ABSTRACT

Interpreting the Octet '61 by Cornelius Cardew on the piano

This thesis investigates the performer's options in approaching the interpretation of the Octet '61 (1961) by Cornelius Cardew (1936-1981) as a solo piano performance. The Octet '61 is an indeterminate composition for any instrument(s) written using graphic notation. The score comprises sixty symbols and a set of performance instructions. The focus on a solo piano performance is justified for several reasons. It was published together with the February Pieces (1959-1961) for piano, the performance instructions by Cardew include several examples for a solo piano interpretation, and Cardew also composed a determinate version of the piece for solo piano, published as the Winter Potato No.1 (1961.) The thesis places the Octet '61 in the context of Cardew's indeterminate works, such as the February Pieces, Memories of You (1964) and Treatise (1963-1967), and compares it to works by other composers employing chance operations, specifically Music of Changes by Cage, Piano Sonata No.3 by Boulez and Klavierstück XI by Stockhausen. The content of the symbols and performing instructions is examined, and the testimony of Cardew interpreters John Tilbury, John White, David Bedford and Sam Richards is discussed. The content of the Winter Potato No.1 is compared to the Octet '61 symbols, and its relevance to the interpretation of the Octet '61 is gauged. The thesis contends that the Winter Potato No.1 is valuable as a demonstration of Cardew's contemporaneous interpretation of the symbols, but that it should not be used as a guide by other performers of the Octet '61. The Octet '61 was designed to take on a different form with each interpretation, and the use of the Winter Potato No.1 as a template would compromise this intention. The final chapter speculates as to why the Octet '61 is seldom performed at the turn of the 21st Century.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. David Metzer for his invaluable and committed guidance and assistance during the course of this project.

I would also like to thank Professor Jane Coop for the inspiration and motivation that she has given me over the last three years.

I would like to thank C. F. Peters Corporation for granting me permission to include musical excerpts from the Octet '61 by Cornelius Cardew, Copyright © 1964 by Hinrichsen Edition Ltd. C. F. Peters, sole selling agent. Used by permission of C. F. Peters Corporation.
**Part 1: Introduction.**

This thesis examines the issues surrounding the interpretation of Cornelius Cardew’s *Octet '61* (1961), an indeterminate graphic score that can be performed with any instrumentation. The *Octet '61* is discussed exclusively as a solo piano piece, a wider examination of issues relating to an ensemble performance not being possible in a document of this length. The focus on solo piano performance is suitable for several reasons. The *Octet '61* was published together with the *February Pieces* (1959-1961) for piano, and contains several examples for a solo piano interpretation in the instructions. Cardew also composed a determinate version of the *Octet '61* for piano, the *Winter Potato No.1* (1961). This piece was written as an example of how the symbols of the *Octet '61* might be realized. Concentration on the solo piano medium also allows comparison with other seminal keyboard compositions that employ indeterminacy, namely *Music of Changes* by John Cage, *Klavierstück XI* by Karlheinz Stockhausen and *Piano Sonata No.3* by Pierre Boulez.

Cornelius Cardew was born in Gloucestershire, England on 7 May 1936 and trained as a boy chorister at Canterbury Cathedral (1943-50.) He went on to study composition with Howard Ferguson and piano with Percy Waller at the Royal Academy of Music, London (1953-7). By this stage he was already an avant-gardist, putting on a performance of Boulez’s *Structures* for two pianos with fellow student Richard Rodney Bennett - an event that juxtaposed with the conservatism of the ‘Academy at that time. After graduation, Cardew studied with Stockhausen in Darmstadt (1958-60), becoming his assistant after a few months. Stockhausen delegated compositional tasks to Cardew in several pieces including *Carré*. At
this time, Cardew’s own pieces were written using total serialist techniques, his *Piano Sonata No.3* (1957-8) showing a marked similarity to Boulez’s *Piano Sonata No.2* in terms of texture and complexity of notation.

The greatest influence on Cardew’s 1960s style, however, proved to be a concert given in Darmstadt by John Cage and David Tudor. It was Tudor’s performance of Cage’s *Music of Changes* that provoked Cardew into rejecting total serialism and turning instead to indeterminacy. In Cage’s experimentalism, Cardew perceived new avenues of expression not possible in stricter compositional forms. The first works of this phase were the *February Pieces* (1958-61,) and the *2 Books of Study for Pianists* (1958). With his next work, the *Octet ‘61*, Cardew finally dispensed with traditional notation and produced a graphic score to be freely interpreted by the performer. The *Octet ‘61* subsequently led to *Treatise* (1963-7), a 193-page graphic score taking several hours to perform.

The completion of *Treatise* signaled a new change of direction for Cardew, who, by the late 1960s, had become concerned with writing music that could be performed by anyone, regardless of musical training. During the composition of *Treatise*, he had joined the improvisation group AMM¹, and it was the experience of working with them that prompted Cardew to launch The Scratch Orchestra, a group of amateur and professional musicians who performed conceptual and improvised compositions under his guidance. His seminal work for the ensemble was *The Great Learning*, a seven-hour setting of a Confucian text in which

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¹ The meaning of the acronym is a closely guarded secret. Cardew was a member of AMM between 1966 and 1973. Information from telephone interview with John Tilbury 20th December 2006.
‘found’ objects were used together with instruments and voices in a bewildering variety of subtexts.

His experience with The Scratch Orchestra, in essence a musical commune, led him to study Marxism, and then Maoism. By the early 1970s Cardew had become a fervent communist, and renounced his earlier music and the philosophies of Cage, Boulez and Stockhausen as bourgeois cultural products in his book *Stockhausen serves Imperialism*. His music now undertook yet another dramatic change of style, as Cardew, inspired by his new political sensibilities, sought to compose clear, melodious music that would appeal to listeners through its simplicity and non-intellectualism. Examples of these pieces include the *Piano Albums 1972* and *1973*, and the *Thälmann Variations*. Cardew became a prominent political figure in England, organising rallies against racism and fascism. He was tragically killed by a hit-and-run driver near his home in Leyton, East London on 13 December 1981.

Although referencing several of Cardew’s indeterminate works, this thesis is almost exclusively concerned with the *Octet ’61*. It is an important piece in Cardew’s output as it overlaps two distinctive stylistic periods of the composer’s development. It is at once a graphic score - a preparatory work for *Treatise* - yet at the same time it points back to the *February Pieces* by using traditional notation as a means of stimulating the performer.

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Before examining the Octet '61 itself, this thesis will place Cardew’s approach to indeterminacy in context by comparing his techniques to those of his major influences at the time, namely Cage, Boulez and Stockhausen.
Many composers experimented with aleatoricism during the 1950s and 1960s. A variety of inspirations, some scientific, some religious, some aesthetic, led them to indeterminism. Boulez, Cage and Stockhausen are composers whose experiments with indeterminacy influenced subsequent approaches to the concept, including Cardew's approach in the Octet '61.

Stockhausen studied philosophy and philology at the University of Cologne in 1947. At this time he was also an avid reader of popular science, including the writings of Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker. Although not a trained scientist, Stockhausen drew inspiration from new scientific theories and techniques of research.\(^3\) In many ways he approached composition as a ‘research-scientist’, presenting pieces as the result of his experiments rather than as finished works of art, the process of composition being as important as the result. Maconie has stated that:

There is no earthly reason why Stockhausen’s studies in indeterminacy should not be characterized... as exercises in the acoustic realization of concepts in physics for which music arguably provides a more precise and appropriate medium of expression than symbolic language, and from which conclusions of universal application can be deduced.\(^4\)

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\(^4\) Ibid., 229.
Following his study at the University of Cologne, Stockhausen attended seminars given by Werner Meyer-Eppler in 1954-1956. These seminars on information theory included exercises in randomizing words, followed by the randomization of both syllables and single letters to produce aleatoric texts that, despite being reordered, still yielded meaning. Maconie has characterized these techniques as a form of "...analysis - essentially destructive intervention, that is, - applied to systems or structures, such as language or sounds, in order to reveal or introduce perceptual unpredictables normally hidden or otherwise unperceived."\(^5\) Stockhausen was led to the use of indeterminacy in his compositions through Meyer-Eppler’s exercises, as well as through his reading of popular science. Stockhausen’s philosophy of composition has always been characterized by its continual search for groundbreaking concepts. He once gave advice to his students that if they felt a lack of inspiration, they should undertake existential transformation through fasting, foreign immersion or enforced solitude.\(^6\)

Boulez arrived at indeterminacy through his study of literature, specifically through that of the late nineteenth-century symbolist poet Stéphane Mallarmé. He was attracted to Mallarmé’s revolutionary approach to syntax, commenting that, "...language has never been worked and forged in the same way. Mallarmé tried to rethink the foundations of French grammar. He showed this in his poems in an exceptionally condensed manner."\(^7\)

\(^5\) Ibid., 235.

\(^6\) Herbert Henck, *Karlheinz Stockhausen’s Klavierstück X* (Köln: Neuland Musikverlag, 1980), 11-12.

that influenced him in particular was *Un coup de dés*, Mallarmé's last published poem and the summation of his syntactical theories.\(^8\) In this work, Mallarmé sought to use alphabetical characters to produce a musical score, with the size of lettering and its placement on the page indicating the dynamic and pitch of the text to be spoken. The most important influence on Boulez was Mallarmé's use of indeterminacy. Each page of *Un coup de dés* need not necessarily be read from left to right, or from top to bottom. As there are several possible journeys through the page, so there are many different interpretations of the text, a structural possibility that excited Boulez and led him to create the peculiar structure of the *Constellation-Miroir* movement of the *Piano Sonata No.3*.

Even more groundbreaking was Mallarmé's planned *Livre*, in which a book made up of loose-leaf pages could be recombined in any order and yet still sustain a progression of meaning.\(^9\) Boulez examined the drafts of *Livre* after completing the first version of the *Piano Sonata No.3* and was astonished to see that *Un Coup de dés* had led him to the same conceptual developments as its author. The philosophy of *Livre*, in particular the concept of 'density' to be examined below, proved a decisive influence on the composer's plans for the unfinished last movement of the Sonata.

Cage's move towards the use of indeterminacy has been attributed to his study of Eastern philosophies in the 1940s.\(^10\) His outlook on composition was changed as a result of his exposure to the teachings of Buddhism, Taoism and other traditions, influences that led

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\(^8\) together with the unpublished and unfinished *Livre*.

\(^9\) *Livre* remained unfinished at Mallarmé's death in 1898.

him to explore new directions of compositional thought.\textsuperscript{11} Cage chose specific elements of Eastern sources and disregarded others in pursuing the development of his compositional language.

Patterson has identified a major source of Cage’s exposure to Eastern thought as \textit{The Transformation of Nature in Art} by Ananda Coomaraswamy. Although Cage mentioned his familiarity with Coomaraswamy,\textsuperscript{12} he was reluctant to clarify the extent of the influence that his theories had had on him:

...Cage was seldom direct in acknowledging Coomaraswamy’s work, making it difficult at times to distinguish conclusively those coincidental instances of aesthetic parallelism from genuine appropriations. For example, Coomaraswamy invokes the term “impersonality” to refer to the proper manner in which one is to execute tasks artistically. In this context, self-expression, equated with “aesthetic exhibitionism”, or “the substitution of the player for the play,” is interpreted as an artistic vice, and Coomaraswamy continually warns of its degenerate nature. At the very least, the appearance of the artist’s person in any work is intrusive; at worst, it is a glaring indication of defective workmanship.\textsuperscript{13}

Through his exposure to Coomaraswamy’s theory of art, Cage developed the ambition to create music in which the preferences of the composer could not be discerned in the composition. This was derived from Coomaraswamy’s observation that Indian treatises on

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item The works that resulted did not actually express any particular philosophy: “......his works composed through chance operations are no more authentically “Buddhist” than his percussion works are “Balinese.” David W. Patterson, “Cage and Asia: History and Sources,” in \textit{The Cambridge Companion to John Cage}, ed. David Nicholls (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 58.
\item Ibid., 45.
\item Ibid., 44.
\end{enumerate}
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drama "constantly emphasize that the actor should not be carried away by the emotions he represents, but should rather be the ever-conscious master of the puppet show performed by his own body on stage. The exhibition of his own emotions would not be art."\textsuperscript{14} Cage applied this concept to composition, later stating in reference to \textit{4’33'}, that, "I wanted my work to be free of my own likes and dislikes, because I think music should be free of the feelings and ideas of the composer."\textsuperscript{15}

Cage subsequently turned to chance procedures, believing that these techniques would ensure that his compositions would not exhibit his personal imprint. As Revill explains:

In Cage’s view, then, any useful compositional method or technique should serve as a means of emptying the mind of thoughts that would exclude possibilities. Chance operations are particularly effective here, since chance effectively blocks the exercise of one’s accumulated knowledge and prejudices. Chance techniques are an example of what Cage, in “Experimental Music: Doctrine,” came to call “experimental actions” - actions “the outcome of which [is] unknown.” He contrasts such experimental actions to the thoughts of “knowing actions” that get in the way of our understanding of the nature of sound, and makes it clear that such actions, free from abstract thoughts, are the only reasonable way to apprehend the totality of possibilities.\textsuperscript{16}

Cage applied chance by drawing charts of rhythm, dynamic, attack and pitch, and using the \textit{I Ching} to combine the elements in a single event. His first use of this chart


\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 76-77.
A new idea entered which is this: to arrange the aggregates [sic]... in a chart formation. In this case the size of the chart was 14 by 16. That is to say: 14 different sounds produced by any number of instruments (sometimes only one) (and often including percussion integrally) constitute the top row of the chart and favor (quantitatively speaking) the flute. The second row in the chart favors the oboe and so on. Four rows favor the percussion divided: metal, wood, friction, and miscellaneous (characterized by mechanical means, e.g., the radio). The last four favor the strings. Each sound is minutely described in the chart: e.g. a particular tone, sul pont. on the 2nd string of the first violin with a particular flute tone and, for example, a woodblock. I then made moves on this chart of a "thematic nature" but, as you may easily see, with an athematic result.17

Cage traced lines on the chart to create a succession of sounds that follow one another according to no audible logic. He used thematic moves on the chart (such as two cells up, three cells across) to create sequences of sounds. In the first movement, the orchestra part is composed using a chart, while the piano part is freely-composed. In the second movement both the piano and orchestra parts are composed using different charts. Through the use of charts, Cage had found a way to order events randomly - a form in which events had no premeditated relationship between them. Cage had called this approach "no-continuity" in a lecture which he entitled "Lecture on Something." He defined it as "accepting that continuity that happens...[not]... making that continuity that excludes all others... [no-continuity] will

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allow our lives with all of the things that happen in them to be simply what they are and not separate from one another... Anything may happen and it all does go together.”\(^{18}\)

The third movement was composed later in the year. In this movement, sounds were divided into three categories: those for solo piano, those for orchestra, and those for piano and orchestra together. Sounds for the first two categories were taken from the second movement charts, while a new chart was used to create sounds for piano and orchestra together. The new sounds were composed using the *I Ching*, perhaps the most important influence on Cage’s compositional technique.\(^{19}\) As Pritchett explains:

The *I Ching* is based on the interpretation of figures made of six solid or broken lines, which represent the basic principles of weak and strong, *yin* and *yang*. There are sixty-four such hexagrams, which are numbered one to sixty-four, and which are said to represent various situations in life. To consult the *I Ching*, one throws three coins to determine each individual line of a hexagram. These lines, whether strong (solid) or weak (broken), may be either stable or moving; moving lines are considered to be in the process of changing into their opposites. If the hexagram obtained in consulting the book contains any moving lines, a second hexagram is formed in addition to the first by changing all the moving lines into their opposites. For each cell in the chart, three coins were tossed to obtain a single *I Ching* hexagram line. If a stable strong or weak line was obtained by the coin toss, that cell of the new chart would be filled by the corresponding cell from the orchestra or piano chart, respectively. If a moving line was thrown, a new sound combining piano and orchestra would be composed and placed in the chart. The *I Ching* was also used to determine the continuity of sounds and silences in the third movement. Cage first chose a collection of thirty-two simple moves that could be made on the sound chart. He then consulted the *I Ching* once for each measure, noting the hexagram numbers obtained; because of the possibility of moving lines, each measure could be assigned either one or two numbers in the range of one to sixty-

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\(^{19}\) “The *I Ching* was the essential primary mechanism by which Cage generated his compositions from 1951 onward, and yet its texts and terms were never a particularly noticeable part of his aesthetic vocabulary.” Patterson, 51.
four. Each number represented a single sound or silence: thirty-two possible numbers were assigned to the thirty-two moves (thus resulting in sounds), while the remaining thirty-two hexagrams caused silences to occur.20

So whereas Cage had chosen the thematic moves in the first two movements, the responsibility for this selection in the last movement was given to the I Ching. In a letter to Boulez (1950) he described this technique as “throwing sounds into silence.”21 Cage’s focus at that time was in a chance-generated order of events. The events themselves, however, were still composed by him.

The use of chart-based composition allied with the I Ching was taken further in his next work, Music of Changes (1951) for solo piano. The fourteen-by-sixteen structure of the chart used in the Concerto for Prepared Piano and Orchestra did not lend itself ideally to the sixty-four hexagrams of the I Ching, so for Music of Changes Cage used a more suitable eight by eight grid. Cage could thus select a chart element with each toss of three coins, which made thematic moves unnecessary. With each hexagram corresponding to one cell, it also meant that the chance of selection for each chart entry was equal. The use of charts was now applied to every aspect of the piece; sonority, dynamic, duration and attack.22 It is important to note that while the Music of Changes is composed using chance procedures, it requires no indeterminate input on the part of the performer. It is a highly determined piece

20 Ibid., 70-71.

21 Nattiez, 78.

22 Cage had also been dissatisfied with the rhythmic language of compositions such as the String Quartet in Four Parts (1949) and the Six Melodies (1950), which he felt to be predictable and rigid. Subjecting duration to chance procedures made this less so.
produced through a strict and methodical use of indeterminacy. Cage sent the score to Boulez in 1952, the latter responding with great enthusiasm: "...Thank you for the Music of Changes. Which I liked a lot, and which I was so pleased to get. I was absolutely charmed by this development in your style. And am with you all the way. It is certainly my favourite amongst everything you have done. And I have lent it here to all my young composer friends..."23

Stockhausen’s major contribution to indeterministic composition is the Klavierstück XI, (1956.) It provoked a torrent of commentary when it was first published, drawing criticisms from Stravinsky, Cage and Boulez, among others. The piece consists of nineteen sections of similar length that are played in an undetermined order, the performer picking at random the next section to be played as soon as one has been completed. Each section of music ends with a set of performance directions that are to be applied to the next section.24 If a section is randomly chosen for a second time, the performer turns to alternate directions in brackets, which typically involve octave transposition and/or the addition or omission of notes. When a section is randomly chosen for the third time, the performance ends. With nineteen sections overall, the work can take myriad forms.

Maconie has commented that the Klavierstück XI is about “how a text is read.”25 Inspired by his work with Meyer-Eppler, Stockhausen produced a piece of music that could be read many times in many different ways. Because of this, one performance can only show one ‘reading of the text,’ and never the full extent of the work’s possibilities. Each

23 Ibid., 133.
24 The performance directions concern tempo, dynamic level, and type of attack, with a scale of six levels for each variable.
25 Maconie, 162.
performance reveals one side of a multi-faceted whole; grasping the entirety of the work would require a vast amount of performances.26

*Klavierstück XI* was criticized by Stravinsky for involving the performer in what he felt to be the task of the composer, namely the ordering of musical events. To Stravinsky, the meaning of musical material was largely determined by tempo, and leaving it and other elements to chance stripped the composer of the control that he should exercise on the work’s final shape.27 Conversely, Cage criticized it for not going far enough in its use of indeterminacy, remarking that it was contradictory to combine determinate pitch material with indeterminate performance directions.28 Boulez took yet a different view; while impressed with the conceptual basis of the work, (which was obviously related to the theories of Mallarmé,) he concluded that the identity of the piece was “inherently unstable,” as the spectrum of interpretative differentiation was so wide that a typical selection of performances could not possibly be aurally identified as the same composition.29

Boulez’s *Piano Sonata No.3* (begun in 1956)30 attempts to combine indeterminacy with serial compositional techniques of pitch organization.31 The use of indeterminacy in this composition is highly controlled, with all pitch content and performance directions being pre-

26 Harvey has commented that, “In Lévi-Straussian terms it is like having to learn roughly the extent and nature of a language before we can appreciate that selection from it which is a particular speech.” Jonathan Harvey, *The Music of Karlheinz Stockhausen* (London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1975), 77.


30 At the time of writing it remains unfinished.

31 The pitch material is serially determined, while section order is indeterminate.
determined, and chance procedures being applied solely to the ordering of musical sections and the inclusion or omission of optional material.

The sonata follows a five-movement plan, of which movements two and three have been completed and published, while movement one has been completed but awaits revision. Movements four and five remain unfinished.

1. *Antiphonie*
2. *Trope*
3. *Constellation-Miroir*
4. *Strophe*
5. *Séquence*

The *Miroir* section is *Constellation* played backwards. The possible ordering of the movements follows the idea of a constellation, with several routes available through the five sections. As only two movements are currently available there are four possible versions according to the instructions set out by Boulez:

1. *Constellation*
2. *Constellation-Miroir*
3. *Trope, Constellation*
4. *Constellation-Miroir, Trope*
A completed version of the work would enable eight possibilities of ordering the five movements. The optional nature of the sequence is also applied to material within the movements. *Trope*, for instance, consists of four sections; while their order is determined, an interpretation can begin with any of the sections. In addition to this, one of the sections, *Glose*, can change its position with the neighbouring section *Commentaire*, resulting in a total of eight formal possibilities.

It is the *Constellation-Miroir* movement that most deeply draws upon Mallarmé’s idea of open-form. Mallarmé’s undoing of the reversal of left-right event sequence is here applied to musical form, with the three sections of *Constellation* played in opposite order in *Miroir*. The form is more complicated than a simple ABCBCA, as there are five structures that span the movement, two of which are “points”, (pointillistic material,) and three of which are “blocks”, (compact, vertical groupings of material.) These five structures are played in alternation, beginning and ending with “points” sections. A short sixth section entitled *mélange* is added, its place determined by the overall movement plan of the performance. *Mélange* comprises three small sections of “points” and three of “blocks”.

There are then, several possible routes for the performer to take through the Sonata. Dominique Jameux has described it as, “... a supervised freedom, obeying a ‘highway code’

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32 In the performance directions Boulez names this as the “microcosm of the whole constellation.”
that suggests certain sequences, ordains some, forbids others."\textsuperscript{33} Boulez's perception of the failure of Stockhausen's \textit{Klavierstück XI} is one that he is anxious not to repeat with the eventual completion of his work. Boulez is keen to produce a modular work in which the reshuffling of sections will always result in a comprehensible whole, something that he believes Stockhausen's composition fails to do. To date, Boulez has not been able to find a way past this challenge in the last movement, \textit{Strophe}, which has been planned as a musical embodiment of Mallarmé's unfinished \textit{Livre}.

Mallarmé's vision for \textit{Livre} was of a book whose accumulation of meaning did not depend on the order of its pages. In a traditional text, the density of meaning of, for instance, page 30, is greater than that of page 1, through the act of reading and absorbing pages 1-29. Mallarmé's conceptual ambition was to design pages of text that could be arranged in any order by the reader, yet still accumulate meaning in this manner. This concept of a work in open-form that achieves a constant enrichment of meaning was one that attracted Boulez greatly. The formal problems associated with creating a musical work that develops its density of meaning regardless of the ordering of its sections has not yet been solved by Boulez. He has said that the 'variability' he needs is 'incompatible with notation as it is used at the present time.'\textsuperscript{34}

From the late 1950s onwards the three composers continued to take separate paths. Boulez and Stockhausen devoted their attention to more fixed forms of composition, while Cage continued to explore indeterminacy. With \textit{Variations VII} (1966), which uses radios,


\textsuperscript{34} Stacey, 83.
geiger counters, and phone taps, he came closer to achieving his ambition of creating a piece in which his likes and dislikes were not discernible. Despite the use of chance procedures in the composition of *Music of Changes*, his preferences were still present through his choice of pitch material and instrumentation. In *Variations VII*, however, the performers caught sounds that were being produced elsewhere without the knowledge of the composer: "The air is filled with sounds that are inaudible, but that become audible if we have receiving sets. So the idea of *Variations VII* is simply to go fishing, so to speak, in a situation you are in, and pick up as many things as you can, that are already in the air."\(^{36}\)

In *Branches* (1976), the performers used plant material and contact microphones to produce amplified resonances of plant vibrations. In this composition, Cage found a form of improvisation in which the performer could not possibly know his instrument, and therefore could not apply pre-learned knowledge or experience in the traditional musical sense. The structure of the performance was determined by chance operations, with eight minutes being subdivided into a randomized number of movements, each calling for a particular ‘instrument’ (eg. a particular spine of a particular cactus,) to be played by each performer.

The next chapter will examine Cardew’s approach to indeterminacy, and relate his works to those of Boulez, Cage and Stockhausen.

\(^{35}\) Cage chose his instruments in *Variations VII*, but he would not have known what sounds they were going to produce.

Part 3: Indeterminacy in Cardew’s compositions.

When Cardew became Stockhausen’s assistant in 1957 he was a disciple of serialism, his *Piano Sonata No. 3* following a strict serial plan and containing complicated rhythms and pointillistic textures reminiscent of Boulez’s *Second Piano Sonata*. While assisting Stockhausen in Cologne, he heard several performances of American experimentalist music given by Cage and Tudor, which stirred in him the desire to follow similar directions. Like many composers at the time, he saw Cage’s style as a liberation from the restrictions of integral serial styles. Cardew was attracted to Cage’s use of proportional notation in *Music of Changes*, and of graphic notation in works such as *Aria* (1958). Many composers have used non-conventional notation for the reason that it liberates the performer from the associations of traditional classical music. Although attracted to Cage’s use of indeterminacy and graphic notation, Cardew showed no interest in using the *I Ching* or other chance-based compositional procedures.

The influence of Cage led Cardew to experiment with graphic notation. On his return to London in 1961 Cardew took a course in graphic design, a training which was to influence the unique notational style of the *Octet ’61* and *Treatise*. Cage had shown him a type of composition which liberated notational language, but Cardew was to develop a style that would be different to and more complex than that of Cage’s *Aria*.37 Cage’s subsequent

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37 Cage’s *Aria* uses simple lines to communicate pitch and duration, and ten color/texture combinations to communicate timbre. The performer has the freedom to determine the duration of sections, the duration of the performance, and also what timbres the ten combinations will represent. Black squares signify any type of noise, with Cage adding in the performance instructions that “all aspects of performance (dynamics etc.) which are not notated may be freely determined by the singer.” John Cage, *Aria* (New York: Peters, 1960)
developments were geared towards removing the influence of the composer from the composition, whereas the development of notation in Cardew’s graphic works was specifically directed at changing the relationship between performer and composer. This ambition was explored in pieces such as the Octet '61 and Treatise. Tilbury comments that, “In these pieces Cardew’s concern for the relationship between composer and performer finds expression and this was to assume a central position in his compositions and music-making over the next decade.”

Cardew wanted to develop a compositional model where the performer contributed to the creation of form, rather then interpreting what had already been determined. Cardew was a committed performer himself, in particular giving celebrated interpretations of works by Cage, Feldman, Brown and Wolff. It is no surprise that his first compositions to use chance, the 2 Books of Study for Pianists (1958) for two pianos and the February Pieces (1959-1961) for solo piano, give considerable freedom to the performer in shaping the form of the piece. Referring to the performer’s role in these works, Parsons comments that, “…he invited them,

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38 “...Cardew’s... application of aleatory was highly idiosyncratic and his admiration for Cage had little to do with Cage’s compositional techniques; what impressed him was Cage’s rejection of the commodity fetishism that had invaded musical composition, his liberation of the performer from the constraints of oppressive notational complexities, and the “democracy” inherent (at least in theory) in Cage’s scores.” Jonathan Tilbury, “The Music of Cornelius Cardew,” in Cornelius Cardew Memorial Concert Programme Notes (London: Queen Elizabeth Hall, 1982), 8.


in effect, to become not only interpreters but also collaborators in the realisation of the music.”

Whereas Stockhausen and Boulez believed that they could control the identity of an indeterministic composition by systematizing chance elements, Cardew took an experimental approach similar to Cage. The process of development that ultimately led to the creation of *Treatise* entailed several works, each exploring different degrees of indeterminacy applied to different parameters of composition and performance.

The *2 Books of Study for Pianists* use indeterminacy by organizing the material within a mobile form. The performers choose the order of fixed material within a given time-frame. The use of a range of dynamics containing six scales is reminiscent of the ranges employed by Stockhausen for dynamics and other variables in his *Klavierstücke*. The *February Pieces* are only partially indeterminate, with fixed pitch material and rhythms, coupled with proportional duration similar to *Music of Changes*. Indeterminacy is applied through the performer’s control of ordering material and deciding the overall length of the composition. This indeterminacy, with the performer able to make his or her own conscious decisions to determine the variables, is similar to Boulez’s *Piano Sonata No.3*. It contrasts with Stockhausen’s *Klavierstück XI*, where variables of material order and performance directions are determined by chance through the performer looking randomly at the page.

An interesting aspect of the *February Pieces* is the use of harmonics through silently-depressed notes and the re-sounding of sustained notes through sympathetic resonance. These

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41 Michael Parsons, Liner Notes from *Cornelius Cardew piano music 1959-70*, Jonathan Tilbury, Matchless Recordings MRCD29, 1996, CD.
effects produce a wide variety of timbres, treating the piano in a very imaginative way. As Parsons comments, “this goes straight to the heart of the characteristic resonance of the piano, and the way it is actually heard... is a much more realistic way of ‘controlling’ sounds than by imposing serial principles on them...” He also adds that “Tempi are not determined by an abstract scale of chronometric values, but are relative to the situation, to the activity and perception of the performer.” 42 Again, this differs from the Klavierstück XI, where the tempo of each section is determined by the instructions given at the end of the preceding section. In the February Pieces, tempo is determined by the performer. Whereas the form of Klavierstück XI in performance is decided by chance, the form of the February Pieces is decided by the performer. This concept of the performer playing an active role in influencing the shape of the piece was to develop through the following works.

*Autumn 60* (1960) is an orchestral piece that subverts the traditional notion of the conductor’s authority, using indeterminacy by allowing the performers to choose when to follow the conductor’s directions. The score contains fixed pitch material in measures with no time signatures. The performers choose which pitches they play, although some pitches are specified for particular instruments or instrumental groups. The conductor gives beats, but they can be either ‘vague or distinct’ and can be any length of time apart. The musicians are instructed to ignore two beats of their choice at some point in the performance. The piece can start and stop anywhere, but these points must be determined beforehand. These freedoms

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42 Ibid
lead to a limited degree of aleatoricism within a controlled framework, the piece containing a basic skeleton that can be discerned in all but the most severely subversive performances.\footnote{Information from Cornelius Cardew, \textit{Four Works: Autumn '60, Material, Solo with Accompaniment, Memories of You}, (London: Universal Edition, 1964,) and Edward Venn, “Cardew’s ‘Autumn '60 for Orchestra” \textit{Tempo} No.238 (October 2006), 2-7.}

Greater interpretative freedom is granted to the performer in the \textit{Octet '61}. The work consists of a chart of sixty-one symbols\footnote{Symbol number one is also symbol number sixty-one.} which are for the most part mutations of traditional musical notation. Although it contains pitch material, these pitches do not have to be played. References to durational values present in the symbols are relative to each other, not to a particular tempo. The symbols are arranged in an order, but the piece can be begun at any point, and can be played on any instrument or combination of instruments.\footnote{The following chapter will discuss the \textit{Octet '61} in greater detail.} The scope of interpretation open to the performer in the \textit{Octet '61} is immense, and it is impossible to guarantee that any two interpretations will be recognizable as the same piece. This makes the \textit{Octet '61} an important breakthrough for Cardew, in that the content of an interpretation, its aural identity, is determined mostly by the performer. The altered role of the composer is codified in the introductory notes, with Cardew saying that, “If the most important function of a composer were the stimulation of an interpreter this piece would be a composition.”\footnote{Cornelius Cardew, \textit{February Pieces for Piano and Octet '61} (London: Peters Edition, 1962)}

The \textit{Octet '61} is a major development from the \textit{February Pieces} and \textit{Autumn 60} in that the notation is largely graphical. Yet the existence of pitch material indicates that Cardew had not yet completely abandoned the relationship between traditional notation and musical communication. Cardew realized that in this respect the concept of \textit{Octet '61} was not entirely

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44 Symbol number one is also symbol number sixty-one.

45 The following chapter will discuss the \textit{Octet '61} in greater detail.

clear. Concerning this he wrote, "...the greatest music is always explicit - like Webern, if you dig him. In *Octet '61* I realise that explicitness has been sacrificed. In this research it is always necessary to sacrifice trusted concepts. As long as there is no blur in the thinking..."\(^{47}\)

Echoes of Stockhausen as the 'music-scientist' can be heard in this statement, with Cardew referring to his composition as 'research.' That Cardew viewed the *Octet '61* as an experiment, provides an interesting challenge to the performer wishing to gauge how to apply their freedom in an interpretation of the piece. This issue will be dealt with later on in this thesis.

*Memories of you* (1964), is the first graphic score created by Cardew that dispenses completely with pitch material, rhythm and duration. It is a series of diagrams that notate a succession of sounds to be created in physical relation to a grand piano, the sounds beginning and/or ending at a specified location around the instrument. The only fixed elements are the presence of a grand piano and the instruction that all sounds are to be played only once.

There are several ways in which the sounds can be ordered: appearing in a series of columns, each column must be completed before the next is commenced, but the performer is free to travel up and down the columns in any direction. The performer is to use three different objects, (called A, B and C), to produce the sounds, and the pedal may be used freely. The sounds can occur in three ways - at floor level, above floor level, or at both simultaneously. In this work Cardew allows many aspects of performance to be indeterminate, yet restricts the performer by allowing him only three objects with which to create his sounds, and by structuring the locations in which these sounds are produced. Although the absence of pitch

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material and open selection of objects provides a wide range of potential sounds, the decisions available to the performer regarding the ordering of events are tightly controlled, reminiscent again of the structured use of indeterminacy as applied by Boulez and Stockhausen.

It was with the composition of *Treatise* (1963-7) that Cardew realized a role for the performer in which all aspects of interpretation were ultimately determined by his or her conscious thought. In its use of indeterminacy *Treatise* went further than *Memories of You* and the *Octet '61*, allowing the performer to react to the visual patterns of the score without constraint. Tilbury’s description of *Treatise* is succinct:

Treatise, inspired by Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus*, comprises 193 pages; a continuous weaving and combining of a host of graphic elements (of which only a few are recognizably related to traditional musical notation) results in a long musical ‘composition’, the meaning of which in terms of sound is not specified in any way. Any number of performers, using any media, are free to participate in a ‘reading’ of *Treatise* and to interpret it in an individual way. Cardew’s idea was that each musician should give of his own music in response to the score, which also shows considerable evidence of his graphic skills.48

Cardew’s activities as a member of the improvisation group AMM greatly influenced the composition of *Treatise*. In the improvisations of AMM there were no sounds that were forbidden. The musical aim of the group was to take advantage of the transient nature of

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musical performance by avoiding the conscious building of structure. Improvisation was exploratory, sounds following each other with only their immediate relationship in mind, not their place within an overall structure. *Treatise* was designed to follow a similarly unstructured pattern, with no prescribed language for dynamic, tempo or attack density - gradations of which are traditionally used to create climaxes. The performer is free to react to the visual stimulus in any way, this philosophy encapsulated in the performance instruction, “No player is told what to play; each has to find this out for himself by reading the score.”

Referring to the function of the score in influencing the performer, Parsons comments that:

*...Treatise* is unique in that the score provides no specific musical material. The role of the score is here irrevocably altered; it no longer determines the sounding music, nevertheless its influence remains subtle and pervasive, acting as a unifying focus for the players’ attention. The interplay and development of its graphic elements may suggest degrees of activity, continuity, differentiation, dynamic flow or interruption in the shaping of a performance. They may suggest ways of listening and responding to sounds as well as of producing them. The score is inherently problematic in that it forces its interpreters to invent their own rules, to question and re-evaluate their activity as it unfolds, and to rely on their intuitive responses to a developing situation.

It is this sophisticated concept of collaboration that created for Cardew a way of achieving the performer-composer relationship that he was striving for, where the performer, although stimulated by the composer, is free to choose his or her response. The composer has created the score, but its translation into sound is wholly determined by the performer.

Eddie Prevost, a fellow member of AMM, has speculated about the motivations that drove Cardew to produce *Treatise*. In his opinion the work is radical, innovative and rebellious - as much a political statement as a purely musical conception:

...Cardew also was not unmoved by the history of jazz and he too, despite the obvious educational and musical advantages he had enjoyed, felt repressed and alienated the conventions of society in general and the musical establishment in particular ...Obviously what we all had in common was a rejection of the predominating modes... The classical and romantic tradition which still predominates, superseded the less formal ways of making music characteristic of pre-industrial society. There the composer and performer were interdependent and often the same person. Dowland’s close friend Henry Peacham, author of *The Compleat Gentleman* (1622) said: “...it is a sign of good breeding to play extempore.” Clearly the musicians of that time had a more integrated relationship to the music they performed than the later orchestral players of the classical and romantic periods... ...Whatever the case of musicians in those times, the commodity ethos prevails in our own times - even if it is camouflaged by an ‘art for arts sake’ mentality, which professes a neutral apolitical appreciation of culture attached to neo-platonist notions of perfect form...\[50\]

Prevost believes that there was an element of nostalgia in Cardew’s radicalism. He contends that by subverting the conventions of his time, Cardew was searching for a composer-performer relationship that he perceived to have existed in past times. In so doing, he created a collaborative style that makes varied yet satisfying demands on the performer, as David Bedford has commented:

Speaking as a performer in many of Cardew's early works, it must be said that the experience was totally rewarding. Our creativity was constantly being challenged, and the empathy of the performers, channelled into producing a coherent piece of music despite sometimes sketchy and sometimes paradoxical instructions, was often remarkable... With Cardew, "indeterminacy" was not simply another compositional technique displacing a previously discredited one; it was a logical musical expression of his humanism, and humanism was the vital thread which ran through his entire output from start to finish.51

Following this period of indeterminate composition, the "humanism" mentioned by Bedford became a greater and greater influence on his composition. Cardew moved towards community improvisation through the composition of The Great Learning (1968-1970), and the organisation of The Scratch Orchestra (1969-72). His political conversion to Marxism, and then Maoism in the early 1970s led to his rejection of indeterminacy and avant-garde ideology in his book Stockhausen Serves Imperialism (1974).

Part 4: Performing the *Octet '61*, and its relation to the *Winter Potato No.1*

The *Octet '61* is a graphic score consisting of sixty symbols. It includes a set of instructions for interpretation and some examples prepared by the composer. Despite being a graphic score, much of the content is comprised of traditional musical elements. The content of the symbols can be grouped into the categories shown in Figure 1, with many symbols containing material from more than one category:

Figure 1:

1) Pitches (e.g. symbol 2)
2) Numbers (e.g. symbol 22)
3) Dynamics (e.g. symbol 51)
4) Clefs (e.g. symbol 2)
5) Articulations (e.g. symbol 52, *tremolando*)
6) Directions (e.g. symbol 16)
7) Repeat signs (e.g. symbol 10)
8) Other (e.g. symbol 37)
The graphic element of the Octet '61 is largely built around conventional notation. The two categories not based on notation, numbers 6 and 8, have only five and four symbols each, respectively.\(^1\) Pitch content is a significant aspect of the piece, with forty-six symbols including pitches. However, whereas the pitches of Boulez’s Piano Sonata No.3 and Stockhausen’s Klavierstück XI are to be played as written, the pitches of the Octet '61 are to be ‘interpreted’ - thus, a valid response to symbol 2 could be to play every pitch other than E-flat.

Some symbols are an interesting melange of the categories outlined above, the resulting mixture creating a confusion that will be dealt with differently by each performer. These symbols, shown in Figure 2, subtly blur boundaries between different conventional notations.

Figure 2:

\[
\begin{array}{ccccc}
\text{4} & \text{11} & \text{17} & \text{26} & \text{45} \\
\end{array}
\]

Symbol 4 is an equal amalgamation of a piano dynamic marking, an eighth-note tail and a flat (accidental) sign, whereas symbol 11 is a combination of a pianissimo dynamic marking and two conjoined eighth-note tails. In these cases, it is up to the performer to decide which of these components, or which combination of components, he or she is going to translate into sound. Symbols 17, 26 and 45 offer a different type of mixture in having one

\(^1\) Symbols 9, 13, 16, 35, 59 in category 6, and symbols 37, 46, 57, 58 in category 8.
dominating component and the hint of another. Symbol 17 is a fortissimo with the hint of a
top G, symbol 26 a sharp with the suggestion of a fortissimo, and symbol 45 a number three
with the insinuation of a bottom F. One possibility would be to interpret symbols 4 and 11
with an equal weighting to each component, and symbols 17, 26 and 45 with an unequal
weighting towards the prominent component. Hence, symbol 11 could become two
pianissimo eighth notes, and symbol 17 a general fortissimo sound that happened to include a
top G as part of its make-up. This is just one possibility, however, as Cardew states in the
performing instructions, “All procedures can be legitimized.”\textsuperscript{2} The vagueness of the notation
is a deliberate factor that ensures an individual response from the interpreter.

The more abstract symbols in the Octet '61 take this concept of collaboration between
composer and interpreter further. Unlike the symbols above, which bear some basic uniform
meaning to the vast majority of interpreters,\textsuperscript{3} these symbols provoke a wide spectrum of
subjective interpretations. Whereas it could be argued that by including a pianissimo in
symbol 11 and a piano in symbol 4, Cardew could expect many interpretations of these
symbols to be relatively quiet, there can be no such predictions for the following symbols,
shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3:

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.8\textwidth]{figure3.png}
\caption{Symbols from Cardew's notation.}
\end{figure}


\textsuperscript{3} Symbol 22, for instance, will communicate and represent the number 2 to almost any performer.
These symbols are among the most complex in the score. Symbol 37 could be seen as including at least a cross, an axis, a number eight and two color pitches or whole-notes; symbol 46 can be seen as including a number four, an arrow, a square; symbol 57 includes a number seven, a dot and a cross; while symbol 58 comprises several overlaid shapes which are difficult to separate and identify. A methodology for the interpretation of the symbols is provided by Cardew in the instructions, (Figure 4.)

Figure 4:

Interpretation:
Each sign is a musical event.
The piece is cyclic (start anywhere, joining the end to the beginning, or the beginning to the end if you are reading backwards) and may be played for any length of time. End anywhere.
Not necessarily for piano.
This manuscript may be copied freely by hand.
Use this sign anywhere and as often as desired.

In the signs:
+ plus/more
- minus/less
· staccato/short
— longer/medium duration
Δ long/longest possible
‡ trill or tremolo
✓ read above the line in treble clef, below in bass
\ slide
come back to here as often as you wish, going as far ahead each time as you wish
end here (before continuing, if you wish to do so) as many times as you wish, picking up from as far back as you wish
out, away; something completely different. This sign should be interpreted only once in any performance of the piece.
these pitches may be used as often as required and in any register, or several registers (colour pitches).
these pitches may be used as often as required, but only in the given register (functional pitches.)
Free use may be made of notes apart from those provided.
The interpretation of the numbers 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 is free (uniformity is not required).
The length of time taken for each sign is free; they also overlap.
No part of any sign is obligatory.

Applying these instructions to symbol 37, we can deduce that the cross or axis translates into “plus/more.” This could, for instance, be applied to an increase of dynamics, tempo, or note density, but paradoxically to a decrease as well - a *diminuendo* could be seen as an increase in quietness. The absence of a clef might lead the performer to disregard the two circles as color pitches, and recognize them instead as a number eight. Symbol 37 in its entirety could therefore be interpreted as eight stages of an increase in a variable, such as dynamics. Symbol 57 also contains a cross, while the dot can be interpreted as staccato or short in accordance with the instructions.
Symbol 46 remains problematic as there is no mention of a square or an arrow in the performing instructions. A performer wishing to include either of these possible components in their interpretation must therefore rely on their own imagination. Symbol 58 also falls into this category. A possible approach could be to construct interpretations of symbols 40-45 and 59-60 first, before tailoring the translation of symbols 46 and 58 into something that fits within this context.

Symbols 21 and 31, shown in Figure 5 below, pose a different challenge to the interpreter by sharing material between them. In developing his or her interpretation, the performer must decide whether this material will be played only once or at both occasions.

Figure 5:

The black (functional) pitch in between the staves could be interpreted as either an A below middle C, (belonging to symbol 21,) or as a top B (belonging to symbol 31.) An interpreter might decide that the material belongs to symbol 31, as the bottom leger-line
would be unnecessary if belonging to symbol 21. Or they might decide that the functional pitch with the number 4 belongs to symbol 21, while the two color pitches and the number 5 belong to symbol 31. Again, this decision might be made within the context of decisions concerning other symbols, a methodology that is supported by Cardew's instructions:

The signs should be allowed to suggest something concrete; a sound, a technique. The traditional connotations of signs or parts of signs should provide sufficient context for a concrete interpretation of at least one sign by almost any musician. This done, his utterance of the one sign should provide sufficient context for the comprehension of neighbouring signs. And so on...

Hence an interpreter can begin his reading with a symbol that he understands, such as symbol 2, before moving on to the more unusual symbols, placing them in the context that has been decided. That Cardew has suggested such a strategy would support the argument that a series of unconnected moments is not his intention for the piece. However, as this remains only a suggestion, a disparate collection of sounds can still be a valid response to the score.

Options of interpretation suggested by the instructions are numerous. As “free use may be made of notes apart from those provided”, a potential performance could include playing all eighty-eight notes of the piano throughout each symbol. The overlapping of different symbols could lead to dense superimposed textures in which individual symbols become obscured, although this would appear to contradict the spirit of the instruction that “each sign
is a musical event.” To help the potential performer, Cardew gives further advice considering the approach of interpretation and form:

Take No.22: two whats? An exploration of No. 21 may provide some answers. For example: No 22 could consist of a second version of No. 21, or No. 21 itself played twice more. Or one could retain two notes of No. 21, or two anythings, or anticipate two notes or anythings of No. 23, the two fortess perhaps.

Playing from the score is not recommended except for experienced performers. A version or many different versions may be made, constituting a bloc of material from which the interpreter can draw...

The piece is an opportunity for an interpreter. It demands no very sophisticated formal approach (the performer does not have to be a composer, he merely has to discover and use that modicum of creativity that is available to all) for the simple identity of the piece is given once for all by the sign : the piece will be known and remembered (if at all) as ‘the piece where something peculiar happens in the middle.’ Any composer or potential composer interpreting the piece and wishing to take the problem of form on his own shoulders will probably interpret at the beginning or the end.

The sign that can be used anywhere and as often as desired provides the key to very simple unproblematic interpretations: make one short characteristic version of this sign and use it as punctuation. Break the piece down into a series of statements separated by this sign... All procedures can be legitimized.

If the most important function of a composer were the stimulation of an interpreter this piece would be a composition. The stimulation of the interpreter is a facet of composition that has been disastrously neglected. Disastrously under-stimulated performances of contemporary music are the result (for here, past glories cannot act as stimuli.) When performed, the piece may be judged as a musical experience (sounds brought together by human agency) and thrown down the drain. No one is to blame. My reputation is free to suffer. This piece is not gilt-edged.

The existence and use of the sign which can be repeated at any point is a significant variable in the interpretation of the work. This sign (referred to in the above quotation as the sign that can be used anywhere and as often as desired) could be used as a ritornello, separating the other symbols into paragraphical groups, or as an ideé fixe, periodically returning as a unifying element. It could even be interpreted as an ostinato figure, remaining...
in the texture throughout while other signs are overlaid upon it. Conversely, it is possible to perform the piece without the repeated sign at all, in which case a clearly perceptible structure (if desired) has to be achieved through other means.

The special sign, symbol 35 ("out, away, something completely different,"') is by definition an interpolation; homogeneity of the material around it must be prepared in order for the sign to have its desired effect. This necessity at once places constraints on the performer's interpretation; the performance cannot have such a degree of variety that the appearance of this symbol goes unnoticed. Cardew's comment that "...any composer or potential composer interpreting the piece and wishing to take the problem of form on his own shoulders will probably interpret \( \ast \) at the beginning or the end..." creates further issues. Although given as a recommendation and not as a requirement, a performer who wishes to remain faithful to Cardew's conception will find it difficult not to follow this advice. It seems strange that Cardew felt inclined against an interpretation that placed symbol 35 at the center; after all, this could make the interpolation of the symbol the central climax of the work and ensure its place in the audience's memory.

The performer's use of repeats is also an important decision. The repeat signs shown in Figure 6 do not function in the traditional way, as explained by the instructions on page 33.

Figure 6:
Despite the multitude of possibilities, some conclusions can be drawn. The ‘begin repeat’ sign, to which the performer can repeatedly return to, has the possibility of becoming a feature for the listener, facilitating the repetition of material and thus its recognition, (although the performer may alternatively choose to vary the material beyond recognition on its repeated appearances.) The ‘end repeat’ sign, at which the performer may stop to go back as far as they like, could function as a signal that something is about to happen. For instance, a fixed, recognizable version of symbol 44 could be prepared, and at each point that it is reached the performer could stop before launching into a new interpretation of preceding symbols. The possible use of repeats is further widened by the piece being cyclic, (it can start with any symbol and join the end to the beginning,) and also that the performer is allowed to perform the symbols in reverse order. The performer may wish to begin by deciding where the interpretation will begin and end, as well as the direction in which the score will be read, before determining how the interpretation of individual symbols can fit into the structure.

Some performers would be attracted towards creating an overall structure based on the pitch content of the symbols. This would seem to go beyond Cardew’s intentions for the piece, the composer stating that it ‘...demands no very sophisticated formal approach...’ and has a ‘...simple identity... given once for all by the sign *.’ This makes a complicated pitch structure unnecessary, although not necessarily incorrect.

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4 It is theoretically possible for a performance of the Octet ‘61 to consist entirely of symbol 32 endlessly repeated.
Cardew’s examples of how symbol 19 might be interpreted show a clear translation of visual content into music, (Figure 7 below). The pitch content, (E, F, and D-flat), is clearly evident in each example, as is the dynamic marking pianissimo. It is interesting that each example also has a crescendo - this has most probably been inferred from the ‘+’ made by the tail of the D-flat accidental.\(^5\) In the bottom-left example, the indication of ‘plus/more’ has also been interpreted as an increase in attack density. Cardew has used a variety of pedal markings.\(^6\) There are two examples without pedal, a third with the sustaining pedal depressed throughout, another using the sustaining pedal to hold two pianissimo D-flats four octaves apart, and a fifth using the sostenuto pedal to hold a silently depressed F.\(^7\)

Figure 7:

\(^5\) ‘+’ meaning ‘plus/more’ according to the instructions.

\(^6\) Whereas the later composition, Memories of You, allowed the performer free use of the pedal, the instructions for the Octet ’61 do not mention the pedal.

\(^7\) The sostenuto technique was liberally used by Cardew in the February Pieces.
Cardew also provides the interpreter with an example of the first six symbols as they might appear in a performance, together with an explanation of how the symbols correlate to the realizations, (Figure 8.)

Figure 8:

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1. Seven taken literally as a configuration in musical space. Six Cs, one added to each of the first six signs.
2. Add E flats.
3. Three As. Five A flats. Three sustained notes forte: the others piano or pianissimo. Five-note cluster-type chord.
4. Two chords piano following the dot-dash rhythm of the Gs in 3.
5. Slide from E down towards B.
6. Six different registers for D (colour pitch). Seven described as in 1. One described as subsequent cluster. One C given at given pitch - longer duration."
```
Cardew overlaps the pitch content of the first four symbols, and interprets the number 1 in symbol 6 as a cluster. Interpretative consistency is created by the identical translation of the number 7 in symbols 1 and 6, while variety is achieved through different dynamics, articulations and the use of the sostenuto pedal.

Further evidence of Cardew’s approach to the symbols is provided by *Winter Potato No.1*. This piece is a written-out version of the *Octet ‘61* by Cardew himself - an example of the composer fulfilling the task that he set for the performer (although still needing actual performance to complete the creation.) It might seem ironic that Cardew composed a piece re-addressing the balance between performer and composer, and then produced a version of the same piece relying on a traditional form of the relationship, but this is not the only realization that Cardew made of his indeterminate music. He also made two realizations of excerpts from *Treatise*: the *Bun No.2 for Orchestra* and *Volo Solo* for any instrumentation. These realizations offer examples of how the graphical elements can be interpreted into a more traditional score, and are intended to help a performer find his or her own personal approach. They are not meant to be stylistically copied by other performers, but to act as a catalyst. This is made clear by Cardew’s comment in the *Treatise Handbook*: “What I hope is that in playing this piece each musician will give of his ‘own’ music - he will give it as a response to ‘my’ music, which is the score itself.”

In this example from the *Winter Potato No.1*, (Figure 9), Cardew’s liberal use of the repeated symbol in *Octet ‘61* can be seen - the first gesture, which reappears a further three times in this fragment:

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In the following example, (Figure 10), Cardew interprets symbol 35 by inserting a screw between the second and third strings of D above middle C. The chord directly following it is symbol 36, with the three functional pitches combined with the color pitch an octave below. Symbol 38 is also identifiable as the bottom A, piano, and the following D-flat (color pitch) and B (functional pitch). Symbol 39 is translated into the four descending B-flats, and symbol 40 as the D of the D-C tremolando and the top F. The G (functional pitch) of symbol 41 is clearly seen after this, as is the eighth-note rest.

9 The translation of symbol 37 is not obvious, although the cross could have become an increase in duration in the three chords following the symbol 36 chord.
The *Winter Potato No.1* is texturally similar to the *February Pieces* and to Cardew's examples for the *Octet '61*, in that it comprises a series of short gestures with a proliferation of articulation and dynamic markings. The use of graphic notation in the *Octet '61* shows a conceptual development from the *February Pieces*. However, it is clear from the *Winter Potato No.1* and the examples for the *Octet '61* that when Cardew translated the symbols himself, the music that resulted did not constitute a significant stylistic departure.\(^\text{10}\) While this is of interest, it does not directly affect the performer approaching the *Octet '61*, who should be primarily concerned with his or her own interpretation of the symbols.

Is it possible for a listener to detect whether a performer has interpreted the symbols according to Cardew's instructions? The scope of interpretation is so vast that it is unlikely that a listener would notice misreadings or even deliberate contradictions of the material.\(^\text{11}\) A performer could merely improvise freely, ignoring the symbols, but at some point insert an interpolation as a mimicry of symbol 35 in order to give the piece its identity. Cardew's examples and the *Winter Potato No.1* show one approach to the symbols, but many others are possible given the scope of the instructions. In writing the *Octet '61*, Cardew has created an opportunity for the performer to collaborate with him in the creation of form. The performer has the final responsibility within the limits set by the composer. This is why Cardew is able

\(^{10}\) "As with *February Pieces* durations are always flexible, the absence of time-signatures and tempo markings allowing the performer considerable rhythmic freedom; the music unfolds in a relaxed and elastic sequence of loosely connected phrases and irregular bursts of activity, each with its own shape and gestural character." Parsons, Michael, Liner Notes from *Cornelius Cardew piano music 1959-70*, Jonathan Tilbury, Matchless Recordings MRCD29, 1996, CD.

\(^{11}\) This seems to be true of other indeterminate pieces, with Maconie stating that the various recordings of Stockhausen's *Klavierstück XI* do not sound like the same composition. Robin Maconie, *Other Planets: The Music of Karlheinz Stockhausen* (Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2005), 228.
to say in the instructions that ‘his reputation is free to suffer.’ The quality of the composition itself, not just its performance, becomes the responsibility of the performer.

Apart from wanting symbol 35 to have a dramatic effect, what else did Cardew envisage for the piece? Despite the spirit of freedom inherent in the instructions, testimony from his contemporaries shows that Cardew had a definite idea as to how the music should sound. John White, a British composer and brass player, has spoken of a performance he gave of the *Octet '61* in the 1960s, in which he interpreted symbol 35 by playing a fragment of the beginner’s trombone piece, *The Acrobat*. Cardew was in the audience, and commented afterwards that he found the inclusion of this material to be inappropriate. Cardew told John White that he had envisaged the *Octet '61* as a non-narrative piece, and that *The Acrobat*, which had narrative content (in this case a tonal, rhythmical melody), did not really belong in the piece.

White categorises the *Octet '61* and *Treatise* as reactions to the ‘serious, dodecaphonic string quartets’ that were standard concert fare at the time. In comparison to these composer-controlled works, Cardew’s compositions were extremely free. This freedom, as White points out, had limits. White’s recollections of performing *Treatise* several times under Cardew’s supervision are also revealing. Cardew was rigorous in rehearsal, insisting that the interpretation of the players remained consistent and did not deviate from a response to the score’s visual patterns. White remembers that a player once arrived for a *Treatise* rehearsal having not prepared his interpretation, believing that he could just improvise from the

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12 On page 36 above.

symbols - an act that drew Cardew’s admonishment. On another occasion White remembers being ‘pulled-up for wrong notes;’ he had been interpreting diagonal lines and lost concentration, playing pitches in the wrong direction. Cardew realized that his interpretation had become inconsistent and drew attention to his mistake. Bedford adds that, “It should be pointed out that none of Cardew’s works ever gave total freedom to the performer. The instructions were a guide which focussed each individual’s creative instinct on a problem to be solved - how to interpret a particular system of notation using one’s own musical background and attitudes.”

Despite his testimony, White does not believe that a performance of the Octet ’61 should incorporate Cardew’s personal preferences from the time of its composition. A ‘historical’ performance that seeks to re-enact the mood and practice of the 1960s would have to reference this information, but the piece has been written to be performed in many styles, and should be interpreted according to the values of the performer, such a performance having greater relevance to a contemporary audience.

Sam Richards performed Cardew’s indeterminate compositions under the guidance of the composer, and has performed the Octet ’61 on solo piano. He gives advice concerning how an interpretation can be prepared:

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15 White recently attended a performance of Paragraph 3 from The Great Learning at Goldsmith’s University, London, in November 2006, supervised by John Lely. He believes that this was a highly successful and enjoyable performance, but very different to the 1960s precedent.
I played solo piano versions of... Cardew’s Octet ’61, on many occasions. Although the graphic references are more directly musical [than Treatise], what one plays is suggested rather than prescribed. As a performer I had to bring my own invention to bear. My method was to improvise from the score frequently at home, trying out different approaches - a quiet, slow piece, a loud active one, a mixture of the two, deliberate references to styles that interested me, sometimes no conscious references at all. None of these would necessarily figure in public performance, but my familiarity with the score meant that I was able to produce a satisfactory piece of music each time.\textsuperscript{16}

Richards is concerned with producing an interpretation that is satisfactory to the audience, but one that is constructed by his own reasoning and not through a mimicry of Cardew’s examples. A satisfying performance can be described as one that keeps the interest of the audience in the progression of the composition. Cardew spoke disparagingly about compositions that failed to do this:

As proof of the human susceptibility to influence, one has only to cite the ease with which some composers make 10 minutes seem like 2 hours. But no influence should be exclusive: time should not be made to fly, crawl, or stand still, but all these in varying degrees and successions.\textsuperscript{17}

In producing a satisfactory performance of the Octet ’61, the performer should mould the passage of time, allowing it to move in different ways and keep the interest of the listener. The performer must be able to achieve the right level of contrast by interpreting each symbol

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{17} Cornelius Cardew, “Musical Space” in \textit{New Departures}, (Volume 1, Summer 1959): 56.
\end{itemize}
according to what is needed by the overall balance of the piece at that time. Thus a particular symbol can be loud or soft, fast or slow, high or low, depending on what the performer believes the audience needs to hear at that point in time.

A personal approach towards achieving a satisfactory performance is supported by Tilbury, who having worked with Cardew for around thirty years and through several stylistic periods, remains the best-placed to comment on performance practice issues relating to his works. He maintains that Cardew intended the *Octet '61* as a ‘template to be completed by the performer’, who should approach the task according to his or her own musical education and experience.18 Tilbury admits that his own experience of working with Cardew has influenced his approach enormously, and while this might make his interpretation closer to Cardew’s, it does not necessarily make it more valid.19 This concept is a huge leap for classical musicians who are trained to follow composers’ preferences, yet the *Octet '61* has been deliberately created outside of this hierarchical tradition and requires a different approach as a result.

The *Winter Potato No.1* occupies a curious position. It shows us how Cardew approached the performance of the *Octet '61*, and is there as an example, providing a historically accurate performance model should the need for one arise. However, according to Tilbury, and to Cardew’s own performance instructions, the performer should not feel the

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19 “For Cardew there was no two ways about it; people could be encouraged, inspired, even cajoled, but ultimately they had to be trusted to make their own music on the basis of their own background, experience and attitudes. In these new compositions he subtly defined the area, emotional, physical, psychological, historical, in which the performer operated, but there was no question of controlling the interpretation, either directly or by some back-door method involving ‘chance operations.’” Jonathan Tilbury, “The Music of Cornelius Cardew,” in *Cornelius Cardew Memorial Concert Programme Notes* (London: Queen Elizabeth Hall, 1982), 11.
need to use the *Winter Potato No.1* as a template for his or her own interpretation of the *Octet ’61*. If the performer is familiar with the former, then this familiarity becomes part of his or her experience and will feed into his approach to the latter. This familiarity, however, does not make his or her interpretation more valid than that of another performer who has never heard or seen the *Winter Potato No.1*. The *Octet ’61* was deliberately designed to produce an unique interpretation of the symbols from each performer. If the *Winter Potato No.1* were to be used as a source for interpretation, this aim would be compromised. Parsons addresses this topic when writing about Tilbury’s recording of the *Winter Potatoes*:

John Tilbury’s playing of all these pieces reflects an intense involvement with and dedication to Cardew’s music over a period of more than 30 years, including the experience of having worked very closely with him in the 1960s and ‘70s. While his performances are in this sense ‘authentic’, they are not necessarily definitive or exclusive: other performers may well find alternative and widely divergent ways of playing the pieces. This is inherent in the nature of Cardew’s approach: he regarded his scores not as self-contained logical systems, complete in themselves, but as catalysts in the essentially social activity of music-making. ‘Like seeds, they depend on the surrounding soil for nourishment.’ (introduction to Four Works, Universal Edition 1966): they contain the capacity to evolve in response to changing needs and circumstances, to engage performers and listeners in new ways. Apart from their brilliance and originality as studies in piano sonority and technique, these early works already express Cardew’s deep awareness of and commitment to social values; far from being superseded by his later political convictions, their questioning spirit and wealth of potential remain continually inspiring and challenging to performers and listeners alike.  

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20 Michael Parsons, Liner Notes from *Cornelius Cardew piano music 1959-70*, Jonathan Tilbury, Matchless Recordings MRCD29, 1996, CD.
This last point is very important. In the early 1960s Cardew had not yet become a Communist, but his mindset was already turning towards egalitarian principles, not least in his move towards the use of open-ended musical structures in which the performer made his or her own decisions. These pieces were written with personal freedom in mind, and it would not be consistent for a performer to place the weight of tradition on his or her interpretation by basing it on the Winter Potato No. 1, especially when the composer has made efforts to emancipate the performer from such considerations. The performer should not use the Winter Potato No. 1 as a basis for his or her interpretation of the Octet '61. The performer should use the totality of his or her musical education and experience to interpret the symbols in a way that will achieve a satisfactory experience for the audience.
Part 5: Why perform the Octet '61?

The Octet '61 constitutes an important work relating to the performance practice of experimental music in the 1960s and represents a particular form of composition that emerged in response to total serialism. This thesis contends that the Octet '61 is not only significant in these respects, but that it is also a valuable piece that deserves to be performed and heard. The question, then, is why indeterminate works like the Octet '61 have failed to capture the imagination of the concert-going public and are currently seldom performed. Enthusiastic performers such as Tilbury, White, and Richards have been performing the Octet '61 for several years, and have commented above on its attractions to the performer. It would seem that the issue lies with the role of the listener, a matter that has not been examined closely. Venn has commented that recent discussion concerning Cardew emphasizes his political expression and notational language, not his actual music.21 Yet Cardew's pieces were written to be performed and listened to, and the Octet '61 is an interesting work that is relevant to audiences today.

The relative paucity of performances of the Octet '61 is partly caused by its status as an indeterminate work. The difference between an indeterminate or open-form work and a determined, classical composition has been defined by Umberto Eco in The Poetics of the Open Work:

a classical composition... posits an assemblage of sound units which the composer arranged in a closed, well-defined manner before presenting it to the listener. He converted his idea into conventional symbols which more or less oblige the eventual performer to reproduce the format devised by the composer himself. Whereas the [open-form works] reject the definitive, concluded message and multiply the formal possibilities of the distribution of their elements. They appeal to the initiative of the individual performer, and hence they offer themselves, not as finite works which prescribe specific repetition along given structural coordinates, but as "open" works, which are brought to their conclusion by the performer at the same time as he experiences them on an aesthetic plane.\textsuperscript{22}

The process by which the work reaches the listener is different in each case. With a classical composition, the listener can expect to hear the same 'assemblage of sound units' with each performance, and focuses his or her attention to how these sound units are interpreted (varied according to dynamic, tempo, timbre and other factors.) With an open work, the assemblage of sound units is different with each interpretation. The listener, then, must treat the given order of material in such a composition as a decision made by the performer, according to the guidelines set by the composer. Berio believes that this should be seen as a collaborative process, not one controlled by the performer:

There are now many works in which the performer is no longer a means, an intermediary, but also a collaborator. He is given a plan of action, more or less precise, a certain number of structures which he can arrange in a way most congenial to himself. The composition... is no longer something ready-made, but rather to be made, made to fit. From being a means of communication, it becomes a means of cooperation.\textsuperscript{23}


An interesting observation is that the composition must be “made to fit.” This is ambiguous, but could be taken to mean that the work should fit the performance situation, with the performer constructing his interpretation with the audience in mind.

Unlike total serialist compositions, whose composer-performer relationship Cardew was rebelling against at the time, the *Octet '61* gives the performer the final role in deciding the form of the piece as heard in one performance. This is in contrast to a piece such as *Klavierstück X* by Stockhausen, where every possible element of the music has been quantified and arranged, the performer being required to produce these fixed elements with the accuracy of a machine, to an audience that is expected to listen to the presentation of material and appreciate its structural ordering of contrast; in an ideal performance, the characteristic input of the performer would not be recognized. As the form of the *Octet '61* changes, so does the experience of the listener. Given a particular audience with certain evaluative criteria, some of the formal possibilities will be successful and others not. This is what Parsons has referred to as the “wealth of potential” demonstrated by Cardew’s indeterminate works. An open work can only be potentially successful as it is dependent on the choices made by the performer in respect to creation of form.

The fact that one performance of the *Octet '61* can never capture the full range of possibilities built into the piece also affects the experience of the listener. As Eco explains:

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24 The process is collaborative, but the performer has the final say.

25 Michael Parsons, Liner Notes from *Cornelius Cardew piano music 1959-70*, Jonathan Tilbury, Matchless Recordings MRCD29, 1996, CD.
Every performance explains the composition, but does not exhaust it. Every performance makes the work an actuality, but is itself only complementary to all possible other performances of the work. In short, we can say that every performance offers us a complete and satisfying version of the work, but at the same time makes it incomplete for us, because it cannot simultaneously give all the other artistic solutions which the work may admit...

The listener may feel frustrated by the exclusive nature of the interpretation. The form of the Octet '61 is unique to each performer’s interpretation of the symbols. The audience is unlikely to become familiar with it through repeated performances, as the spectrum of variability is so large. Alternatively this could be seen as a good thing. The Octet '61 can be listened to again and again, yet always be presented as a fresh experience, the process of collaboration between composer and performer resulting in continually new translations of the symbols.

By what criteria should a performance of the Octet '61 be judged? Cardew’s intentions for the evaluation of his music differ from piece to piece. For Autumn '60 he wrote that, “the musical potentialities... cannot be fully exploited in a single performance... the criterion of a good performance is not completeness (i.e., perfection), but rather the lucidity of incompleteness.” Hence a performance, while unable to demonstrate the extent of the work’s possibilities, must communicate sufficient clarity of intention to the audience. The Treatise Handbook, while giving much information on the composition’s conception and performance, does not give any specific information about the role of the listener. As this

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26 Eco, 171.

work can be contemplated in silence by reading the score, without any sounds whatsoever, it would seem that the role of the listener was not a priority in this work.

We should refer to the performance instructions for the Octet '61 to divine what Cardew wished to be communicated to the listener. The instructions state that, “when performed, the piece may be judged as a musical experience (sounds brought together by human agency) and thrown down the drain.”28 That the piece is to be judged implies a critical appreciation from the listener, although it is to be evaluated as a transient experience, not as a definitive performance. Richards is an example of a performer that takes the critical faculties of the audience into consideration when preparing his interpretation, seeking to produce a ‘satisfactory piece of music each time.’29

Much has been written on the political expression of Cardew’s compositions. Commentators such as Tilbury and Prevost have attributed Cardew’s use of indeterminacy to his desire to subvert the traditional composer-performer hierarchy in the classical musical process,30 a desire that ultimately led to his conversion to Marxism. While this is of interest, it does not necessarily affect the listener’s perception of the actual music. Commentary from Richards, Bedford and Tilbury given above supports the view that Cardew’s indeterminate compositions provide a valuable creative experience to performers who feel unsatisfied in composer-controlled environments. However, the listener is more concerned with the sound of the work than the way in which it is created.


The exposure of the *Octet '61* to the concert-going public has been limited by its poor prospects of marketability. As an indeterminate composition, the *Octet '61* undermines the established process of creation and dissemination. It is perhaps because of this that the performance of such repertoire is so rare in conventional musical venues. It would not, for instance, be appropriate to record a single interpretation of the *Octet '61* and then promote it by a series of concerts in which the musical content remained fixed. Moreover, if the interpretation of the symbols has been tailored for a particular audience in a specific venue, a recording of this will not necessarily translate into a satisfying listening experience at home. If the formal properties of the piece are allowed to vary from performance to performance, as they should, then it becomes impossible to sell. Richards explains: "The musical composition is seen as a thing in itself and is... an object of exchange for sale. The business side of music then comes into play: agents, promoters, recording companies, concert halls, ticket prices, publicity, grants and awards, colleges to train the next generation of producers, and so on. In order for this network to function... the pieces of music must be recognizable and repeatable. Otherwise there is no commodity."\(^{31}\) It is this subversive feature that makes the music so appealing. The chameleon-like nature of the *Octet '61* is a special characteristic; each performance is a one-off composition, specific to that occasion and combination of performer(s) and audience.

In conclusion, the *Octet '61* contributes a special kind of collaboratively-produced music, able to be adapted for different occasions. Its success, if judged on the basis of

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audience approval, depends on the performer translating the symbols in a way that achieves a consistency of expression and provides a satisfactory experience for the listener. This conforms with Cardew’s instructions for the piece, as well as the views of performers such as Tilbury, White, and Richards. The flexibility of the *Octet '61* should make it suitable for performance in a variety of settings, not just at specific experimental music concerts. It is possible that in the future its musical qualities, which allow the performer to develop form as part of his or her communication to the audience, will be more widely recognized.
Bibliography:


THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Recital Hall
Thursday, March 3rd, 2005
8:00 p.m.

DOCTORAL RECITAL*
ALEKSANDER SZRAM, Piano

Sonata in D major Hob.XVI:19

I. Moderato
II. Andante
III. Finale: Allegro assai

Sonatine (1912)

I. Moder
II. Mouvement de menuet
III. Animez

Sleeping ashes (2002)

Razzle (2004)

- INTERMISSION -

Sonata in F minor Op.5

I. Allegro maestoso
II. Andante espressivo
III. Scherzo: Allegro energico
IV. Andante molto
V. Allegro moderato ma rubato

* In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctorate of Musical Arts with a major in Piano.
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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   I. Modere
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   III. Animez

Sleeping ashes (2002)

Razzle (2004)

- INTERMISSION -

Sonata in F minor Op.5
   I. Allegro maestoso
   II. Andante espressivo
   III. Scherzo: Allegro energico
   IV. Andante molto
   V. Allegro moderato ma rubato

Joseph Haydn
   (1732 - 1809)

Maurice Ravel
   (1875 - 1937)

Dai Fujikura
   (b.1978)

Yvonne Gillespie
   (b.1970)

Johannes Brahms
   (1833-1897)

* In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctorate of Musical Arts with a major in Piano.
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
SCHOOL OF MUSIC
Recital Hall
Wednesday, February 22nd, 2006
8:00 p.m.

DOCTORAL RECITAL*
ALEKSANDER SZRAM, Piano

Trio for Flute, Cello and Piano Op. 78 (1818)  
Johann Nepomuk Hummel  
(1778-1837)

Jessica Raposo - Flute  
Caroline Szram - Cello

Sonate-Vocalise Op. 41 (1922)  
mit einem Motto “Geweihter Platz” von Goethe  
Nikolai Medtner  
(1880-1951)

Teiya Kasahara - Soprano

Sonata for Cello and Piano Op. 4 (1909-10)  
Zoltán Kodály  
(1882-1967)

I. Fantasia
II. Allegro con spirito

Caroline Szram - Cello

- INTERMISSION -

Phantasiestück (1987-88)  
Mauricio Kagel  
(1931-)

Mark Macgregor - Flute

Sonata in A (1886)  
César Franck
I. Allegretto ben moderato  
II. Allegro  
III. Recitativo-Fantasia: Ben moderato  
IV. Allegretto poco mosso  

Caroline Szram - Cello  

* In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctorate of Musical Arts with a major in Piano.
DOCTORAL RECITAL*
ALEKSANDER SZRAM, Piano

Trio for Flute, Cello and Piano Op.78 (1818)  
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Jessica Raposo - Flute  
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Caroline Szram - Cello

* In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctorate of Musical Arts with a major in Piano.
DOCTORAL RECITAL*
ALEKSANDER SZRAM, Piano

Echoes 1: of Time and Tone (2006)  
Richard Covey  
(b.1979)

The Eemis-Stane Hommage (2001)  
Michael Spencer  
(b.1975)

a time-slide tango (2006)  
Danny Ledesma  
(b.1979)

- INTERMISSION -

Grande Sonate Op.33 (1847)  
Charles-Valentin Alkan  
(1813-1888)

I. 20 ans très vite
II. 30 ans Quasi-Faust assez vite
III. 40 ans Un Heureux Ménage lentement
IV. 50 ans Prométhée Enchaîne extrêmement lent

* In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctorate of Musical Arts with a major in Piano.
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Recital Hall
Tuesday, December 5th, 2006
8:00 p.m.

DOCTORAL RECITAL*
ALEKSANDER SZRAM, Piano

Echoes 1: of Time and Tone (2006)  
Richard Covey  
(b.1979)

The Eemis-Stane Hommage (2001)  
Michael Spencer  
(b.1975)

a time-slide tango (2006)  
Danny Ledesma  
(b.1979)

- INTERMISSION -

Grande Sonate Op.33 (1847)  
Charles-Valentin Alkan  
(1813-1888)

I. 20 ans  très vite
II. 30 ans  Quasi-Faust  assez vite
III. 40 ans  Un Heureux Ménage  lentement
IV. 50 ans  Prométhée Enchaîné  extrêmement lent

* In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctorate of Musical Arts with a major in Piano.
DOCTORAL LECTURE-RECITAL*

ALEKSANDER SZRAM, Piano

Lecture: Interpreting the Octet '61 by Cornelius Cardew on the piano

INTERMISSION

Octet '61 (1961)                                   Cornelius Cardew  
                                           (1936-1981)

* In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree with a major in Piano Performance.
Interpretation:

Each sign is a musical event.

The piece is cyclic (start anywhere, joining the end to the beginning, or the beginning to the end if you are reading backwards) and may be played for any length of time. End anywhere.

Not necessarily for piano.

This manuscript may be copied freely by hand.

Use this sign anywhere and as often as desired.

In the signs:

+ plus/more

- minus/less

. staccato/short

- longer/medium duration

Δ long/longest possible

# trill or tremolo

/ read above the line in treble clef, below in bass

\ slide

| come back to here as often as you wish, going as far ahead each time as you wish

| end here (before continuing, if you wish to do so) as many times as you wish, picking up from as far back as you wish

\ out, away; something completely different. This sign should be interpreted only once in any performance of the piece.

• these pitches may be used as often as required and in any register, or several registers (colour pitches).

• these pitches may be used as often as required, but only in the given register (functional pitches.)

Free use may be made of notes apart from those provided.

The interpretation of the numbers 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 is free (uniformity is not required).

The length of time taken for each sign is free; they also overlap. No part of any sign is obligatory.
Take No. 22: two whats? An exploration of No. 21 may provide some answers. For example: No 22 could consist of a second version of No. 21, or No. 21 itself played twice more. Or one could retain two notes of No. 21, or two anythings, or anticipate two notes or anythings of No. 23, the two fortes perhaps.

Playing from the score is not recommended except for experienced performers. A version or many different versions may be made, constituting a bloc of material from which the interpreter can draw...

The piece is an opportunity for an interpreter. It demands no very sophisticated formal approach (the performer does not have to be a composer, he merely has to discover and use that modicum of creativity that is available to all) for the simple identity of the piece is given once for all by the sign: the piece will be known and remembered (if at all) as 'the piece where something peculiar happens in the middle.' Any composer or potential composer interpreting the piece and wishing to take the problem of form on his own shoulders will probably interpret at the beginning or the end.

The sign that can be used anywhere and as often as desired provides the key to very simple unproblematic interpretations: make one short characteristic version of this sign and use it as punctuation. Break the piece down into a series of statements separated by this sign... All procedures can be legitimized.

If the most important function of a composer were the stimulation of an interpreter this piece would be a composition. The stimulation of the interpreter is a facet of composition that has been disastrously neglected. Disastrously under-stimulated performances of contemporary music are the result (for here, past glories cannot act as stimuli.) When performed, the piece may be judged as a musical experience (sounds brought together by human agency) and thrown down the drain. No one is to blame. My reputation is free to suffer. This piece is not gilt-edged.
DOCTORAL LECTURE-RECITAL*

ALEKSANDER SZRAM, Piano

Lecture: Interpreting the Octet '61 by Cornelius Cardew on the piano

INTERMISSION

Octet '61 (1961)  
Cornelius Cardew  
(1936-1981)

* In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree with a major in Piano Performance.
Interpretation:

Each sign is a musical event.

The piece is cyclic (start anywhere, joining the end to the beginning, or the beginning to the end if you are reading backwards) and may be played for any length of time. End anywhere.

Not necessarily for piano.

This manuscript may be copied freely by hand.

Use this sign anywhere and as often as desired.

In the signs:

+ plus/more
- minus/less
· staccato/short
¬ longer/medium duration
Δ long/longest possible
♯ trill or tremolo
/ read above the line in treble clef, below in bass
\ slide
|| come back to here as often as you wish, going as far ahead each time as you wish
:: end here (before continuing, if you wish to do so) as many times as you wish, picking up from as far back as you wish
← out, away; something completely different. This sign should be interpreted only once in any performance of the piece.
※ these pitches may be used as often as required and in any register, or several registers (colour pitches).
• these pitches may be used as often as required, but only in the given register (functional pitches.)

Free use may be made of notes apart from those provided.

The interpretation of the numbers 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 is free (uniformity is not required).

The length of time taken for each sign is free; they also overlap. No part of any sign is obligatory.
Take No.22: two whats? An exploration of No. 21 may provide some answers. For example: No 22 could consist of a second version of No. 21, or No. 21 itself played twice more. Or one could retain two notes of No. 21, or two anythings, or anticipate two notes or anythings of No. 23, the two *fortes* perhaps.

Playing from the score is not recommended except for experienced performers. A version or many different versions may be made, constituting a bloc of material from which the interpreter can draw...

The piece is an opportunity for an interpreter. It demands no very sophisticated formal approach (the performer does not have to be a composer, he merely has to discover and use that modicum of creativity that is available to all) for the simple identity of the piece is given once for all by the sign ♦: the piece will be known and remembered (if at all) as 'the piece where something peculiar happens in the middle.' Any composer or potential composer interpreting the piece and wishing to take the problem of form on his own shoulders will probably interpret ♦ at the beginning or the end.

The sign that can be used anywhere and as often as desired provides the key to very simple unproblematic interpretations: make one short characteristic version of this sign and use it as punctuation. Break the piece down into a series of statements separated by this sign... All procedures can be legitimized.

If the most important function of a composer were the stimulation of an interpreter this piece would be a composition. The stimulation of the interpreter is a facet of composition that has been disastrously neglected. Disastrously under-stimulated performances of contemporary music are the result (for here, past glories cannot act as stimuli.) When performed, the piece may be judged as a musical experience (sounds brought together by human agency) and thrown down the drain. No one is to blame. My reputation is free to suffer. This piece is not gilt-edged.