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Original Citation

Cox, Geoffrey (2010) A Return to the Future or Forward to the Past? *Contemporary Music Review*, 29 (3). pp. 251-264. ISSN 0749-4467

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A Return to the Future or Forward to the Past?

Geoffrey Cox

The literary origins of the 1945 'zero hour' concept are traced and its relation and importance to post-war avant-garde music is explored, as is the power of its concomitant polemics. The apparent hegemony of the resulting total serialist music and its associated ideas of newness and history are questioned and then compared to the reaction against it in the 1960s, when radical ideas about man's relationship with and understanding of time and history grew. It is suggested that the real break with the past began then rather than in the immediate post-war period.

Keywords: zero hour; tabula rasa; serialism; quotation; newness; nostalgia

I

'There is no remembrance of former things' (Ecclesiastes, 1:11).¹

In outlining the epoch-changing musical developments of around 1600, Carl Dahlhaus described the associated music as a 'relapse into primitivism' characterised by the 'poverty and thinness' of Giulio Caccini's monodies when compared to the immediately preceding madrigals by Luca Marenzio. Nevertheless, this musical austerity became a 'programme for the future' in terms of the style of music that was to follow and was part of what it made possible in the first place, 'its apparent poverty, as it were, a promise of future wealth'. Dahlhaus made a similar argument for the other major shifts in musical thinking that occurred around 1430, 1740 and 1910 (Dahlhaus, 1996 [1969], p. 25). Though Schoenberg's shift into genuine atonality in his Second String Quartet in 1908 and the subsequent development of the 12-tone technique must be rightly seen as part of this phenomenon, it took the horror and devastation of the Second World War for this particular musical programme for the future to take hold. Dahlhaus was sceptical about the making of simple links between sea changes in social and musical history (*ibid.*, p. 29.) but the German experience from 1945 on surely did have a profound effect. Lothar Kettenacker has described May 1945 as 'the most important caesura in German history since the initial formation of the nation state' with up to 75% of the fabric of all major cities destroyed. Half a million civilians died in the process along with the destruction of a major part of the country's infrastructure: 'The break with the immediate past was convincingly stark: the Wehrmacht and Nazi Party, the day before [May 8] in total control had now been disbanded, arrested and hunted down; the whole of the country was occupied by foreign troops; chaos and paralysis everywhere' (Kettenacker, 1997, pp. 1–2). The depiction of this in Roberto

Rossellini's film *Germania, anno zero* (Germany, Year Zero, 1947) was, according to Stephen Brockmann, key in cementing 1945 as a 'zero hour' in German cultural memory though, in the film, the zero hour is depicted as a dead end rather than a new beginning (Brockmann, 2004, p. 174). Writing in 1946, Hans Richter declared that

 faced with the smoke-blackened picture of this European landscape of ruins, in which human beings wander aimlessly, cut loose from all out-dated bonds, the value systems of the past turn pale and lifeless [and] because of the dislocation of life, because of the violence of the experiences that have become a part of and shaken the younger generation, this generation believes that the only possible source for a spiritual rebirth lies in an absolute and radical new beginning (Richter in Brockmann, pp. 188-9).

This idea became enshrined in the famous concept of *Nullpunkt* or *Stunde Null* (zero point or zero hour) and the 'notion of Germany as a *Trümmerfeld* (expanse of ruins) was widely held' (Barnstone, 2005, p. 29). Importantly, Walther Schmidt held that a positive end could result from the devastation and stressed the importance of not romanticising the past (Barnstone, p. 29). This stance was mirrored by the Gruppe 47 in the same year, a literary society who 'officially' declared the *Stunde Null* in an attempt to define the new German culture. Member writers such as Alfred Andersch, Richter (both founding members), Günter Grass, Paul Celan and Heinrich Böll 'repudiated historic German myth and culture, and delineated fresh images and metaphors for their national identity' (Barnstone, p. 29). At the second meeting of the group in November 1947 Andersch declared that because of the 'dictates of a completely unprecedented situation, the younger generation stood before a *tabula rasa*, before the necessity of achieving, through an original act of creation, a renewal of German spiritual life' (Andersch in Brockmann, 2004 [1948], p. 229). One of the important literary desires of the Gruppe 47 was to forge a new language, a new 'programme for the future', in an attempt to repudiate the Nazi manipulation of language paralleled by the Nazi use of some of the philosophies of Hegel and Nietzsche to justify their policies and Goethe's writing and especially pertinent to this discussion, Wagner's music (used at Nazi rallies), to represent the glorious German past (Barnstone, p. 29).

The legacy of the Nazis' appropriation of culture was, at one extreme, to make questionable the whole value of culture, certainly as a means of fending off barbarism. Swiss playwright and author Max Frisch commented in 1949 that one of the most brutal of Nazi leaders, Heinrich Heydrich, 'the murderer of Bohemia, was a distinguished and very sensitive musician, who could hold forth with spirit and true connoisseurship, even with love, on Bach, Händel, Beethoven, Bruckner' (Frisch in Brockmann, 2004, p. 123). The idea of a murderous camp commander enraptured by

classical music one minute and committing atrocities the next was profoundly shocking in the immediate post-war years, leading Germans and indeed Europeans generally to question their image as civilised; the Nazi crimes became for Jung, 'a blow aimed at all Europeans' (Jung in Brockmann, 2004 [1946], p. 125). A deep influence upon the avant-garde musical revolution that was to follow, Theodor Adorno summed up the impact of these revelations in 1949: 'The entirety of traditional culture [is today becoming] null and void: through an irrevocable process, its...legacy has become dispensable, unnecessary, trash'. Adorno later added that '[t]raditional aesthetic forms [are powerless since] they are all given the lie by the catastrophe of the society out of which they grew' (Adorno in Brockmann [1950], p. 132).

A more stark justification of Dahlhaus's point that 'the new, which asserts itself through its antithesis to the old, has a propensity to reflection and polemics' (Dahlhaus, p. 25) would be difficult to find and the musical revolution that took place in the aftermath of the Second World War was clearly no exception.

That the post war avant-garde created music which reflected the pervasive dark mood is a cliché so often used in reference to the music that it is easy to forget its reality.ⁱⁱ Many of the composers had direct experience of the war: Stockhausen worked in a mobile hospital behind the western front caring for soldiers injured in bombing raids, Henze worked as a radio operator for Panzer battalions, Bernd Alois Zimmermann fought on the front lines of the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, Berio was conscripted into the army of Mussolini's Republic of Salò, and Xenakis joined the Greek Communist resistance, suffering life-long injury as a result (Ross, 2007, p. 344). Even George Rochberg (who would later become a key defender of Adorno's 'null and void' traditional culture) said of his war experiences that 'just trying to stay alive' and his 'confrontation with death' led him to adopt serialism as a musical 'language with which I could say what I had experienced' (Rochberg in Reilly, 2002, pp. 8-9). Elliot Carter explained that his renunciation of the Copland-like populism of his early work happened before the end of the Second World War, when he realised

that we were living in a world where this physical and intellectual violence would always be a problem and the whole conception of human nature underlying the neo-classical aesthetic amounted to a sweeping under the rug of things that [...] we had to deal with in a less oblique and resigned way (Carter in Ross, 2007 [1971], 356).

This notion was famously formalised in Adorno's *Philosophy of New Music* in which he described the new music as having

taken upon itself all the darkness and guilt of the world. All its happiness comes in the perception of misery, all its beauty comes in the rejection of beauty's illusion [...] unheard music drops through empty time like a useless bullet. New music

spontaneously takes aim at that final condition [...]. [I]t is the true message in a bottle (Adorno in Ross [1949], p. 357).

The New Music Courses set up by Wolfgang Steinecke in 1946 in Darmstadt (notably, devastated by Allied bombing in 1944, with 80% of the city destroyed (Fox, 2007, p. 9)) came to epitomise this view, not only as a result of the *Nullpunkt* imperative of a need for artistic renewal but also as a result of the occupying American authority's promotion of music banned under the Nazis as part of the process of de-Nazification and the 'reorientation' of the German mind. Though it is questionable how much the occupying forces really supported the new music, Everett Helm, the US music officer of the region, nevertheless

noted that at Darmstadt "contemporary music only is taught and performed – and then only the more advanced variety. R. Strauss and J. Sibelius do not come into consideration". Hindemith was designated a "natural starting point", but Schoenberg quickly emerged as the shining beacon for young German composers' (Helm in Ross, [1948], p. 350).

Indeed, Schoenberg's opening horn theme from his First Chamber Symphony was used as the logo on all the courses' posters and leaflets (Fox, p. 10). The subsequent emergence of 'hard line' serialism and the consequent battles that raged at Darmstadt and elsewhere is very well documented,ⁱⁱⁱ but to illustrate the way polemic drives or even engenders the idea of a new music epoch as 'a self fulfilling prophecy' (Dahlhaus, 1996 [1969], p. 25) and its subsequent later consequences, it is worth dwelling a little more on some of the written justifications.

As Christopher Fox has pointed out, the courses at Darmstadt tended to magnify the importance of talking about music (thus sidelining those who were less adept at it or did not want to) almost to the point where it became more relevant than the music itself (Fox, 2007, pp. 20–21). The technical tended to be paramount in composers' minds, an emphasis derived from the compositional imperative of the zero hour, the *tabula rasa*: in order to really compose afresh, Adorno's 'null and void' past must be obliterated and Richter's 'absolute and radical new beginning' launched using wholly fresh technical means which avoided personal aesthetic choices and thus past influences. As Dahlhaus notes, new musical epochs tend to show a penchant for the calculated, even 'aggressively constructed' resulting in a 'relapse into poverty' compared to what had come before (Dahlhaus, 1996 [1969], p. 30) and certainly, the total serialist works of the early 1950s by what Susan Bradshaw calls the 'Class of '45', Henri Pousseur, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Hans Werner Henze, Bruno Maderna, Luigi Nono, Luciano Berio and perhaps above all, Pierre Boulez (Bradshaw, 1995, p. 139), are prime examples. At a Darmstadt lecture in 1956, Boulez almost sheepishly said that he hoped such steps did not lead 'to aridity',

killing 'all fantasy, and, since it is difficult to avoid the fateful word, inspiration' (Boulez, 1971, p. 143). Interestingly, unlike some of his contemporaries, Boulez did not suffer unduly during the war being too young for conscription and, according to biographer Joan Peyser, he welcomed the influence of Nazi-administered German culture in occupied France, apparently saying 'the Germans virtually brought high culture to France' (Boulez in Peyser in Ross, 2007 [1976], p. 361). Nevertheless, he championed as much as anyone the development of total serialist techniques and he had much to say about how he saw the musical future and the previous generation of composers. As early as 1948 Boulez was attacking those who might be conceived as representing Richter's 'pale and lifeless' value systems of the past: Ravel was impotent and sidetracked by 'false discoveries' (Boulez, 1991 [1949], p. 244) Stravinsky's neoclassicism was 'schematic, arbitrary, stereotyped' (Boulez, [1949], p. 250) and Schoenberg's technique enclosed 'classic and preclassic forms in the elaboration of a world ruled by functions antagonistic to those forms' (Boulez, 1991 [1949], pp. 255-6). His infamous 'breath-takingly pitiless' (Ross, p. 363) obituary for Schoenberg in 1951, 'Schoenberg is Dead', claimed this resulted in 'the most ostentatious and obsolete romanticism' (Boulez, 1991 [1952], p. 268). Speaking of the zero hour and the need for a break with the past, he stated in 1954 that 'it seems that the present generation can take leave of its predecessors: it has succeeded in defining itself precisely and explicitly enough not to have to accept patronage or be haunted by the past any more' (Boulez, 1991, p. 141) and reflecting on this in 1968, stated that 'after the war there were great hopes for a generation [...] to make its own discoveries on what amounted to a *tabula rasa* [...]. [I]n 1945-46 nothing was ready and everything remained to be done: it was our privilege to make discoveries and also to find ourselves faced with nothing' (Boulez, 1986, p. 445).^{iv} Drawing on Antonin Artaud, Boulez said of his own music that it should be organized delirium (Boulez, 1991 [1958], p. 43) and 'collective hysteria and magic, violently modern' (Boulez, [1948], p.54); his scores of this time are full of expressions of harshness and violence: 'violent and rapid' (the first movement of his First Piano Sonata, 1946), 'very brutal and very dry' (the second movement), and progressively, 'more and more staccato and brutal', 'still more violent' and ultimately, 'pulverize the sound [...] stay[ing] *without nuances* at very high volume' (the final movement of his Second Sonata, 1948). Perhaps it is not too far fetched to say that the culmination of the idea of a zero hour in music, music which attempts to eradicate the past, be violently of the present in which 'all its beauty comes in the rejection of beauty's illusion' and which seems almost to step out of Richter's 'smoke-blackened picture of this European landscape of ruins' is the 'featureless "absolute zero"' of his *Structure la*

for two pianos which applies total serialist techniques rigorously in a 'totally ordered disorder in which human memory ceases to function' (Bradshaw, 1995, p. 140). Alex Ross describes it thus:

The emotional content of the music is elusive. The feeling of delirium wears off after a few minutes, giving way to a kind of objectified, mechanized savagery. The serialist principle, with its surfeit of ever-changing musical data, has the effect of erasing any given moment whatever impressions the listener may have formed about previous passages in the piece. The present moment is all there is (Ross, 2007, p. 364).

II

'The sun shone, having no alternative, on nothing new' (Beckett, 1977 [1938], p. 5).

And yet, this picture of writers and composers invoking newness with little or no reference to the past, their creativity somehow wilfully erupting from nowhere and the idea that this wiped out any other forms of post-war creative 'restoration' or influence, is highly questionable. The Gruppe 47 declarations of an absolute break with the literary past simply did not happen, at least not in the profound way they suggested. The period around the student revolts in 1968 saw German critics such as Hans Mayer and Heinrich Vormweg de-bunk the zero hour as a myth: 'there was nothing to year zero' (Mayer in Brockmann, 2007 [1967], p. 3); 'there was no "zero hour"' (Vormweg in Brockmann [1971], p. 3). This was demonstrated by showing continuities in style and personnel before and after the war particularly with the literary existentialism of the 1930s and 1940s (Brockmann, p. 3),^v and the exposure of Richter and Andersch and others as anything but blank slates but indeed conformists during the war and showing complicity to the Nazi state; the language used by the group was also surprisingly similar in tone to Nazi propaganda (Brockmann, pp. 11–12). The suggestion is that the zero hour idea was used to both whitewash personal histories and more generally by conservatives, as a bulwark against guilt by association with the Nazi past. The 1960s saw the left expose this continuity between post-war German culture and Nazi culture as a way of demanding the need for radical progressive change: the problems of the past must be faced and the idea that West Germany appeared out of nowhere after the war, without a past and thus unaffected by it, destroyed (Brockmann, p. 3). To draw too close a parallel with more revisionist thought on the music of the post-war period to these profoundly serious issues would be suspect, but the exposure of the so-called serialist hegemony in the 1950s as mythical by writers such as Christopher Fox and the generally 'restorative' thrust of music in the 1960s and its desire to examine the relationship of the present to the past, is worth examining.

Dahlhaus suggests, 'that the concept of the new attaches to a whole era, instead of an unrepeatable moment, seems to presuppose that an old style, *prima prattica*, exists side by side with the new one, either in the shape of a peripheral tradition as in the seventeenth century, or in that of a predominant one, as in the twentieth' (Dahlhaus, 1996 [1969], p. 26). This parallel existence of the progressive and the conservative was also true at Darmstadt, a place that general historians tend to cite as dominated by the serialist Darmstadt School: for example Paul Griffiths states 'nowhere was this [the revival of interest in serialism] more keenly felt than in Germany, and it was there, [...] in Darmstadt, that the new European movement had its headquarters' (Griffiths, 1994, p. 132). Similarly Michael Hall suggests 'the ideal that the Darmstadt school had in mind was music that was totally objective and completely devoid of associations' (Hall, 1996, p. 195).^{vi} However, Fox asserts that there was no fixed sonic consensus at Darmstadt for the first five or six years after the war, quoting Humphrey Searle from 1952, a featured composer there in 1950: 'there was no fixed "party line" – one could be an admirer of Schoenberg or Bartok, Hindemith or Poulenc, and still find something to one's taste' (Searle in Fox, 2007, p. 12). From the early 1950s onwards the younger generation of composers did begin to assert themselves (Boulez first took part in the courses there in 1952) and were indeed strongly evangelistic about the serialist cause but Fox shows that the idea of the Darmstadt 'School' is again, an historical conceit. For example Boulez was strongly influenced by pre-war surrealism via his use of poetry by René Char as texts for *Le visage nuptial* (1946/51), *Le soleil des eaux* (1948/50) and *Le marteau sans maître* (1953–55) and popular music influenced Bernd Alois Zimmermann (a regular Darmstadt attendee throughout the 1950s) in *Nobody Know de Trouble I See* (1954) as well as Stockhausen whose *Gruppen* clearly owes a debt to American big band music with its prominent use of percussion, electric guitar and piano and brass groupings (Fox, pp. 14–17).^{vii} Fox makes the pertinent point that one of the reasons for the reluctance to acknowledge the influence of other music on the new European music, especially American, might well have been that as an occupying power, the United States had a deep influence on the new German institutions (including Darmstadt) and its economic recovery during the 1950s and that inevitably 'there comes a point when that which has been reconstructed will want its own autonomy' (Fox, p. 17). This bears some similarity to the Gruppe 47's 'heroic picture of themselves and their unsuccessful struggle against the German – *and Allied* – restoration in the immediate postwar years' (Brockmann, p. 10, my italics), a picture which is essentially false. Later on, Richter admitted that the idea that he and his group somehow emerged fully formed, phoenix-like after the war and untainted by it

or even inactive during it was wrong; they could not have been inactive 'because otherwise they could not have suddenly surfaced. No one falls from heaven' (Richter in Brockmann, [1989], p. 12). Again, one can hear echoes of this as Boulez admitted (also in 1989) that 'history is there of course; it made us what we are. It's senseless to ignore it – like breaking down wide-open doors' (Boulez in Vermeil, 1996 [1989], p. 46). Nevertheless though, whilst accepting in 1968 that 'some of our [serial] solutions were no doubt exaggeratedly strict in character, a discipline that irked' he goes on to stress that it was necessary as the only way to effect a 'clean sweep of all that you have inherited from the past' (Boulez, 1986 [1968], p. 446) clearly showing his continued adherence to his own dogma of newness, a dogma which whilst superficially anathema to the straight-laced cultural climate of the 1950s can be seen, in retrospect, as quite appropriately restrictive. The freedoms sought in the decade that followed ensured a profound reaction to Boulez's 'clean sweep' with a willingness to face the past as well as to throw off the shackles of self-imposed 'poverty and thinness', justified, of course, with polemic of its own.

III

'The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be: and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun' (Ecclesiastes, 1:9).

It is interesting to note that like the ex-smoker or drinker, it is one-time serialists that have voiced some of the strongest criticisms of the technique, often citing serialism itself as a cause of its own demise: after detailing the impossibility of serialism generating 'significantly evolving structures', Luciano Berio suggested 'the end of the "separatist" movement was brought about, oedipally, by the very serial conceptions and procedures that had generated it' (Berio, 2006 [1993], p. 20). The political undertones in this statement were far more obvious and vitriolic in 1968 when he equated total serialist practices with fascism,^{viii} suggesting composers were ignoring the idea of music as a social act, happy instead to be an 'extraneous, or merely decorative, figure in his own society'. He went on to argue how historical evolution 'modifies [...] codes of esthetic perception' and that 'meaningful works' are an 'experimental step in a poetic process, an acknowledgment of the need to continuously modify, to reinterpret' (Berio, 1996, [1968], p168). This indication of what one might call a rapprochement with the past was already well established by this time. Henri Pousseur wrote in 1960 that 'killing the possibility of the past's surviving in the present [...] also killed the possibility of any future whatsoever' (Pousseur in Bradshaw, 1995, p. 141).

What did follow however, 'as the whole house of cards came tumbling down' (Bradshaw, p. 141), was arguably more fascinating than the bleak dead end Pousseur feared. Crucially, ways of viewing time and especially the past and its relationship to newness and the present underwent a radical transformation, with some surprisingly similar concepts espoused by a diverse range of composers all of whom were either 'recovering serialists' (Metzer, 2003, p. 119) or continued to incorporate the technique amidst other styles in their music.^{ix} Often these ideas themselves were rooted in the past. Bernd Alois Zimmermann, a devout Catholic, talked of *Kugelgestalt der Zeit*, the spherical form of time ('the simultaneity of the unsimultaneous' according to Dahlhaus (Dahlhaus in Metzer, p. 115)), based on St Augustine's idea that we can only live in the 'eternal present' and thus can only comprehend 'a present of things past, a present of things present and a present of things future' (St Augustine in Hall, 1996, p. 226). He would often cite 'the preacher' Ecclesiastes (thought by some scholars to be King Solomon) in the titles of his works, for example, *Omnia Tempus Habent* (1957) which translates as 'to everything there is a time' (Ecclesiastes, 3:1).^x George Rochberg who turned his back on serialism around 1964 ('it was finished [...] hollow [...] meaningless' (Rochberg in Griffiths, 1981, p. 219)) similarly cited

King Solomon's doleful remark, "there is nothing new under the sun" as an attack on those who believe that 'only by progressing to the "new" can human culture save itself from atrophy and stagnation' On the contrary, the future is 'beyond our grasp', only reachable 'as a new present' and the avant-garde is foolish for trying to 'cut itself free from any and all ties with past history, memory and cultural associations' (Rochberg, 1971, pp. 70–72).

In a direct attack on Boulez, Rochberg contended that 'if one wipes the slate clean of others, in order to satisfy some misguided notion of being "contemporary", one's own fate is, by the same token, equally null and void [...].The past refuses to be erased. Unlike Boulez, I will not praise amnesia' (Rochberg, 1972, p. 192). Like Zimmermann, Rochberg saw time as 'radial' whereby he was surrounded by potentially all periods of time: 'I stand in a circle of time, not on a line. 360 degrees of past, present and future. All around me' (Rochberg in Metzer, 2003 [1969], p. 115). For Berio, the issue was more complex; he would cite Eduardo Sanguinetti's idea of the past as 'the mud on our shoulders' and talked of 'transforming historical "minerals" and absorbing them into musical materials and processes that don't bear the mark of history' but was nevertheless clear that 'there can be no *tabula rasa*, especially in music,' (Berio, 1985 [1981], p. 66) rather, time is 'qualitative':

Every experience carries with itself traces of past experiences and the seed of future ones to be discovered. Every form has a memory and is a premonition. Historical time is a quality not a quantity; one can be more or less in focus with different fields of historical

time, exploring them, sometimes even exploding them with the detonator of one's creativity (Berio in Emmerson, 1976, p. 26).

The manifestation of such ideas was enshrined in many compositional strategies throughout the 1960s (or 'regular and dreadful [stylistic] epidemics' according to Boulez (Boulez in Bradshaw, 1995, p. 141)), but one of the most challenging to the *tabula rasa* notion was the use of direct quotation of earlier music, especially tonal, in new works often stylistically plural, juxtaposing serial and atonal dissonance with the soothing consonances of the past. Zimmermann, Rochberg and Berio all used quotation in pursuit of their ideas on time: Zimmermann's collage of music from the Renaissance to the modern era, *Musique pour les soupers du roi Ubū* (1966) uses only quotations; the third movement of Luciano Berio's *Sinfonia* (1968-9) uses the Scherzo of Mahler's Second Symphony as a skeleton over which are laid quotations from over a hundred works from the Baroque to the 1960s, and Rochberg's *Music for the Magic Theatre* (1965) quotes large passages of Mozart (and Mahler) amidst Varèse, Webern, Stockhausen and his own serial passages. Such examples represent only a fraction of such practices (much of Rochberg's and Zimmermann's output during this time used quotation in one form or another, for example) and indeed, have been analysed and discussed at length,^{xi} but whilst the resulting quality, success and character of such music is very varied, the importance of memory, the relationship between artist and audience, cultural awareness and poetics in music are key tropes in Berio and Rochberg's work, tropes that directly opposed polemicists such as Boulez and, indeed, the whole notion of newness that the post-war movement espoused. Rochberg's belief at the time in the possibility of bringing together music and compositional and performance techniques from any era, enshrined in his concept of *ars combinatoria*, was for him a means of musical renewal and revealed a 'profound wisdom about the paradox of time', which preserves everything 'as the individual mind preserves its individual memories' (Rochberg, 1972, pp. 193–197): 'it is memory [...] which is the bloodstream of culture' (Rochberg, 1984, p. 334).

Probably the most famous (and celebrated) quotation work of the 1960s, Berio's *Sinfonia*, also stresses the importance of memory. The use of Samuel Beckett's novel *The Unnamable* (1951) as spoken text in the third movement is crucial in this respect (Michael Hicks even goes so far as to suggest the movement is the 'book turned into music' (Hicks, 1981, p. 207)) and emphasises that 'it is memory conscious or unconscious [...] which always furnishes the artistic voice' (Hicks, p. 214). The unnamed protagonist of the novel (which consists solely of his continuous internal monologue) says at one point that 'memory notably, which I did not think myself entitled to draw upon, will have its word to say, if necessary. This represents

at least a thousand words I did not count on. I may well be glad of them' (Beckett, 1966 [1952], 298). This is partially quoted by Berio but the 'one thousand words' is replaced by 'three thousand notes' accompanied by a quotation from Ravel's *La Valse* followed by a further quotation, this from Act II from Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*, another waltz, which together 'affirm and illustrate the notion of nostalgia as the source of art' (Hicks, p. 214).

It is perhaps this notion of nostalgia, an emotion so associated with looking back with longing at something lost in an attempt to try and regain it (only to inevitably fail, hence deepening the sense of loss), which has brought the most criticism from modernists. Already in 1951 Boulez had described Stravinsky's neoclassicism as 'regrets for the easy life', 'eclectic bankruptcy [...] intellectual laziness [...] morose hedonism', and 'grave-digging activities' (Boulez, 1991 [1951], pp. 4-13). By 1968 his attack on works which utilised quotation was no less stark:

But I must eliminate from the start all [compositional tendencies] that are backward looking, all 'restorations' which are not so much tendencies but nostalgias. When one has had ones fill of experimenting, there comes a nostalgia for the past [...] and attempts are made to camouflage this nostalgia by returning to certain things and integrating them as best they can in the world of today by means of a clumsy dialectic [...]. [S]uch nostalgias have no interest for me [...]. [W]hat we must face at this time is *a return to the future* (Boulez, 1986 [1968], p. 447, my italics).

David Metzger has thrown fascinating light on the nostalgic tendencies (or otherwise) of Rochberg and Berio in the 1960s (Metzger, 2003, pp. 108–159) suggesting that Berio overcame any longing for the past by, as Hicks says, 'resonating through many levels of meaning' such that 'nostalgia gives way to epiphany' (Hicks, 1981, p. 209), resulting in the past being renewed by the present. Conversely, the central movement of Rochberg's *Music for the Magic Theatre* which quotes the whole of the fourth movement of Mozart's Divertimento no.15 before dissolving via intervallic correspondences into Webern's Concerto for Nine Instruments and Stockhausen's *Zeitmasse*, is described in the score as a movement 'in which the past haunts us with nostalgic beauty [...] but the past is all shadow [...]. [W]e can't hold onto it because the present is too pressing', a nostalgia which as Metzger points out is 'all Rochberg's' (Metzger, p. 121). Whatever the subtleties of this, however, both composers were actively seeking to speak to their audience, as Berio put it, 'to incorporate within the musical development different degrees of familiarity, and to expand its expressive design and the levels on which it can be perceived' (Berio, 1985, p. 66). According to Metzger, this desire for expanded expressiveness retains its 'modernist distance' in Berio (Metzger, p. 116),^{xii} but is embraced by Rochberg who believed music should 'convey eloquently and elegantly the passions of the human heart' (Rochberg, 1972,

p. 195) and once again express 'serenity, tranquillity, grace, wit, energy "and perhaps most importantly, joy"' (Rochberg in Reise, 1980, p. 397).

Notwithstanding Rochberg's desire, his music of the 1960s only manages to express such emotions at a distance via his use of quotations of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century music, leaving the dissonant modern passages to speak for the present, paradoxically heightening their apparent inability to express much apart from Adorno's 'darkness and guilt of the world'. *Music for the Magic Theatre* is based on Herman Hesse's novel *Steppenwolf* (1927), which is essentially concerned with the central character's inability to reconcile his intellectual and sensual side, manifested specifically in 'high' (Mozart) and 'low' art (jazz in the novel but ostensibly represented by Rochberg by modernist musical quotations); he consequently contemplates suicide. Thus Adorno's programme for new music in which 'all its happiness comes in the perception of misery' was a legacy composers found very difficult to leave behind even in the apparently optimistic, expanded musical consciousness of the 1960s. Zimmerman describes his total collage work, *Musique pour les soupers du roi Ubü* which concerns a king Ubü, a tyrant and mass murderer, as a 'ballet noir', 'a farce which is seemingly merry, fat and greedy like Ubü himself' but is in reality 'a warning allegory, macabre'. The third movement of Berio's *Sinfonia* has very dark undertones with its use of Beckett's existentially angst-ridden text which, as Hicks has noted, related directly to the programme of Mahler's Scherzo (quoted throughout the movement): 'life appears senseless to you and like a dreadful nightmare from which you may start up with a cry of disgust' (Hicks, 1981, p. 210). The immediate post-war experiment may have been over, but its effect was nonetheless profound and lasting.

IV

'That which has been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past' (Ecclesiastes, 3:15).

Stephen Brockmann has suggested that due to clear continuities with earlier styles, rather than being a zero hour, 1945 was in fact the chronological middle of a literary period that predated the Nazi's rise to power and lasted for another fifteen years after their defeat. The 1960s thus become the true turning point in German literary history (Brockmann, 2004, pp. 3–4). Drawing a direct parallel to this with music would be inaccurate, not least because the immediate post-war literature has largely fallen into obscurity (Brockmann, p. 2) whereas the legacy of serialist music as a sonic world is still very much with us and its importance un-denied (not least for, at its best, its unearthly beauty). However, the ideas of the post-war avant-garde of a 'programme

for the future' were already in serious doubt by the mid-1950s and turned on their head in the 1960s despite almost desperate pleas by Boulez of a need to 'return to the future'. Looking back from the vantage point of the early twenty-first century it seems not too fanciful to suggest that the true turning point in music, the real advent of a genuine newness also came in the 1960s. Post-war modernism, for all its desire to break with the past and face the future with a clean slate now looks more like a continuation of pre-war (and indeed much earlier) concerns, not just in terms of the development of musical codes set out by Schoenberg, Webern and Messiaen, whose music had evolved from nineteenth-century romanticism (after all, 'music for the future' was Wagner's term (Lissa, 1973, p. 21)), but much more importantly in the whole 'conception of linear [historical] progress professed by [...] Francis Bacon or Pascal' which 'inaugurated a faith in infinite progress [...] already proclaimed by Leibniz, predominant in the century of "enlightenment"' (Rochberg, 1963, p. 9). The era now looks like the dying gasp of that idea, whereas, ironically, by rebelling against the whole notion of 'everything that has happened once [becoming] past, and artistic creation as a constant projection into the future' (Lissa, p.25), the music of the 1960s essentially rejected this by accepting St Augustine's philosophical conception that the past, present and future are with us continuously, are an 'essential unity', (Ringer, 1966, p. 410) separate from historical time, and cannot be ignored without potentially losing the very lifeblood that makes music meaningful at all.

Perhaps in essence Dahlhaus's point about the music of new eras relapsing into 'primitivism' and exhibiting 'poverty and thinness' that began this article, is all important: composers simply wanted a greater variety of emotionally expressive means than serialism could offer. What fundamentally changed, though, was that there was no attempt to forge a single new language to replace it; mankind's twentieth-century wearying of time, his 'terror of history and its increasingly relentless pressure' (Rochberg, 1963, p. 9) resulted instead in an embracing of time and in a way that was genuinely new, composing 'not *according* to traditions of music of the past but by *remembering* [them]' (Rochberg, 1984, p. 334). To deliberately misquote Boulez, who was actually speaking of renouncing the past (again), this led to 'undreamed of [musical] territories' (Boulez in Griffiths, 2002 [1974], p. 151)^{xiii} since composers like Bernd Alois Zimmermann, Rochberg and Berio realised that 'as Heraclitus said "it is not possible to go into the same river twice" [...] the awareness of the past is never passive, and we do not want to be obliging accomplices of a past that is always with us, that we nourish, and that never ends' (Berio, 2006 [1993], p. 78).

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ⁱ All quotations from Ecclesiastes are taken from the King James Bible.

ⁱⁱ Though Fox has made a strong case that the music produced was far more diverse than the history books tend to show.

ⁱⁱⁱ See Fox, 2007.

^{iv} It is noticeable that the emphasis on generational differences is contemporaneously paralleled by Gruppe 47 who invariably couched their polemic with reference to the innocence of the younger generation and the war guilt of their elders, a rationale that Brockmann points out is deeply flawed as is, it is tempting to say, is Boulez's. See Brockmann, 2007, pp. 170–207.

^v Frank Trommler writing in 1970 actually saw the years 1930–1960 as essentially a thirty-year period of literary apolitical existentialism.

^{vi} It is interesting to ask why the perception of Darmstadt is such given the evidence to the contrary and the answer may well lie in the power of the associated serialist polemic and the controversies it engendered, controversies which as Dahlhaus points out 'are taken remarkably seriously by historians, who like to illustrate the differences between epochs by means of symbolic events' (Dahlhaus, 1996 [1969], p. 25).

^{vii} Boulez himself also notes that serialist composers of this era 'began to explore their own worlds' as a natural process and a necessary one to guard against academicism (Boulez, 1986 [1968], p. 446).

^{viii} Fascism like its polar opposite, communism, are ideologies that are based on the idea of a complete new beginning, through violent means if needed (remember Boulez's 'violently modern'?) and, indeed, the brutal Khmer Rouge take-over in Cambodia in 1975 was called 'year zero' and the French Revolutionary calendar was started at Year One: 'The French Revolution also smashed a lot of things and that was very healthy. When there is too much tension builds up, there's only one thing to do, and that's to let blood' (Boulez in Vermeil, 1996 [1967], p. 155).

^{ix} Berio has suggested in fact that serial music 'expresses an historical moment' and is not a technique but an 'ideology [...] a spiritual situation of the early fifties' (Berio, 1976, p. 548).

^x A text made famous by The Byrds with their 1965 hit, 'Turn! Turn! Turn (to Everything There Is a Season)', originally set to music by Pete Seeger in 1959.

^{xi} The third movement of Berio's *Sinfonia* has been analysed by Osmond-Smith, 1985, pp. 39–71 and Hicks, 1981, pp. 199–224 and Rochberg's *Music for the Magic Theatre* and *Sinfonia* by Metzger, 2003, pp. 108–159.

^{xii} *The Unnamable* is indeed an archetypal modernist novel that flows not so much as a 'stream of consciousness' but as 'a frantic, eternally unsettled consciousness' (Hicks, 1981, p. 211)--for most of the 125 pages there are no paragraphs with some sentences stretching over five pages--and is crucial to the dark exuberance of *Sinfonia*.

^{xiii} To put this into its proper context, Boulez actually says: 'Despite the skillful ruses we have cultivated in our desperate effort to make the world of the past serve our present-day needs, we can no longer elude the essential trial: that of becoming an absolute part of the present, of forsaking all memory to forge a perception without precedent, of renouncing the legacies of the past to discover undreamed of territories' (IRCAM press brochure, 1974, pp. 6–7).