Individual preparation', 'Tuning tips', 'Experiments with rhythm', and 'Representing musical meaning'. The scores then constitute the remaining three-quarters of the workbook, but are printed in a different order to the performance on video. This lack of detailed guidance poses the question of how this package is to be used and where one should start. Watching the video with the score was the obvious place, but again few clues on integration and application were offered. Instead, more questions concerning the level of the intended audience emerged.

The video is a recording of a performance of the five contrasting works, with no commentary. The quality of the performances is very good but unfortunately the soundtrack on my particular copy was distorted. As the focus of the package is 'creating ensemble', it is unfortunate that footage of rehearsals was not included. This was a particular disappointment with the final piece 'Disjointed Quartet', which involved the interpretation of a graphic score, non-standard use of the recorder and an element of 'music theatre'. A valuable opportunity was lost here, for pupils could have learned a great deal from observing the development of such a performance. The video, however, could also provide the teacher with an attractive anthology of contemporary compositions to be used at GCSE and/or 'A' level as a composition stimulus.

The compositions are varied in style and mood and provide a stimulating and thought-provoking environment for the development of ideas; one is notated graphically, another includes opportunities for improvisation, whilst a third incorporates elements of 'music theatre'. My initial impression of the first piece 'Doves Around' was, that although the parts were exposed, the material would suit a Key Stage 3 or 4 recorder group. I noted however, that the



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