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Mark Carroll, *Music and Ideology in Cold War Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), ISBN 0 521 82072 3 (hb)

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REVIEWS

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Kevin Holm-Hudson, ed., *Progressive Rock Reconsidered* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), ISBN 0 8153 3714 0 (hb), 0 8153 3715 9 (pb)

Three decades on from its creative zenith, so-called ‘progressive’ rock remains probably the most critically maligned and misunderstood genre in the history of rock music. During progressive rock’s heyday in 1969–77 British groups like Yes, Genesis, Emerson, Lake & Palmer (ELP), King Crimson, and Gentle Giant, along with their later North American cousins, like Kansas and Rush, sought to blur the distinction between art and popular music, crafting large-scale pieces – often in multiple ‘movements’ – in which the harmonic, metric, and formal complexities seemed to share more of a stylistic affinity with, say, a symphonic work by Liszt or Holst than with a typical three- or four-minute pop song.¹ Critics at the time differed widely in their opinions of progressive rock, but most agreed that it was not ‘authentic’ rock music. Writing in early 1974, the neo-Marxist Lester Bangs, one of progressive rock’s harshest detractors, even went so far as to accuse ELP of ‘the insidious befoulment of all that was gutter pure in rock’.²

Despite some notable exceptions (in the ‘intelligent’ rock history magazine *Mojo*, for example), the critical reception of progressive rock has not really improved much in the ensuing thirty years. As I was completing this review, the latest *Rolling Stone* (11 December 2003) arrived in my mailbox, a ‘special collectors’ issue’ devoted to the ‘500 Greatest Albums of All Time’. All of the major pop and rock genres from the last fifty years are well represented here – especially those of the 1970s, with albums from that decade occupying no less than 190 (thirty-eight per cent) of the 500 total positions – and yet, as one has grown to expect of a mainstream US publication such as *Rolling Stone*, not one album by any of the classic progressive rock groups mentioned above makes its way onto the list.³

- 1 As John Covach put it, ‘these musicians were attempting to shape a new kind of classical music – a body of music that would . . . be listened to (and perhaps even studied) for years to come.’ See his ‘Progressive Rock, “Close to the Edge” and the Boundaries of Style’, in *Understanding Rock: Essays in Musical Analysis*, ed. John Covach and Graeme M. Boone (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 4.
- 2 Lester Bangs, ‘Blood Feast of Reddy Kilowatt! Emerson, Lake and Palmer Without Insulation’, *Creem* 5/10 (March 1974), 44; quoted in Edward Macan, *Rocking the Classics: English Progressive Rock and the Counterculture* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 169.
- 3 Classic progressive rock is represented only by Jethro Tull’s *Aqualung* (1971), ranked no. 337, and four albums by Pink Floyd – a group, as Holm-Hudson notes, ‘whose “progressive” status is sometimes hotly debated, not least by progressive rock’s fans’ (4).

Progressive rockers, of course, had no trouble earning several spots on *Blender* magazine’s recent (September 2003) list of the ‘50 Worst Artists in Music History’. In fact, three of classic progressive rock’s favourite groups hold the dubious honour of ranking among the top ten: Asia (the early 80s supergroup made up of former members of Yes, King Crimson, and ELP) at no. 7, Kansas at no. 6, and ELP at no. 2 (behind only the Insane Clown Posse at no. 1).

It should be no surprise, given the recent explosion of scholarly work in popular music, that many of progressive rock's strongest advocates over the past ten years or so have been academics – particularly musicologists and music theorists, who are best qualified to confront its complexities in purely musical terms. In his watershed 1993 study, *Rock: the Primary Text* (revised 2001), Allan Moore declares 'a critical re-evaluation of progressive rock' to be one of his main objectives.⁴ Following Moore's lead, several articles devoted to the analysis of progressive rock – by myself, John Covach, Mitchell Morris, and others – have appeared in academic books and journals.⁵ In the late 1990s, three book-length studies of the genre were published in rapid succession by Edward Macan, Paul Stump, and Bill Martin.⁶ The latest addition to this growing body of serious and admiring literature is a new collection of essays from Routledge, *Progressive Rock Reconsidered*, edited by Kevin Holm-Hudson. As the editor announces in his introduction, 'this book brings together . . . the work of a variety of authors from a wide range of academic disciplines, to reconsider progressive rock in a way that transcends commonly held stereotypes of the genre' (1). Not only does Holm-Hudson's introduction set the stage nicely for the essays that follow, but it also serves as a valuable contribution in its own right, providing a tidy overview of progressive rock's historical context, reception history, and network of related styles.

Fittingly for a book on progressive rock, the front cover boasts a new painting, 'Storm in a Teacup', by Paul Whitehead, the artist responsible for the fantasy artwork on the cover of several classic progressive rock albums, including Genesis's *Trespass* (1970), *Nursery Cryme* (1971), and *Foxtrot* (1972). The eleven essays are organized in three parts, offering an eclectic slate of perspectives ranging all the way from formal music analysis and musical semiotics and to socio-cultural, gay, and lesbian-feminist criticism and beyond. John J. Sheinbaum's 'Progressive Rock and the Inversion of Musical Values' – the first of two chapters in Part One: 'History and Context' – quickly gets to the heart of why progressive rock has been so vilified by the rock critics, explaining that 'the very signs commonly held as sources of value in the reception of Western music in general have become signs of the very opposite within the context of rock criticism' (25). After highlighting some of these conventional 'high'/'low' dichotomies (his table on page 24 is especially useful here), Sheinbaum goes on to argue that recent attempts on the part of musicologists and music theorists to 'legitimate' progressive rock by utilizing '[a]nalytic tools and language derived from the study of Western art music and the explicit value judgments associated with them' (27) are also problematic, since, by focusing on the 'high' or 'classical' aspects of progressive rock, they tend to downplay the 'low' or 'rock' aspects that are just as crucial to the genre. His thoughtful analysis of Yes's

Blender's justification for dubbing Kansas the sixth worst artist ever says it all: '... [their] music was a noxious fusion of Jethro Tull and Yes, appealing only to male sci-fi bores and guaranteed to drive any self-respecting frontiersman headlong into the nearest bear trap.'

4 Allan F. Moore, *Rock: the Primary Text*, second edition (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), xiii.

5 See Mark Spicer, 'Large-Scale Strategy and Compositional Design in the Early Music of Genesis', in *Expression in Pop-Rock Music: a Collection of Critical and Analytical Essays*, ed. Walter Everett (New York: Garland, 2000), 77–111; John Covach, several essays, including 'Echolyn and American Progressive Rock', *Contemporary Music Review* 18/4 (2000), 13–61; and Mitchell Morris, 'Kansas and the Prophetic Tone', *American Music* 18/1 (2000), 1–39.

6 Macan, *Rocking the Classics*; Paul Stump, *The Music's All That Matters: a History of Progressive Rock* (London: Quartet, 1997); Bill Martin, *Listening to the Future: the Time of Progressive Rock 1968–1978* (Chicago: Open Court, 1998).

'Roundabout' thus deliberately approaches the music from both sides, emphasizing the 'dialectical tensions' (30) between high and low elements that are 'thematize[d]' (31) throughout the song.⁷

Holm-Hudson reminds us in his introduction that '[c]ontrary to some accounts, progressive rock did not spring full-grown, as from the head of a rock Medusa [*sic*], in 1969' (4).⁸ Keeping with this theme, his own chapter, "'The American Metaphysical Circus" of Joseph Byrd's United States of America', focuses on the work of a pre-1969 group that I suspect is virtually unknown in the UK (and whom few rock fans will remember even in the country from which the group took its name). Led by keyboardist and main composer Byrd, 'the United States of America was formed at UCLA in 1967, its members actively studying new music composition or ethnomusicology' (44) – not unlike several of the British progressive rockers, such as Keith Emerson and Rick Wakeman, who similarly abandoned their academic music studies to pursue a career in rock. Holm-Hudson's informative account of the genesis of the group's only album, the self-titled *The United States of America* (1968), sheds light on a forgotten but important moment in rock history noteworthy for its early experiments with electronic sound synthesis. As he points out, '[t]he prominence of electronic sound on the album is indeed striking for a 1968 [rock] recording, particularly considering that the Beatles made their first tentative use of the Moog synthesizer on *Abbey Road* the following year' (50).

The bulk of the book's essays – seven out of the eleven – are concentrated in Part Two: 'Analytical Perspectives'. In his 'Pink Floyd's "Careful with that Axe, Eugene": toward a Theory of Textural Rhythm in Early Progressive Rock', John S. Cotner examines an early Pink Floyd B-side that quickly became a cult favourite, recorded in 1968 during what Edward Macan has dubbed the group's 'proto-progressive' period.⁹ Like much of the Floyd's 'psychedelic' early work, 'Careful with that Axe, Eugene' (or 'CAE', as Cotner abbreviates it) had its origins in live performance as an extended, drug-fuelled improvisation. With not much to speak of in the way of harmony (guitarist David Gilmour has described 'CAE' as 'basically one chord' (67)), Cotner's analysis privileges rhythm, texture, timbre, and studio effects, drawing heavily upon Eytan Agmon's work on musical duration and Wallace Berry's theory of 'textural diversity'. While I applaud Cotner's attention to detail in analysing the 'actual sound' of the recording (indeed, his graphic representations of the stereo soundscape might well prove fruitful as a model for further research), the flow of his argument unfortunately seems often to get lost in the endless parade of technical jargon.¹⁰

7 Sheinbaum's choice of 'Roundabout' as the object of his analysis is hardly arbitrary, since this was one of the very few songs by a progressive rock group to achieve any real commercial success on the singles charts, peaking at no. 13 in the US in early 1972.

8 Surely Holm-Hudson means 'from the head of a rock *Zeus*' here? A progressive rock fan, after all, should know his Greek mythology.

9 Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, 23.

10 I have one or two minor technical quibbles with Cotner's analysis: for example, he identifies the electric organ played by Richard Wright on the track as a Hammond (67), but, with its more nasal, reedier tone, it is almost certainly a Farfisa (Wright used both Hammond and Farfisa organs, yet it is the distinctive timbre of the latter that predominates on most of the Floyd's earliest recordings from 1967–8).

In stark contrast to Cotner's painstaking examination of the 'music itself', the second of the book's two chapters on Pink Floyd, Deena Weinstein's 'Progressive Rock as Text: the Lyrics of Roger Waters', bypasses the music entirely. Writing from the dual perspectives of an expert sociologist and an expert rock historian, Weinstein begins by assessing the extra-musical factors that contributed to the rise of progressive rock in Britain as 'an expression of a sociocultural movement, specifically an attempt to put forth claims of value for the upper middle class' (92). She then stakes her own claim that 'Pink Floyd, . . . already designated as a progressive rock group . . . on the basis of its music, should also be considered as one on the basis of its lyrics' (94). Her subsequent analysis focuses on examples taken from what she classifies as 'the third Pink Floyd, . . . a set of albums beginning with *Dark Side of the Moon* in 1973 and ending with *The Final Cut* in 1983' (95) – the period in which bassist Roger Waters asserted his role as the group's leader and sole lyricist. Weinstein ably demonstrates that 'Waters's lyrics are appropriations of themes that are staples of the high modernist art associated with cultural pessimism, turn-of-the-twentieth century British romanticism, and existentialism' (95). The only veteran author among the ten contributors, Weinstein puts her skill in social and cultural analysis to good use here, and it should be added that the fluency of her prose sets this essay apart from most of the other chapters in the book.

Holm-Hudson's second contribution, 'A Promise Deferred: Multiply Directed Time and Thematic Transformation in Emerson, Lake and Palmer's "Trilogy"', is also the book's shortest. Of all the British progressive rock groups, ELP were the most overt in their appropriation of art music forms, and quickly became famous (not to mention critically reviled) for their rock cover versions of such classical warhorses as Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* and Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man*.¹¹ On *Trilogy* (1972), Holm-Hudson argues, ELP 'came closest to achieving the classical–rock fusion that was the group's aim' (111). His analysis of the album's title track begins by noting its strong similarity in compositional procedure to that of nineteenth-century symphonic poems, particularly those of Liszt: '[T]he [main] theme . . . is developed according to the narrative advanced by Greg Lake's lyrics . . . Each of the piece's sections incorporates transformations of the theme, in the manner of a . . . symphonic poem' (112–13). Holm-Hudson then turns his attention to the tonal design of 'Trilogy', where he shows that much of the song's highly-chromatic language – again arguably straight out of the nineteenth century – is characterized by the setting up of harmonic expectations that are deliberately thwarted or deflected, only to be 'resolved' much later in the piece. As Holm-Hudson suggests, evoking a theory of Jonathan Kramer, '[t]he fact that [the song's] three tonal centres . . . occur with interruptions of other developmental material make it possible to listen to this piece as an example of [what Kramer calls] "multiply directed time"' (114). On the whole, this is a solid analysis, and yet I feel that the essay would have benefited from dwelling less on harmony and more on the Lisztian thematic-transformational aspects of the piece, the discussion of which seems to end too soon.

11 Interestingly, ELP's 'Fanfare for the Common Man' was the most commercially successful of any single released by a British progressive group in their native country, reaching as high as no. 2 on the UK singles charts in July 1977 at the peak of Queen Elizabeth's Silver Jubilee festivities (and shortly after the Sex Pistols' 'God Save the Queen', despite – or perhaps because of – being banned by the BBC, had reached no. 1).

In ‘King Crimson’s *Larks’ Tongues in Aspic: a Case of Convergent Evolution*’, Gregory Karl offers a close reading of a quintessential work from one of progressive rock’s most notorious chameleons. With guitarist Robert Fripp as the only constant member, King Crimson have drastically reinvented themselves – in both personnel and sound – several times over the course of their sporadic thirty-five-year career. Their fifth studio album, *Larks’ Tongues in Aspic* (or *LTA*, as Karl abbreviates it) from 1973, ushered in a new style for the group that Bill Martin has aptly dubbed ‘experimental “chamber rock”’.¹² Yet despite its seemingly radical departure in style from their previous albums, *LTA*, as Karl suggests, can also be viewed as the culmination of a growing ‘neoromantic aesthetic stance’ on the part of King Crimson, the seeds of which were sown on the earlier records: ‘*LTA*’s two [instrumental] title tracks (“Part One” and “Part Two”) dramatize the ebb, flow, tensions, and crises, and resolutions of life in an abstract sense . . . a sophisticated form of narrative content and organization heretofore associated only with instrumental art music of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries’ (122). An obvious next step would have been to show how King Crimson were inspired by art music – perhaps Bartók or Stravinsky – in composing *LTA*, but Karl insists that the group achieved their unique sound ‘by transforming the materials of rock from within, rather than by importing unassimilated material and procedures from a foreign realm’ (122). Borrowing a term from biology, he explains that *LTA*’s shared affinities with the ‘formal processes and narrative paradigms of nineteenth- and twentieth-century art music’ came about as a result of a so-called ‘convergent evolution’ from ‘the “disparate starting points” of popular song and sonata forms, respectively’ (123). Karl’s ensuing analysis is very convincing, although I suspect that those who do not already know these two pieces well or have access to the CD (with timings built in) will find his detailed, seven-page account of specific musical events (129–35) difficult to follow without the aid of more than the one notated example he provides.

Of all the book’s contributions, the next two chapters – both of which, not coincidentally, focus on Yes – are likely to provoke the most heated reactions among its readers, this reviewer being no exception. In ‘Tales of Change within the Sound: Form, Lyrics, and Philosophy in the Music of Yes’, Jennifer Rycenga draws upon her knowledge of ancient, tribal, and Eastern religions in an effort to shed new light on Yes’s classic work from the 1970s. She begins by noting that during the group’s creative heyday lead singer Jon Anderson’s lyrics ‘were often savaged [by rock critics] as incomprehensible gibberish’ (144). On the contrary, Rycenga contends, a careful study of these lyrics reveals a common thread running through them, a ‘panentheistic neopagan immanent cosmology’ (145), with ‘specific religious references . . . cover[ing] a wide range of traditions, from Buddhist to Mayan, Native North American to Hawaiian, Christian to Celtic’ (146). She proceeds meticulously to decode these references in Anderson’s lyrics from two representative Yes compositions, the epic four-movement *Tales from Topographic Oceans* (1973) and ‘Sound Chaser’ from *Relayer* (1974). Rycenga would perhaps have been wise to limit herself to analysing the lyrics, since her attempts to show how these concepts are mirrored in the music often come across as vague and unconvincing: in

¹² Martin, *Listening to the Future*, 227.

describing the significance, for example, of the nexus passage that occurs towards the end of ‘The Revealing Science of God’ from *Tales* (at 19:36), she explains that ‘[t]he moment refers to itself, but it also contains the entire piece: recalling the chanted opening, both climaxing [?] and suspending [?] the song-like section . . .’ (152). In the last two pages of her essay, Rycenga abruptly shifts gears and adopts the position of a lesbian-feminist critic, her main point being to blame Yes’s apparent ‘loss of formal openness and lyric openness’ in their work from the 1980s on the addition to the group of guitarist and songwriter Trevor Rabin, who, she argues, ‘was imbued with sexism in a deep way that the 1970s band never was’ (159). Her point is provocative and probably valid, but the sudden shift of perspective here seems more to detract from her overall argument than to provide a convincing conclusion to the essay as a whole.

The title alone of Dick von der Horst’s chapter, ‘Precarious Pleasures: Situating “Close to the Edge” in Conflicting Male Desires’, should give the reader fair warning of what to expect in its pages. Often touted as Yes’s masterpiece, ‘Close to the Edge’ – the title track from their classic 1972 album – is quickly becoming the ‘Tristan Prelude’ of progressive rock, with a number of writers having already offered their own analytical perspectives.¹³ Von der Horst joins the party with an essay that stands as a curious blend of music analysis and confessionally revealing autobiography. Like Rycenga at the end of her chapter, the author draws on his own homosexuality, though this time from the very opening paragraph:

Yes’s ‘Close to the Edge’ models masculinity in a manner similar to many examples of sonata form by purging feminine elements to achieve closure and using form as a primary locus of musical pleasure. I experience this construction of masculinity as a negotiation of contrasting relations to the closet: the body-denying nature of formal listening was a component of my closeted adolescence, while the purging of femininity evokes pleasure of bonding with straight men as an openly gay person. (167)

Building on this premise, Von der Horst guides us through a history of his own personal involvement with the track, from his initial encounter with it ‘while leafing through the *New Harvard Dictionary of Music* . . . under “art rock”’ (168), through his repeated listenings to it ‘during . . . many evenings after work with a group of straight men drinking beer, smoking weed, playing euchre, or just hanging out’ (172). He makes some interesting observations, particularly in his critique of the ‘prophylactic function of formal listening [that] continues to structure the agenda of music theorists’ (171).¹⁴ And in a sense, by looking at ‘Close to the Edge’ through his own homosexual lens, Von der Horst is reclaiming this music in a positivist way from those critics who have objected to progressive rock by implying that it is not ‘manly’ enough (evident, for example, in *Blender*’s criticism of Kansas quoted in note 3 above). But unfortunately, while I found the chapter entertaining, I came away from it – as

¹³ See, for example, Covach, ‘Boundaries of Style’, and Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, 95–105.

¹⁴ Von der Horst echoes here an idea of Fred Everett Maus; see Maus, ‘Masculine Discourse in Music Theory’, *Perspectives of New Music* 31/2 (1993), 264–93.

with too many other examples of gay musicology I have read – having learned a great deal about the *author* and not enough about the music under scrutiny.

The final chapter in the central section of the book, Durrell S. Bowman's "“Let Them All Make Their Own Music”: Individualism, Rush, and the Progressive/Hard Rock Alloy, 1976–77”, provides a close study of the music and philosophy of the Canadian trio Rush – a group that has garnered a massive following in North America over the course of their thirty-year recording career, despite having being blasted by the critics and largely overlooked by rock scholars.¹⁵ To set up the context for his analysis, Bowman first provides an insightful commentary on how British progressive rock was embraced by a whole new audience on the other side of the Atlantic in the late 1970s and early 1980s:

Although progressive rock ‘purists’ would like to believe that all true fans of the genre understood its references to art music, in fact the vast majority of such references (with the notable exception of certain famous examples by ELP) went largely undetected – or at least under-appreciated – by fans. As I know from experience, those of us (young, white, North American suburban males) who became enthusiastic about early-70s British progressive rock in the early 1980s associated the genre more with our own growing inclinations toward mathematics, science, computers, and structure. (186)¹⁶

Bowman goes on to explain how ‘Rush’s music is best termed “progressive hard rock”’ (189) – that is, a stylistic fusion (or ‘alloy’) of the ‘riff-oriented, blues rock’ characteristic of early heavy metal groups such as Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath with the ‘extended structures, complex rhythms, and other features’ characteristic of progressive rock (189–90). He illustrates this contention through careful analyses of representative tracks from two classic Rush albums, *2112* (1976) and *Farewell to Kings* (1977), also finding room along the way to discuss the ‘individualist/libertarian ideology’ (191) evident in the group’s work from the mid to late 70s (an ideology that stems mostly from lyricist/drummer Neil Peart’s fascination with the writings of Ayn Rand).¹⁷

This brings us to Part Three: ‘“Don’t Dare Call Us ‘Progressive’’: “Post-Prog” and Other Legacies’, which, like Part One, consists of just two chapters. In ‘Somebody is Digging My Bones: King Crimson’s “Dinosaur” as (Post)Progressive Historiography’, Brian Robison examines a key track from the mid-1990s incarnation of the group. Taking a semiotic approach, he explains that ‘[t]he song “Dinosaur,” from King Crimson’s 1995 album

15 I recently witnessed this firsthand at one of the performances on Rush’s 2003 US tour in support of their latest album *Vapor Trails*. This was the first time I saw the group perform live, and I must say that I was quite amazed at the enthusiasm of the 10,000 or so rabid fans in attendance – many of whom were sporting Rush tee-shirts from previous tours going back as far as the late 1970s.

16 Indeed, I suspect that several of the other authors in *Progressive Rock Reconsidered* would make a similar admission. A general criticism of the book might be that its overall perspective is somewhat skewed, since all of the authors are North American and did not live through the social upheavals in Britain that led to the rise of punk and which, in turn, directly contributed to the fragmentation and decline of progressive rock on its native soil in the late 1970s. For a study that looks at progressive rock from a uniquely British perspective, see Stump, *The Music’s All That Matters*.

17 This chapter is taken from Bowman’s recently-completed dissertation, ‘Permanent Change: Rush, Musicians’ Rock, and the Progressive Post-Counterculture’ (PhD dissertation, UCLA, 2003).

THRAK, appears to comprise an entire network of nonintentional signs, one inadvertently so cohesive and powerful that it effectively overwhelms the principal songwriter's intentional signs' (221). Guitarist/vocalist Adrian Belew, who joined King Crimson in the early 1980s, has insisted that he did not intend his song 'Dinosaur' to be a commentary on the group's long history ('[f]or me, it's a song about digging into my past' (222)), and yet, as Robison argues, any listener familiar with King Crimson's earlier work or the history of progressive rock in general would be hard pressed to perceive it any other way, not only because of the lyrics but also because of the preponderance of sonic cues that point to specific aspects of earlier styles – from the 'electronically coloured orchestral strings' (226) that allude to the mellotron-soaked passages on the group's debut album *In the Court of the Crimson King* (1969), to the 'chromatic interludes preceding the guitar solo' (228) that recall both the 'experimental chamber rock' of their mid-1970s incarnation and the chromatic harmonic vocabulary of late-period Beatles, among others. The kind of 'sonic historiography' that Robison advocates here is extremely useful, and his analytic methodology would seem to have the potential for illuminating the work of many other 'postmodern' pop and rock artists who, to borrow from Graham Allen, have similarly 'reject[ed] notions of originality . . . and cultivate[d] a willfully derivative and intertextual approach'.¹⁸

In the final chapter, 'How Alternative Turned Progressive: the Strange Case of Math Rock', Theo Cateforis 'considers progressive rock and its relationship with the "alternative rock" music culture of the 1990s' (243). Focusing on an alternative subgenre that will probably be unfamiliar to most readers, Cateforis begins by explaining that math rock's 'most prominent [feature] is the extensive use of asymmetrical or "odd" time signatures and shifting mixed metres', thus 'combin[ing] the rhythmic power of thrash metal bands, such as Metallica, with the nuanced, interwoven ostinato patterns of mid-1970s and early-1980s King Crimson' (244). His ensuing analysis of a representative math rock track, Don Caballero's 'Stupid Puma' (1995), amounts mainly to unravelling the intricate web of riffs and counting out all the changing time signatures – which is no mean feat. In so doing, Cateforis makes a fitting analogy between the role of transcription in music analysis and 'the act of mathematical problem solving' (252).

Like many pop and rock genres – glam, punk, synthpop, grunge, and others – that have risen to prominence and then receded from the limelight during the last thirty years or so, progressive rock never completely died out, but simply went underground and resurfaced from time to time in various guises.¹⁹ The fact that only two chapters of the book are devoted to progressive rock beyond 1980 is, for this reviewer, a major disappointment, since it leaves a great part of the story untold. But there is only so much that can be done in a single

18 I quote here from the author's definition of postmodern art in Graham Allen, *Intertextuality* (New York and London: Routledge, 2000), 217. Holm-Hudson himself has recently explored the notion of sonic historiography in a wide range of pop and rock repertoire; see his 'The Future is Now . . . and Then: Sonic Historiography in Post-1960s Rock', *Genre* 34/3–4 (2001), 243–64. See also Serge Lacasse, 'Intertextuality and Hypertextuality in Recorded Popular Music', in *The Musical Work: Reality or Invention?*, ed. Michael Talbot (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000).

19 For a representative survey of the several younger progressive rock groups – such as Dream Theater and Spock's Beard – that have spearheaded a revival of the genre in recent years, see Ernie Rideout, 'Prog Progresses', *Keyboard* (June 2003), 34–42.

volume, and Holm-Hudson is to be commended for assembling a diverse collection of essays that will be welcomed as a valuable addition to the growing body of literature on progressive rock.

Mark Spicer

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Kevin Holm-Hudson, ed., *Progressive Rock Reconsidered*

It is hard to reconsider something that has barely been subject to considered response in the first place. The title of this collection suggests a revisionist agenda, which I presume responds either to the (limited) praise or (more widespread) journalistic condemnation the genre has received, on grounds that ultimately reduce to its inauthenticity. Such a considered response may be assumed to consist particularly of my own, and that of Stump, Macan, Martin, and the ongoing work of Covach.¹ There is very little in this volume to challenge these positions, unless it is that these American authors are frequently cited (and Macan, particularly, taken issue with), while Stump's valuable book is apparently almost unknown. But this insularity is replayed in the authors' domicility, so perhaps we should not be surprised.

What we do get is a series of unrelated studies of predominantly UK progressive rock (no mention here of European or Japanese outfits) from a range of viewpoints, but all focusing in some manner on the texts of progressive rock. The view we are given is that Yes, King Crimson and Pink Floyd are at the centre of the movement, which may not be far from the truth. The near exscription of Genesis, then, and the Canterbury scene, certainly is a revisionist move. The inclusion of work on Rush (reasonably mainstream but North American), the United States of America (clearly marginal) and 'math rock' from the 1990s prevents a monolithic picture. However, as for why this was a predominantly UK movement, Macan's response is allowed to stand. And anyway, this collection is most interested in texts. Since so many of the chapters follow the linear narratives of the songs they observe, I shall allow my observations to do likewise.

Kevin Holm-Hudson's introduction provides a brief overview of the genre, its history and stylistic diversity, critical opinion, and its artistic legitimacy. He stresses the eclectic nature of the genre, appraisal of which 'has been tainted by faulty generalizations' (3), only to fall foul of his own criticism in identifying King Crimson as 'influenced' by Bartók, and Jethro Tull as influenced by 'British and Celtic folk music' (11) (instead of asserting a rather modernist

1 See Allan Moore, *Rock: the Primary Text*, first edition (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1993); Paul Stump, *The Music's All That Matters* (London: Quartet, 1997); Edward Macan, *Rocking the Classics: English Progressive Rock and the Counterculture* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Bill Martin, *Listening to the Future: the Time of Progressive Rock, 1968–1978* (Chicago: Open Court, 1998); John Covach, 'Progressive Rock, "Close to the Edge", and the Boundaries of Style', in *Understanding Rock: Essays in Musical Analysis*, ed. John Covach and Graham Boone (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

primitivism – there’s little real influence here). Its eclecticism would have been better served had he even mentioned bands of the range of Camel, Caravan, Gentle Giant, or Family. Although Holm-Hudson is right in arguing against the all-too-frequent identification of progressive rock with supposed rock/classical hybrids, he none the less tentatively identifies it as a merger of ‘rock’s beat with certain aspects of art music’s style, in terms of harmony, metric complexity, or extended form’ (11). Again, the exceptions are too numerous to validate this generalization.² I think the fundamental problem is the identification of certain bands as ‘progressive’, carrying as it does the implication that everything they produce can be described thus. What is key about progressive rock is that it marks the historical moment of explicit rupture between a band’s style and its idiolect, the first glimpses of which can be found on the Beatles’ *Revolver* (1966) and *Sgt Pepper* (1967). But that is an entirely different tale, one which is not taken up in this collection.

Two essays are collected under the heading ‘History and Context’. John J. Sheinbaum, in ‘Progressive Rock and the Inversion of Musical Values’, tries to do two things. Firstly, he takes on critical appraisal of the genre, focusing on its inherent stylistic impurity. This impurity is viewed negatively by two key critical traditions:

The rock critic treats the music as conventionally ‘high’ – a clear signal that this is ‘bad’ rock music – or as a stylistically impure music, resulting in the same conclusion. The university music professor treats it as conventionally ‘high’ music as well – though here it’s simply a sign of value in and of itself – and through the use of traditional analytical language, leaves eclecticism off the table, because ‘impurities’ would be a problem. (29)

Secondly, he illustrates how to deal critically with this impurity through a discussion of aspects of Yes’s ‘Roundabout’, his own attempt to deal with his criticism of Macan’s thoroughly normative (putatively ‘new musicological’) analytic method. This he undertakes through three oppositional pairs: high/low, fixity/improvisation, and structural understanding / cultural understanding. Although he comes to no conclusion, the discussion illuminates both the song and the fluidity of the genre’s characteristics.

‘I won’t leave my wooden wife for you’ is the only United States of America song I have ever heard, so to find the one-album wonder discussed here, in Holm-Hudson’s ‘The “American Metaphysical Circus” of Joseph Byrd’s United States of America’ came as something of a surprise. Holm-Hudson argues that, because of the band’s embedded avant-garde influences, the music was less psychedelic (as it is usually assumed to be) than progressive. His argument rests on the avant-garde background of the players and their use of electronic sound sources, parody, quotation, and collage. Like the author, and the band themselves, I am left uncertain as to whether this was ‘Rock, or New Music?’ (54). Unlike them, however, because they seem so marginal even within this genre, I do wonder whether

² I hope I am not being petty, but examples are necessary to justify this point: King Crimson’s ‘The Night Watch’, Jethro Tull’s ‘Orion’, Caravan’s ‘C’Thlu Thlu’, Genesis’s ‘In the Cage’, Emerson, Lake and Palmer’s ‘Jeremy Bender’, all chosen completely at random.

it really matters. A comparison with other outfits, like Faust, for example, might have been instructive. And what they have to do with 'History and Context' is a mystery to me.

Part Two, 'Analytical Perspectives', consists of seven essays, each of which asks questions of interest to the musicologist. John Cotner's discussion of Pink Floyd's 'Careful with that axe, Eugene', endeavours to get at the music's gestural qualities but, rather than building on Richard Middleton's recent theorization, returns to Wallace Berry and Eytan Agmon. Although I find the detail of Cotner's employment of Agmon's theory unconvincing, he does use it to argue against the simplistic distinction between 'psychedelic' and 'progressive' which often obtains: 'In most outward appearances, the studio recording can easily be categorized as psychedelic rock . . . on a more covert level, the track manifests subtle means of variation and development, a progressive tendency that is more than merely "experimental"' (87). Cotner finds these procedures particularly in the song's progression of textures (thereby arguing that it is more successful than Pink Floyd's later output). Deena Weinstein then undertakes an analysis of the lyrics of Roger Waters, read as an artistic statement through their transcendent vision, consistency of imagery and concept, and appropriation of high modernist themes. She discusses various examples of Waters's output under these headings. This is a strong essay, though it perhaps assumes too much knowledge of Waters's work – there is little demonstration of her points. And, while her brief social characterization of progressive rock seems to me particularly pertinent, to insist that progressive rock is distinguished by the appropriation of 'high art' forms (including jazz and the avant-garde) is, again, insufficient to account for the Incredible String Band, early Marc Bolan, Edgar Broughton, Hawkwind, Jethro Tull, and many others who, at the time, worked under the progressive banner. To simply assent to the subsequent 'purification' of the label seems too much intellectual shorthand.

Kevin Holm-Hudson's very brief analytical discussion of Emerson, Lake, and Palmer's 'Trilogy' is utterly different in approach, arguing that thematic transformation across three movements makes for a successful symphonic poem (on the Berlioz model). In so doing, he employs Jonathan Kramer's notion of 'multiply directed time', to account for the relationship between larger tonal areas of the piece. The essay works (although its lack of examples might make it difficult to follow unless you know the piece), but particularly because it situates itself firmly within purely musical discourse. The same cannot be said for Gregory Karl's essay on King Crimson's *Larks' Tongues in Aspic* (1973). His conceit, in this essay, is that of convergent evolution, whereby different species develop in similar ways in response to similar environmental pressures. He demonstrates that *Larks' Tongues* can usefully be understood to dramatize the internal life, organized as it is by King Crimson's neo-romantic aesthetic. Indeed, with the exception of the odd assertion as to what some instrumental pieces ('Sailor's Tale', particularly) are 'about', it is a highly persuasive line to take, and I do not find it necessary for the essay to invoke his model in order to convince. His conclusion that the form of this song conveys the dramatized internal experience far more successfully than does sonata form should be more far-reaching than it probably will be.

Jennifer Rycenga approaches the work of Yes, and particularly the lyrics of Jon Anderson, in an attempt to understand their spiritual content. She argues against any fixity of

interpretation, and suggests they give rise to ‘a panentheistic neopagan immanent cosmology, inviting the listener into the temporal experience of this cosmology in music’ (145). The chapter then offers a demonstration of this position, in addition valuing the lyrics for their evasion of a ‘heteronormative’ stance, critiquing the more recent involvement of guitarist Trevor Rabin, and pondering the danger of political quietism inherent in panentheism. She explores how Jon Anderson failed to understand a key source, Swami Paramahansa Yogananda, but concludes that this misunderstanding was highly productive. The chapter demonstrates how badly the lack of an adequate methodology for discussing studio manipulation is felt: although Rycenga rightly emphasizes the importance of the studio as a place of working, she falls back on formal and harmonic concepts when discussing the music. And I am left wondering about her implicit challenge that any opening up of a form is in itself good (154ff). She does, however, go some way towards explaining why Yes’s music is still worth attending to, an explanation which for her lies in its ambivalence towards a gendered position. Dirk von der Horst’s essay takes a very different line, arguing that in its use of sonata form (itself an arguable assertion), Yes’s *Close to the Edge* (1972) ‘models masculinity . . . by purging feminine elements to achieve closure’ (167). I found it a very difficult essay, because (and this is a key issue here) I was unable to identify with the author or his reported experiences: Horst annexes the personal – the observation that the only perception we can report is our own – to queer theory. Hitherto, I guess I had found it important to insist that we had to jettison our putative objectivity, but when that fails to communicate, perhaps we have a problem. The essay certainly demonstrates the futility of assuming meaning to be inscribed, but I am not sure what I have gained from it.

The final essay in this heterogeneous section is Durrell Bowman’s discussion of three songs by Rush. He too asserts that the ‘classical’ element in progressive rock is overstated, that its import is not properly critiqued in analytical work on it, and that such work fails ‘to incorporate historical/interpretive arguments directly’ (187), using them rather as ‘prologues’ to the real work. Bowman’s chapter explores these assertions, with particular reference to the concept piece ‘2112’. He views this both analytically (paying attention to form, key, motive, melodic range) and in terms of the extreme individualist philosophy propounded by Ayn Rand, to which Rush’s lyricist, Neil Peart, is openly indebted. Bowman isolates its problem as lying in the subversion of teleologically driven structural conventions by the failure of the hero to overcome. Bowman gives similar space to discussions of two other songs, ‘Xanadu’ and ‘Cygnus X-1’, only to reach broadly similar conclusions.

The book’s final two essays appear under the strange heading ‘“Don’t Dare Call Us Progressive”: “Post-Prog” and Other Legacies’, dramatizing the unwieldy nature of the subject matter. Brian Robison’s discussion of recent King Crimson is first-rate. He focuses on the song ‘Dinosaur’, which originally appeared in 1995, comparing its many versions in order to argue that, despite the intention of writer Adrian Belew, it makes sense to view the song as commentary on the history of the band. The essay is brief, focused, and illuminating in demonstrating how such misreadings might take place. The final essay, by Theo Cateforis, looks at the music of Don Caballero, one of a group of 1990s US bands identified under the genre label ‘math rock’ – the link with progressive comes from the music’s relative

complexity and abstraction. This raises unanswered questions of where 'progressive' begins and ends and, thus, of what sort of picture of the genre the book paints. It is unbalanced, a heterogeneous collection of both approaches and subjects, and does not adequately represent work currently being undertaken. It contains some gems, but is unlikely to further understanding of the genre as a whole.

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Arnold Whittall, *Exploring Twentieth-Century Music: Tradition and Innovation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), ISBN 0 521 81642 4 (hb), 0 521 01668 1 (pb)

You can't judge a book by its cover. Clearly. But in this case, the cover seems remarkably well related to the text it precedes. Its reproduction of Franc Marc's *Kämpfende Formen* (1914) offers an intriguing analogy of the vision of twentieth-century music that Arnold Whittall constructs in this book. Marc's 'Struggling Forms' create an opposition that roughly divides the left of his canvas from the right – an opposition above all of colour (dark vs vibrant, a single tone vs kaleidoscopic variety), but also of shape (curves vs angles) and of specific symbolic representations. But the two sides of the picture are not divided by any hard or systematic lines: the irregular shapes and whorls of colour from which the picture is made ensure that one side is bound into the other, each reaching into the other with flame-like tendrils.

It makes for a fine allegory of Whittall's conception of tradition and innovation (the book's subtitle). Both sides of the picture present richly elaborated forms, struggling with themselves as much as with each other, interacting not as two wholly exclusive forces but like the meeting of two tidal currents, producing complex eddies, waves, and whirlpools. The image brings to the fore a key aspect of the book, which explores twentieth-century music through underlying binary oppositions but which sees such oppositions manifested in music that is always multifaceted, plural, many-hued, overlapping. Tradition and innovation form only one such opposition, but it is a definitive one and maps on to Whittall's use of the terms 'classicism' and 'modernism', which recur throughout. Other binary divisions that shape his interpretative excursions include formalism and hermeneutics, sacred and secular, Dionysian and Apollonian. But, in each case, Whittall's idea of oppositions resembles Franz Marc's: never a mutual exclusion but always a necessarily complementary pairing of different energies that interact with one another in rich and unpredictable ways. Not only does Whittall resist any reading of the twentieth century that would collapse it into the dominance of one idea over its other, his central task appears to be to show, whatever the repertoire, that every piece and every style contains elements of its opposite.

The book is largely defined by this approach. It keeps its distance from canonic histories of the twentieth century and avoids any trace of the conventional definition of principal

schools, trends or currents of composition. It discusses many of the major composers of the century, but remains independent of the gravitational pull they normally exert upon historians. Instead, discussion of these composers is woven into larger musical, cultural, and historical themes that allow their music to be rethought afresh, less constrained by the usual narratives of stylistic influence, technical development, or social context. It is as much an exploration of recent writing on twentieth-century music as it is of the music itself, but Whittall's discussion of other authors has a very particular critical purpose: to show that all constructions of this music that place it wholly on 'one side of the picture' are necessarily flawed and that the music is more productively and more richly understood if seen from both sides of the same idea.

This is not to suggest that Whittall sets up other writers in order to knock them down; his use of a wide range of recent scholarship is both more gentle and more constructive than that. With an elegant sleight of hand, he draws out the missing element in the accounts he discusses, acknowledging their usefulness while restoring what they exclude. He takes issue with Lawrence Kramer's assessment of Elliott Carter's *Syringa* (1978), for example, because it impoverishes the work by denying its ambiguity (between an enveloping 'referential sonority' and the possibility of temporal progression). He elaborates Hans Keller's writing on Schoenberg in order to move beyond Keller's dualities of tonal/serial or opposition/integration, using examples from more recent work (Martha Hyde, Joseph Auner, and Michael Cherlin) to show how these elements are brought into relation in Schoenberg's music rather than diametrically opposed. Roger Scruton's championing of Janáček over Schoenberg is unpicked to reveal that, far from one negating the other, each composer displays aspects of the other: Scruton's assertion that Janáček's music contrasts with Schoenberg's in its projection of an 'ideal of human community' is offset by Whittall's remarks, derived from music analysis, that there is also here (in Janáček's Second Quartet (1928)) 'the expression of a distinctly unstable individuality – an exultantly personal, even solipsistic sensuality' (40). My own work on Webern is opened up in similar ways, as is James Hepokoski on Sibelius, Gary Tomlinson on Britten and Richard Taruskin on Stravinsky. In Taruskin's analysis of the link between Stravinsky's music and a tendency towards fascism, Whittall discovers 'the seeds if its own critique' (60). This neatly sums up his primary method. The exploration of musical texts as of critical secondary literature may seem individual but is far from capricious: it proceeds through discursive interaction, refining ideas in order to reveal dialectical contradictions – an eminently critical task in the best sense.

Such an approach makes for a book of great subtlety. Some readers may miss the satisfaction of following the development of a single thesis; others will enjoy the absence of an overarching historical narrative or critical framework with which twentieth-century music, more than most, refuses to comply. The relative lack of system is undoubtedly a strength and makes the book refreshing in the face of more dogmatic writers. But it does mean one has to read rather differently and expect rather different things from this book. It moves swiftly between insights of quite different orders (analytical, historical, biographical, cultural) and changes tone equally quickly (from that of the reviewer to that of the analyst and of the cultural historian). The insights are searching and provocative and always worth reading, but

one has to wait patiently for a larger picture to emerge from the details. At times, this avoidance of engagement with the larger historical picture can be frustrating. Chapter 8, for example, presents a substantial discussion of the music of Henze, particularly in terms of his debts to Wagner and with specific reference to Henze's *Requiem* (1990–92) and his own *Tristan* (1972–3). While intriguing in itself, this relationship clearly begs historical questions that exceed the level of Henze's own biography or musical predilections. I missed here a sense of how one might understand such a relationship in wider historical terms. If one considers Darmstadt as emblematic of German music's post-holocaust cleansing of the past, a cultural 'Year Zero', then how is one to understand this element of restoration in Henze's music and its concomitant projection of a subjectivity whose final traces the avant-garde was busy expunging?

My picture is too crude, and this book rightly undoes the very kind of reductive oppositions that I have just constructed, but it highlights the tension between, on the one hand, reading music as necessarily plural in its significations, and on the other, avoiding any kind of historical interpretation because, on some level, whatever one says the opposite may also be true. Whittall should be widely applauded for the precision with which he counters the reduction of music – to a political belief, a biographical detail, an ideological position, a social context. On the other hand, one might miss here the specific and particular way in which a musical work is bound in to the twentieth century. There is always the danger, in a technical or thematic approach, that historical tensions on which the music depends become neutralized in a kind of ahistoricism. I do not think this happens here, but at times it is left to the reader to consider how the discussion of style, musical materials, and technical processes are related to specifically twentieth-century conditions, problems, or ideas.

Such questions come to the fore in the final chapter, 'Modernism in Retreat', which becomes something of a personal affirmation of the value of the kind of music with which the book as a whole is concerned. With reference to recent work by Lawrence Kramer and Fred Lerdahl, Whittall opens up the question of whether the glacial retreat of classical music in the twentieth century has been partly the result of the failure of modernism to communicate adequately with any kind of audience. His answer is, unsurprisingly, strongly to the contrary. A discussion of Carter's music serves here, as elsewhere in the book, as a kind of exemplar of qualities that might guarantee such music a future. Carter's music is a model of 'balanced diversities, not synthesis', it is 'a discourse, a process of exchange and interplay, of oppositions mediated by a willingness to coexist' (154). For Whittall, 'it is the ability of modernism to accept and work with aspects of tradition . . . which makes the prospect of a new, modern classicism based, not on tonality like Sibelius's, but on more equivocal ideas of stability and centredness, a real and attractive possibility for the music of the future' (203). He finds the same positive quality in the music of Ligeti, which provides the last, telling, music example of the book. In an upbeat assessment of the Solo Viola Sonata (1991–4), Whittall concludes, 'Given such vital and moving results, it is by no means inevitable that the years ahead will see modernism in retreat in new compositions; rather, it could acquire new contexts, new perspectives' (207).

But perhaps critical questions of musical modernism – of its origins as much as its future – are not likely to be answered on the level of technical or stylistic discussion alone. For all the wealth of reference to other writers in this book, Whittall's virtual omission of Adorno is a curious one. This is understandable given that the book's principal focus is technical detail rather than an aesthetics or sociology of music – that is, until the final chapter. Adorno, after all, reminds one that modernism cannot be understood as a purely aesthetic phenomenon and remains inexplicable without reference to a fundamentally social and historical tension. The future of modernism is unlikely to be a question of musical style alone – or even primarily. The nature of musical life today suggests that it has far more to do with the social situation in which music exists and, above all, the changing expectations of what music is and might do.

The repertoire that Whittall discusses in the preceding ten chapters is varied and wide-ranging. It is, inevitably, selective and, at times, idiosyncratic. In a short book on this, the most impossible century about which to make stylistic generalizations, there are inevitably plenty of composers who do not feature, and those who do have to be dealt with succinctly. Every reader will no doubt have his or her own sense of injustice ('What, no Varèse?'). But this is not a history book. In his Preface, the author acknowledges a highly personal slant to the book ('selective, narrow, limited'), which originated from a series of lectures initially called 'The World of Twentieth-Century Music', but 'quickly modified in practice to 'My World of Twentieth-Century Music' (vii). In place of a textbook, such as his earlier *Musical Composition in the Twentieth Century*,¹ Whittall offers here 'a discourse, or series of narratives' in relation to his own selection of composers and works. Some readers might feel it privileges innovation over tradition, and writes a history of modernism and its uneasy relationship with its 'classical' other, rather than an exploration of twentieth-century music as such. There is some truth in this and certainly the absence of some key movements in the twentieth century might have been more deliberately underlined. It would have been a different book, to be sure, if it had taken on board the twentieth-century history of popular music, of film music, or of a more traditional current of art music. But if this is not an overview history, neither is it a social history. As the Preface underlines, this 'is not a history of musical life in the twentieth century . . . [and] . . . is much more about music as object and concept – as "text" – than about music as event' (viii).

The primary focus of this book, then, is found in questions of musical language and musical style – technical questions concerning materials, forms, and compositional processes. Clearly, Whittall is well aware of the necessity to problematize the 'autonomous' aspect of music and manages to find ways of discussing technical matters that open up the question of wider, non-aesthetic questions; one of the principal oppositions of the book, between whose poles it repeatedly moves, is that between 'work and world'. But at the same time there is a clear statement here that problematizing autonomy does not equate with avoiding the formalist aspect of music. One might agree, rather, that the question of autonomy forces us to rethink the notes rather than ignore them. Dealing with the notes as

1 Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

well as the world inevitably means painting with a broad brush one moment and something much finer the next. Within the confines of relatively short chapters this requires some swift changes of gear – from social history and cultural comment one moment to remarks about pitch-class sets the next. It is not always easy to follow the logic that relates one to the other, but at the very least the reader is forced to reflect on just that question. A similar effect is created by some rather opaque chapter headings – a favourite device is to juxtapose two related terms: ‘Reflections, Reactions’, ‘Renewal and Remembrance’, ‘Engagement or Alienation?’, ‘Modernism, Lyricism’, ‘Experiment and Orthodoxy’. But the precise relationship of such terms is by no means immediately apparent. Do they complement or oppose one another? Do they co-exist or are they mutually exclusive? Are they shades of the same thing? In one sense the opacity frustrates, but in another way it provokes one to consider the very questions that lie at the heart of this book. To the reader who wants neat binary oppositions and clear ‘either/or’s Whittall fully intends to be frustrating.

This is undoubtedly an individual, even idiosyncratic, book. Were it proposed by a first-time author it is unlikely that it would be accepted by a major university press – but then Arnold Whittall is hardly a first-time author. It is the kind of book, rather, that is somehow legitimated by a breadth of overview that few writers possess, the product of a long process of sifting, sieving, maturing, and fermenting of ideas that only such a profound knowledge of the music and its attendant literature can deliver. Such rare conditions free up the author to dwell on significant points while elliptically skirting around the material between them (material which can, after all, be had elsewhere). Not a textbook then, but a collection of insights, incisive raids into the often perplexing phenomenon that is twentieth-century music, hints and guesses, offers of ways in which we might conceptualize its unfolding history and consider its future. Whittall’s approach preserves the incommensurability of music towards any reductive system of interpretation but at the same time reaffirms the productive nature of our attempts to read it. This is perhaps one of its most valuable aspects; indeed, what more can a book on music do?

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Goffredo Plastino, ed., *Mediterranean Mosaic: Popular Music and Global Sounds* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), ISBN 0 415 93655 1 (hb), ISBN 0 415 93656 X (pb)

This new title represents a welcome addition to the literature on the Mediterranean region, contemporary popular musics outside the Anglo-American mainstream, world music and globalization, and the relationship between music and politics. The book appears as part of Routledge’s promising new series *Perspectives on Global Pop* which, under the general editorship of Gage Averill, sets out to ‘explore . . . the global traffic in musical sounds that is

reconfiguring the world's sonic map' via 'a cross-disciplinary dialogue on issues, theories, and regional studies in global popular musics' (ii).

The editor of the present volume, Goffredo Plastino, is to be congratulated for bringing together contributions by a pleasingly international cohort of twelve authors, including ethnomusicologists, anthropologists, scholars of popular music, and practising musicians. The collection also achieves a good sense of balance between the various shores of the 'Great Sea' – Spain, Italy, Croatia, Greece, Turkey, Israel, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco all have their own chapters. My only regret here is that none of the Mediterranean islands features prominently – though this leaves obvious scope for a future project.

The volume is indicative of a renewed interest in the musics of the Mediterranean and makes a useful partner to another excellent collection that has also appeared in the past year, Tullia Magrini's edited volume *Music and Gender: Perspectives from the Mediterranean*.¹ (These are soon to be joined by *The Mediterranean in Music: Critical Perspectives, Common Concerns, Cultural Differences*, edited by David Cooper and Kevin Dawe.²) Interestingly, Plastino's and Magrini's volumes have only three authors in common. The writings brought together by Magrini tend towards music and dance in what we might call more 'traditional', domestic, or local settings, albeit with an emphasis in many of the chapters on recent changes in contexts and functions and, in particular, in gender dynamics. The present volume focuses more on popular music production and the music industry, on the search by musicians for a musical style they can define and market as 'Mediterranean', and on syncretic products celebrating what are perceived to be characteristic 'Mediterranean' features.

Mediterranean Mosaic, says the back jacket note, 'weaves together issues of music, contemporary geopolitics, and identity struggles'. In the process it offers a wealth of interesting perspectives on the themes of commercialization and professionalization, westernization and modernization, and the interplay between local and global and between East and West. It also contributes to the vexed question of definitions – popular, traditional, neo-traditional, contemporary, fusion, hybrid, world music. The musics of the Mediterranean, Plastino argues, should not be 'reduced to a model': the task of the ethnomusicologist, rather, is to explore questions of meaning, of musical change, of labelling, and diffusion (10). Such explorations do indeed underpin the majority of the contributions, even if one or two would have benefited from a stronger or more clearly articulated theoretical framework.

Like the Mediterranean itself, the volume is a model of unity in diversity. Some chapters are densely ethnographic, while some take a more historical perspective and others are more philosophical; some chart the progress of locally rooted or 'subaltern' musics towards the global marketplace, while others focus on new syncretic styles or 'scenes'. All of the writers address the central questions: What is the Mediterranean? Does it really exist as an entity? How can it be defined? What constitutes a Mediterranean music?

Following Braudel, it has been common to conceive of the Mediterranean as 'an ancient crossroads' where numerous influences coalesce, 'complicating and enriching its history'

1 Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

2 Lanham: Scarecrow Press, forthcoming.

(7).³ Its unique situation as a culture area embracing three continents (Southern Europe, North Africa, and Asia Minor) and three major world religions (evoked here in Bohlman's evocation of the soundscape of Jerusalem with its 'mixing and remixing of the Muslim call to prayer, the voices of praying Jews, and the rhythmic movements of Christian processions' (299)) makes it an ideal area in which to explore cross-cultural interaction. In Magrini's view, 'if . . . there is one geographical area that can be said to have prefigured the postmodern condition, it would have to be the Mediterranean, where Hellenism developed into what might be called the first historical experience of "globalization"'.⁴ Perhaps not surprisingly, then, one of the strongest tropes to emerge in the present collection is that of Mediterranean music as hybrid. 'Authenticity' in today's Mediterranean, Plastino asserts, is to be found in musical forms that result from 'contamination', 'fusion', and 'hybridisation' (10), free borrowing being made possible by the inherent nature of the Mediterranean itself (11). ('Contamination' here, like the 'corruption' in the title of Horden and Purcell's recent volume *The Corrupting Sea*, is not intended to carry negative connotations.⁵) Plastino's lively introduction, 'Sailing the Mediterranean Musics', thrusts the reader straight into this hybrid world with its substantial and revelatory commentary on, and quotation from, a series of recent 'Mediterranean' CDs and their liner notes.

'Mediterranean' emerges in a number of the chapters as a category or metaphor, rather than a genre. Franco Fabbri, in his chapter on 'Rock, Pop, and the Mediterranean', emphasizes the 'fuzzy' nature of 'Mediterranean music' with its lack of a clear-cut set of defining features which one can use as a yardstick for deciding what is 'in' and what is 'out'. Rather than attempting to identify its characteristic features, Fabbri suggests, we should consider the concept as 'just an "other" that was created . . . as a mythical counterpart to the popular music mainstream' (4). In similar vein, Yetkin Özer views *Akdeniz* (Mediterranean) music in Turkey as an 'alternative' form cultivated as a reaction to entertainment or commercial music. In this sense, use of the qualifier 'Mediterranean' can be seen first and foremost as a statement of orientation, both cultural and political, which can be applied quite broadly to denote 'authenticity', 'roots', 'meaningfulness' in opposition to the 'mainstream'.

It is also clear, however, that musicians and critics using the Mediterranean label do so on the basis of at least some defining characteristics that are seen to give the music a Mediterranean identity. In Plastino's discussion of Italian progressive-rock group Area, for example, 'the Mediterranean quality' is pinned down more precisely to the use of Middle Eastern and Balkan melodies and rhythms and above all to the highly ornamented and melismatic style of vocal delivery (271), while the Spanish musician David Cervera (cited in Plastino's introduction) refers to instrumentation, chord patterns, intonation, and 'something very significant and highly essential in the melismas' (1). One constant, as Plastino notes, is the recourse to distinctive local styles which provide a solid foundation on which to build. Antonio Baldassarre, as if by way of illustration, describes how, at the end of the 1960s,

3 Fernand Braudel, *Il Mediterraneo: Lo Spazio e la Storia – gli Uomini e la Tradizione* (Milan: Bompiani, 1987), 8.

4 Magrini, *Music and Gender*, 19.

5 Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: a Study of the Mediterranean History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).

a new 'pop music' scene began to emerge in Morocco with bands like Nass El Ghiwane revitalizing stylistic traits drawn from local 'peasant' musics and the traditions of the Sufi brotherhoods, accompanied by lyrics expressing desires for social change. 'Local musical cultures', Plastino goes on to say, 'are revisited, redeveloped, relaunched via the acquisition of other repertoires, whether global, Mediterranean, or local. The dialogue is between that which is at hand and familiar and that which is perceived as distant . . . but similar, or in some way assimilable' (28).

The theme of synthesis as integral to the concept of 'Mediterranean music' resurfaces in Plastino's absorbing analysis of Fabrizio de André's *Creuza de Mä* and its legacy. Recognized as the best song album and best rock album of the 1980s in Italy, *Creuza de Mä* marked an important turning point in Italian pop music. Conceived in part as a reaction against Anglo-American pop and a return to the ethnic, it also played a central role in 'orienting future debate on *musica mediterranea*' (268), the latter evolving as 'essentially a synthesis of several musics of oral tradition, progressive rock, and jazz' (272). Most significantly, perhaps, *Creuza de Mä* 'declares the Mediterranean Arabic' (274) – not only in terms of musical style and in particular the sonorities of the 'ud, saz, and bouzouki, but also in the use of the Genoese dialect rich in Arabic influences. Finally, Plastino leaves us with the thought that the *musica mediterranea* of *Creuza de Mä* is, in fact, 'the *in vitro* creation of an imaginary Mediterranean that has never existed . . . an artificial syncretism, an "ethnic" music that works only as re-created' (281).

Questions of politics and meaning are central to Edwin Seroussi's discussion of 'Transformations of Mediterraneanism in Israeli Music', which illustrates beautifully the usefulness of the notion of the 'Mediterranean' as a pivotal point or liminal space between East and West. For Israel, 'Mediterraneanism . . . was always a strategy to avoid fully-fledged Arabness while at the same time developing a sense of belonging to the large Eastern Mediterranean cultural area' (194). Noting the recent intensification of what he refers to as the 'Mediterranean topos' in Israel as a result of geopolitical and economic developments related to the Middle East peace process which brought Israel into closer relation with the European Union and the Arab states of North Africa, Seroussi goes on to explore the various uses of the concept of the Mediterranean in Israeli music. He proposes three models of musical Mediterraneanism in Israel, which he labels 'synthesis', 'Orientalist', and 'subversive', and goes on to show how each of these models can help to elucidate different types of musical expression, at different periods, that have attracted a Mediterraneanist label, namely art music of the mid twentieth century, folk song, and finally the genre of popular music initially known as 'Orientalist music' that in the 1980s attracted the alternative name 'Israeli Mediterranean music'. In this latter case the label was intimately linked to the political question of Israeli identity and an attempt to bring the culture of the Oriental Jews more into the mainstream while at the same time 'Mediterraneanizing the sound of popular music in Israel' (193). Critics, meanwhile, have lamented the loss of the oppositional status enjoyed by the music in its Orientalist guise, interpreting the music's acceptance by the media and its accommodation to the technological and aesthetic demands of the music industry as a threat to its authenticity.

In Kevin Dawe's chapter, 'Contemporary Grooves in Greek Popular Music', Greece appears as another country sitting on the cusp between East and West. Dawe explores the way in which this 'between worlds' setting shapes contemporary Greek musical sensibilities, 'perhaps more than ever before in the history of Greece' (221). Dawe's discussion proceeds via an analysis of a series of recordings made in the 1990s by a selection of Greece's most successful recording artists, showing how 'Greek popular musicians are fully conversant with the *global* language of contemporary rock and pop, using synthesizers, drum machines, sequencers, samplers, and overdriven electric guitars' at the same time as seeking inspiration in *local* regional sounds and styles (224). All manner of 'Western' genres put in an appearance here – among them heavy metal, disco, reggae, hip-hop, bebop, cool jazz, jazz-funk, exotica, and electronica. While much of the music described here would appear to sit well enough in the meta-genre of 'world music' or 'global beat', Dawe is keen to emphasize that 'these productions also confront sensitive, challenging, and deep-seated issues relating to a cultural identity formed out of a mixture of "Eastern" and "Western" cultural elements' (225). 'The mix,' he insists, 'really is a mix.'

North Africa is represented by the contributions of Antonio Baldassarre, Gabriele Marranci, Ruth Davis, and Michael Frishkopf, each of whom traces, to a greater or lesser degree, the ways in which East and West intersect in recent and contemporary popular music output. Michael Frishkopf ('Some Meanings of the Spanish Tinge in Contemporary Egyptian Music') sets out to disentangle some of the complex meanings that Spanish-tinged Arabic music holds for Egyptian listeners, his researches revealing what he justifiably refers to as 'a startling diversity of theories' (172) about the reasons for, and meanings of, this phenomenon. (The 'Spanish tinge' refers to the Spanish and Latin elements prominent in Arab popular music from the mid 1990s.) Here again we find implicit hints of the 'Arab Mediterranean' in the symbolic value attached to Andalusia and its historical significance as a bridge facilitating an Arab influence on European culture: the Spanish tinge from this perspective is interpreted as a homecoming of what were originally Arabic inspirations. Again, the Spanish and Latin tinge emerges as part of a turning away from American culture which has been fuelled in part by the recent interventions of the USA in Middle Eastern politics.

Gabriele Marranci, in his chapter on pop-*raï*, proposes an account of 'the different phases that allowed pop-*raï* to move from a local musical tradition to a global musical reality' (101). Via an examination of the recent career moves of some of its leading artists – Khaled, Cheb Mami, Rachid Taha, and Faudel – Marranci shows how 'the internationalization of *raï* not only required adapting music and sound to the Western audience's needs, but also required adapting the image and representation of *raï* to the western consumer's ideology' (106). As pop-*raï* progresses ever further down its global path, it is essentially the singer's voice, Marranci argues, and in particular its timbre and its characteristic melismas, that continue to qualify the music as *raï* even as it accrues influences from styles as diverse as flamenco, reggae, house, and techno – in the process losing much of its meaning for many back home in Algeria while at the same time taking on new and positive meanings for the Beur community in France. Ultimately, Marranci proposes, the new French or international *raï* is no less 'authentic' than the local *raï* still played in Algeria today: 'they are only different' (117).

The central theme of Antonio Baldassarre's essay on 'Moroccan World Beat through the Media' is the way in which musical fortunes have been affected by the different mass-communication and technological media introduced to Morocco during the past century and the cultural policies by which they have been governed, which in themselves reflect the shifting sands of Morocco's attempt to define its place in a changing world. In this brief overview Baldassarre points to the clear relationships between political ideology and musical style and taste (though in places I would have welcomed a more detailed and sustained focus on the interaction between the two). Beginning with the cultural policies of the French Protectorate and ending with the triumph of the female group B'net Houariyat at the Reading Womad festival in 1998, Baldassarre explores the different meanings that different manifestations of 'Moroccan' music have held for different sectors of the population. As a result of a new turn towards the West following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Gulf War, Morocco became increasingly influenced by democratic ideals, which in turn seem to have opened the way for a new wave of technological experimentation and a clear entry into the 'global' marketplace with Morocco's Gnawa musicians following the stars of *rai* onto the world stage in the early 1990s. Baldassarre ends his discussion by sounding a note of warning regarding what he sees as an unthinking imitation of experiments in crossing cultural boundaries which can result in the worst cases in 'a meaningless soup', even if this is justified rhetorically as demonstrating the 'feasible coexistence' of diverse cultures (95) – a theme which recurs in the latter-day laments quoted by Marranci regarding the watering down of pop-*rai* as it enters into an 'incongruous marriage' with other styles (114).

Ruth Davis offers a useful introduction to the Tunisian *ma'luf*, in which she notes the difficulty involved in trying to assign the *ma'luf* – an urban tradition believed to have originated in the Islamic courts of medieval Spain – to the category of either 'art music' or 'popular music' (indeed, it is referred to by both of these terms by different sectors of the population). Questions of authenticity again resurface in her discussion of reinterpretations of the *ma'luf* by top media stars of the 1990s.

The concept of the Mediterranean has not always included the countries on its southern shores. Sílvia Martínez ('Mediterranean Sounds in Spanish Folk and Popular Music') notes how Barcelona's Festival of Mediterranean Song restricted its scope in the first few years of its existence (late 1950s / early 1960s) to Spanish, French, Italian, and Greek performers. The late 1960s and early 1970s, however, saw the growth of the Catalan Nova Cançó movement, which was marked by a move away from 'the unconcerned pop song' (63) and a deliberate turning towards the Mediterranean. Lluís Llach in particular was committed to sharing the stage with singers from the Maghreb and other parts of the southern Mediterranean – a move which in the context of widespread hostility towards North African immigrants in Spain represented a strong political statement.

I have to confess to having had difficulty following Yetkin Özer's line of thought in his chapter on 'The Akdeniz Scene and Mediterraneanness' in Turkey. I think this is partly because a number of potentially interesting points that are made are not really followed through, in terms of analysis, or sufficiently contextualized at a theoretical level. Here and there a gem is dropped in passing about which I would love to know more. Why, for example,

did politically engaged Akdeniz musicians use poems by e.e. cummings? The greatest interest here, for me, lay in the quotes from contemporary Turkish musicians – speaking about their political motivation and about the reasons for changes in their music between the 1970s and the 1980s, for example – and I feel that the inclusion of more of these (perhaps with additional commentary) would have made for a more powerful and engaging discussion.

Joško Čaleta offers an insight into recent developments in *klapa* singing (a traditional genre originating in Dalmatia) and in *ca-val* (popular music from Istria) as ‘examples of a Mediterranean dimension of music that has passed the boundaries of the local and regional in Croatia’ (241). He notes how the Mediterranean was an important factor in the formation of a national identity for the new state of Croatia in the early 1990s – the Mediterranean in this case signifying a move towards a more Western identity and away from a Balkan association – with the musics of the country’s coastal regions serving as a model for the development of Croatian music in general. Another strand of Čaleta’s analysis is to show that ‘the borders between the popular and the traditional are not clearly drawn’ (256). The value of this essay is given an extra boost by the numerous and lengthy endnotes which, in particular, offer further documentation of the recent development of *klapa* in the context of a more formal performance culture. However, some of these notes might usefully have been incorporated into the main text.

Finally, Philip Bohlman’s chapter (‘Sacred Popular Music of the Mediterranean and the Journey to Jerusalem’) takes as its starting point the profusion of songbooks, cassettes, and CDs that fuelled the popular celebration of the Jubilee year of the Christian church. Bohlman goes on to comment more broadly on the way in which religious practice has benefited from mass mediation in the global era, as part of what he refers to as ‘the globalization of religious revival’ (290). Pilgrimage emerges as ‘one of the most persistent of all templates for the expression of sacred-popular music’ (293), with music serving as a catalyst for the intimacy of popular religious activity both during the journey and in the rituals enacted at the shrine. The ‘popular’ can be seen to operate here at a number of levels, from the use of a common repertory of songs by the pilgrims themselves (often facilitated by the thriving sales of cassettes and songsheets at sacred sites) to the mass production of recordings of the Qur’an by ‘star’ reciters to provide soundtracks for daily life in marketplaces around the Mediterranean.

This book fills an obvious gap in the existing literature, offering a much needed focus on developments in popular music in a part of the world that has been less visible and easy to pin down than, say, Africa or Latin America. It is also worth highlighting the extensive discographies accompanying most of the articles, which will be especially valuable for readers lacking regular opportunities to browse the world music racks in major record stores. A number of relevant websites are likewise referenced.

It is, of course, inevitable with a collection of this kind that some contributions will appear more polished than others. Notwithstanding, one or two of the essays would have benefited, in my view, from a firmer editorial hand and more thorough copy-editing. The minor frustrations are far outweighed, however, by the novelty of some of the material, by the dedicatedly cross-disciplinary approach and, not least, by the value of having this work

brought together under one cover. The collection as a whole celebrates the vibrancy of popular music activity and its associated discourses in the Mediterranean region and is genuinely revelatory in its exploration of the many different ways in which the concept of the Mediterranean serves as a point of reference for those involved in the creation, performance, and promotion of popular music.

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Mark Carroll, *Music and Ideology in Cold War Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), ISBN 0 521 82072 3 (hb)

In the preface to his recent book *Music on the Frontline*, Ian Wellens makes wry allusion to the hero of Jules Verne's *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*, who 'follows the trail left by an earlier explorer, Arne Sackneusen, who has left the initials "AS" scrawled on the cavern walls'.¹ Wellens had similarly been going through the Nicholas Nabokov archive at the University of Texas at Austin in the late 1990s, and had kept coming across stickers with the initials 'SS' on them. They were markers left by Frances Stonor Saunders in researching her book on the cultural Cold War, *Who Paid the Piper?*,² a subject which up to that point Wellens had supposed to be his own private fiefdom. Reading Mark Carroll's intriguing new book, I wondered whether he had at any time had the same experience. The Saunders, certainly, was known to him, and was an important source. But as regards the specifically musical ramifications of the subject, the publication of Wellens's book at (presumably) about the time his own went to press must have given him a faintly disagreeable jolt. Wellens had soon 'realised with some relief that [Saunders's] substantial work still left a space for my own'.³ Carroll probably came to the same conclusion about Wellens's book. Still, there is a lot of material in Wellens, and some energetic ideas, that Carroll would surely have liked to take into account, and which any review of his book is bound also to consider at an early stage.

The starting-point for both volumes (as to some extent for Saunders's) is the activities of that curious phenomenon of post-war intellectual politics, the Congress for Cultural Freedom, inaugurated with a conference in Berlin in 1950 as a specifically anti-communist riposte to the Soviet so-called Peace Conferences, of which the most recent – held at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York in 1949 – had set alarm bells jangling in Washington over the sheer range and insidiousness of Soviet cultural propaganda under America's erstwhile ally Uncle Jo Stalin. The Berlin conference led to the establishment of the CCF on a permanent basis with the composer Nicholas Nabokov as its Secretary General; and it seems to have been Nabokov's idea to 'start off its activities with a big bang and in the field of twentieth-century

1 Ian Wellens, *Music on the Frontline: Nicholas Nabokov's struggle against Communism and Middlebrow Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), viii.

2 Francis Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper?: the CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (London: Granta Books, 1999).

3 Wellens, *Music on the Frontline*, viii.

arts' by mounting a major festival of what he grandly labelled 'L'Oeuvre du XX^e siècle' in Paris in the spring of 1952.⁴ Nabokov, a white Russian *émigré* who had been commissioned for a ballet by Diaghilev in the late twenties and had worked in Berlin at the end of the war for the cultural section of the USA's Information Control Division, was an instinctive networker who moved freely around the world of arts and letters, understood the mechanisms of political management and administration, and rapidly turned himself into one of the most effective arts fixers in a world which, as both Wellens and Carroll show, was revolving on an increasingly complex hidden axis of interlocking wheels, springs, and levers. One has only to survey Nabokov's manipulations on behalf of his close friend and compatriot Igor Stravinsky to form an idea of his influence at the point, for instance, where music and money meet. It was Nabokov who in December 1950, on his own initiative, cut through the tangle of Italian theatre politics to secure *The Rake's Progress* (1947–51) for Venice, at a fee of \$20,000 to the composer; Nabokov who clinched the Hamburg-Venice performances of *Threni* (1957–8) in 1958; Nabokov who brokered the Swiss commission for *Movements* (1958–9) and the Israeli commission for *Abraham and Isaac* (1962–3); Nabokov who fixed Stravinsky's trip to Japan in 1959 and his sojourn in Berlin in 1964; and Nabokov who, through his old CCF colleague Arthur Schlesinger, wangled the composer's (and his own) invitation to the White House in 1962, Stravinsky's eightieth year.

Both Wellens and Carroll investigate Nabokov's contribution to the 1952 Paris festival and the effect of his own musical preferences, which were broadly middle-of-the-road modernist, anti-serial but also, of course, anti-Socialist Realist, on the response to the festival in France, a country which, then as now, was particularly touchy on the subject of American cultural dumping, and where communism was a more active force, in art as well as politics, than in any other state in western Europe. But whereas Nabokov is the main focus of Wellens's study (his book is subtitled 'Nicholas Nabokov's struggle against Communism and Middlebrow Culture'), Carroll is more interested in pursuing threads from the CCF sideways and diagonally, for instance by way of the recent traditions of musical *engagement* in France, the prewar activities of Charles Koechlin and the Fédération Musicale Populaire, with their idealistic notions of highbrow popularism, the supposed association of neoclassicism with fascism and of integral serialism with what Adorno would soon be calling the repression of the subjective impulse (99),⁵ Leibowitz's attempt to show, through an analysis of Schoenberg's *Survivor from Warsaw* (1947), that dodecaphony and political commitment were imaginable bedfellows,⁶ and the various stages and facets of Sartre's views on artistic commitment, from his insistence that music was incapable of engagement because it was 'a *non-signifying* art' to his later suggestion that 'the artform might use the expressive freedom in which post-war society invested such faith in a way that confronted society with the consequences of its actions' (130).⁷

4 Nicholas Nabokov, *Bagazh* (New York: Atheneum, 1975), 243.

5 See Theodor Adorno, 'The Aging of the New Music', trans. R. Hullot-Kentor and F. Will, *Telos* 77 (1988), 95–116.

6 René Leibowitz, *L'artiste et sa conscience* (Paris: L'Arche, 1950).

7 Jean-Paul Sartre, 'The Artist and His Conscience', in *Situations*, trans. Benita Eisler (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1965), 222–3, an essay which originally appeared as foreword to Leibowitz's *L'artiste et sa conscience*.

The common denominator in all this, evidently enough, is the assumption, which seems to have been shared by nearly all Carroll's *dramatis personae*, that the principal function of art in the desperate conditions of immediately post-war Europe was to change society for the better. 'An author shot is one less mouth to feed. The least important producer would be a greater loss to the nation,' Sartre had written in 'Situation of the Writer in 1947'. But he had added that 'this gratuitousness, far from grieving us, is our pride, and we know that it is the image of freedom'.⁸ The artist produced nothing of value, while often consuming more than his fair share. Yet art could persuade, and beyond even persuasion it was the one guarantee of man's freedom from the grinding futility of an existence fought out in a world that knew nothing of that existence. Needless to say, Sartre's freedom was not quite the freedom of the Cultural Congress. As has been well known at least since the publication of *Who Paid the Piper?* in 1999, the CCF was one of a number of cultural organizations and publications funded indirectly by the CIA, through a network of money-laundering foundations set up in America for the purpose. The object of these activities was of course to counteract the effects of Soviet propaganda in western Europe, where the Americans, secure in their confidence that the world would always be flagwavingly grateful to them for beating the Nazis, had been slow to recognize the advance of communism and the durability of pro-Soviet sentiment. In France especially, the communists had emerged from the war and the terrible retributions that followed it in a position of huge organizational and intellectual strength, not least because of their wartime association with the Resistance. But everywhere the Left had come through with its power enhanced. The Soviet tactic in the new Cold War was to secure the neutrality of this Non-Communist Left (NCL), the goal of US propaganda was to secure its support. But as so often, this 'defence of freedom' entailed a paradoxical measure of coercion which was quickly sensed and resented by those whom it was most intended to persuade.

Mark Carroll picks his way with a good deal of skill through the tangle of political and philosophical contradictions into which the CCF and Nabokov blundered in Paris in April 1952. It's true that much of the material of his opening chapter, on the background and programming of 'L'Oeuvre du XX^e siècle', has already been gone over in somewhat greater detail by Wellens; true also that Carroll is oddly reticent about the role of the CIA, which he mentions only four times in the entire book, invariably wrapping words like 'alleged' or 'suspected' round what, post-Saunders, few any longer bother to question. What is impressive about his treatment is the agility with which he manoeuvres between the propagandistic intentions of Nabokov's programming, on the one hand, and the intellectual tendencies that were thereby inevitably, if unintentionally, politicized. As a modernist, Nabokov was known as an opponent of Schoenbergian serialism. He had recently engaged in a vitriolic dispute with René Leibowitz in the impeccably NCL pages of *Partisan Review* on the relative merits of Stravinsky and Schoenberg,⁹ and his section of the Paris programme (the chamber music

8 Jean-Paul Sartre, *What Is Literature?*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 179–80.

9 René Leibowitz, 'Music Chronicle: Two Composers – a Letter from Hollywood', Nabokov, 'The Atonal Trail – a Communication', and Leibowitz's reply, in the form of a letter to the editor, all in *Partisan Review* 15 (1948), 361–5, 580–85 and 943.

concerts were organized by Fred Goldbeck) largely avoided serial works, with the single, partial, exception of Dallapiccola's *Canti di prigionia* (1938–41), though it included major pre-serial works by Schoenberg (*Erwartung* (1909)) and Berg (*Wozzeck* (1917–22)) – a distinction not drawn quite sharply enough by Carroll.

Unfortunately for Nabokov, the extended or 'neo' tonalism that he favoured rapidly took on the character, at least in French eyes, of a semi-official language of the US hegemony – a sort of musical Marshall Plan. Carroll quotes approvingly Alexander Ringer's shrewd if over-simple observation that Stravinsky's *Symphony in C* (1938–40), which the composer himself conducted in Paris, was the work of an artist 'perfectly attuned to the subliminal needs of the power elite' (2).¹⁰ He goes too far in suggesting that 'Stalin would have had little trouble with [the] *Symphony in C* had it been dedicated to the glory of the Soviet people rather than to God' (which, strictly speaking, it was not in any case) (31). But the general point he is here over-emphasizing is the perfectly plausible one that in adjudicating between the acceptable and unacceptable fringes of modernism, Nabokov was behaving pretty much like a Soviet cultural commissar, with an only marginally broader horizon. Against this Carroll sets Goldbeck's chamber programme, which, while by no means hypermodern, at least avoided music written before 1900 (which the mainstream programme, despite its title, had far from done), gave prominence to music by living French composers – a courtesy Nabokov had extended to only a handful of works from the ageing and no longer very challenging ranks of the former *Les Six* – and included at least one new work that set the modernist cats among the establishment pigeons, in the shape of Pierre Boulez's *Structures 1a* (1951–2), which Boulez played with Messiaen in the chamber festival's opening concert.

Not the least remarkable aspect of this event is that it provoked an audience disturbance, the only one at the Paris concerts, apparently, apart from the barracking of Cocteau's staging of Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* (1926–7). A girl applauded the Boulez ironically and a young man leapt over a row of seats, hit her in the face, and was promptly led away by a policeman. As a dramatization of Sartre's idea about the confrontational possibilities of even an abstract art, this could hardly have been bettered. Carroll later explores in some detail Adorno's complaint in 'The Aging of the New Music' that the integral serialists of the postwar generation, with their 'fetishism of the means', were consciously avoiding the social responsibility of the artist 'in the face of a modern society beset by the "contraction of freedom [and] the collapse of individuality"' (34). Yet in Boulez it must have been clear that, whatever the automatism of his particular means, the music transmitted a certain rage which might express, amid the moral ruin, the anger of the young against the old or of the heart against the brain, or might even, in the context of 'L'Oeuvre du XX^e siècle', amount to 'an assertion of independence from the cultural and ideological conditioning to which France was being exposed' (14). In refusing to make itself available as propaganda for either the (Soviet) Left or the (American, NATO) Right, *Structures 1a* stood as a symbol of that French non-alignment that would express itself in a generally negative reaction to the festival in the Parisian press,

10 Alexander Ringer, 'Musical Taste and the Industrial Syndrome', *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 5/1 (1974), 152.

would eventually lead to France quitting NATO, and even today has a way of polarizing Euro-American politics at a time when, unlike in 1952, the cultural and economic pressure is almost entirely from one quarter.

It is at this point in Carroll's book that the reader has to remind him/herself of the extent to which histories of modern music tend to distort the picture by their preoccupation only with what, because of factors that are also playing on the actual writing of history, happens to have survived in the modern consciousness. *Structures*, for instance, is a work which came from somewhere, led somewhere else, and can now be seen to have played such and such a role in the 'evolution' of whatever came next. But, as Carroll shows, it was in many ways untypical of its aesthetic environment. Boulez seems to have emerged from wartime study with little or no political baggage, but for those less detached the question of how a progressive (that is, avant-garde) art should relate to a progressive (that is, egalitarian) politics was one of the most important issues of the day. It was still, for instance, possible at the end of the 1940s for a left-wing veteran of the pre-war anti-fascist *Fédération Musicale Populaire* (FMP) such as Charles Koechlin to believe that art for art's sake and a socially useful music were perfectly compatible once one accepted that 'if the work is humane and beautiful it radiates outwards towards mankind' (44).¹¹ Koechlin was perhaps fortunate to die in 1950, at a ripe eighty-three. Boulez's fellow Messiaen pupil Serge Nigg also for a time indulged the fantasy that serialism could be adapted to the needs of a popular, socially useful music, but in the end gave up the unequal struggle and turned to writing large-scale choral works in a more or less Socialist Realist style. It was correspondingly unlucky for the Left in French music around 1950 that the outstanding musician in the tendency – unlike the outstanding writers and painters – was not a creative artist at all but the conductor Roger Desormière, and even unluckier that, soon after being excluded from participation in the Paris festival because of his membership of the French Communist Party, he was the victim of a stroke so devastating that he never spoke, much less conducted, again.

If Carroll had confined himself to a synchronic study of 'L'Oeuvre du XX^e siècle' and the conflicting and unproductive tendencies in French music around 1950 or the self-defeating political undercurrents in the early stages of the Cold War, his book would have been interesting enough but limited in scope, a skirmish in a distant war, a small earthquake with not many dead. Nabokov's festival, after all, reflected a good deal more than it affected, and – however deliciously sinister the idea of Parisian modernist taste being manipulated by a bunch of spooks in Washington – there is little real sign that the CIA did any more than enthusiastically or otherwise fund the event, a fact that Nabokov himself may or may not (as he, improbably, later claimed) have known. There is sadly no serious evidence of any attempt on the part of what Ian Wellens calls the 'uptown eye and ear people' in New York to manufacture a marketable NCL tendency in music to go with the one they were, it seems, inventing in painting in the guise of Abstract Expressionism. Wellens cites Babbitt's so-called 'Cold War Music Theory', but does not see in it any political puppeteering, and he takes a

11 Charles Koechlin, 'Avant-propos: art et liberté (pour la tour d'ivoire)', *Contrepoints* 6 (December 1949), 105.

quizzical look at Darmstadt and Donaueschingen without convincing himself of a secret plot behind the horrors of the New Music.¹²

In effect, in his last and most absorbing chapter, Mark Carroll shows that such explanations are neither necessary nor appropriate. No doubt political and market pressures are germane to the directions taken by new music, as they are to all processes of distribution. But beneath and behind these manipulations, the hypermodern artwork continues of its own accord to articulate the society that gave it birth. If neoclassicism ‘expresses’ (with due apologies to Stravinsky – and the ‘if’ is a biggish one) the knowledge-based, linguistically understood and reassuring surface of organized western elite capitalism, then by the same token the integral serialism of Boulez, Stockhausen, and co. is, in all its ‘intentional non-significance’ (141), the more profound image of a world in thrall to huge political power blocs both of which (not just the wicked Eastern one) maintain their dominance through a technology that by its nature elevates systematic, controlling structures above the interests of the individual. Its rejectionism is recognizably that of a society where all trust in the past has been destroyed. Its negation of style and its obliteration of the space between means and expression – what Adorno called the ‘exalted terrain of the unconscious’¹³ – were a sign not of strength but of anxiety, the tokens of an existential caution belied by the gestural ferocity with which the composer rattles the bars on his prison door.

Whether or not it is fair to imply, as Carroll does in his penultimate paragraph, that the opacity of *Structures* was in some way connected with (‘cannot be separated from,’ is his mildly equivocating formulation) the supposed demand of the ‘Cold War antagonists’ for a ‘transparency in artistic expression’ that would ‘ensure fidelity to their political values’, is to my mind questionable (176). But then Carroll is understandably inclined to attribute to the Paris festival a greater artistic (as opposed to political) significance than it really seems able to bear. The simple fact is that, whatever the covert role of intelligence agencies, money-laundering foundations, and name-only millionaire patrons, ‘L’Oeuvre du XX^e siècle’ was a spectacular but in large measure retrospective festival which summed up fairly accurately the state of the mainstream modern repertoire (among other things) at that time, just as countless large-scale festivals (Edinburgh, Holland, the London Proms, Berlin) have done since. Carroll argues (with Saunders) that the next CCF festival, in Rome in 1954, reflected a shift in Nabokov’s attitude to serial music, which both authors attribute in part to the fact that by that time Stravinsky, Nabokov’s modernist lodestar, had himself adopted serial techniques, in part to a ‘shift in attitude . . . from overt propagandising to a rational discourse’ on the part of the CCF itself (167). But I side here with Wellens in questioning the degree of the supposed shift, much of which is better ascribed to the gradual leakage of ‘classical’ serial music into the general repertoire, the fact that the festival was being presented in conjunction with a composers’ competition and a conference on the situation of modern music, and even the mere fact that it was happening in Rome rather than Paris. Although Stravinsky’s partly serial Septet (1954) was on the Rome programme, few knew much about it beforehand (it

¹² Wellens, *Music on the Frontline*, 91, 118–20.

¹³ Theodor Adorno, ‘The Aging of the New Music’, 108.

had been premiered at a private concert in Washington less than three months before), and Nabokov was almost certainly not among them, since he had not heard the Septet before the Rome performance and was still writing to Stravinsky eighteen months later expressing interest in the rumour that Stravinsky's next work, the *Canticum sacrum* (1955), was going to use serial technique.¹⁴ Whatever the reason for any change in Nabokov's point of view, it had nothing to do with Stravinsky.

This is a small blot on an important and fascinating book – important above all for the range of material it brings to bear on a subject which, whatever the circumstances of this or that concatenation of events, raises endless questions for a postmodern age that sometimes seems to be trying to persuade itself, in its smug pluralism, that it is beyond the influence of ordinary, sublunary life.

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14 Letter of 22 November 1955, partially quoted in *Stravinsky: Selected Correspondence*, ed. Robert Craft, vol. 2 (London: Faber, 1984), 391.