Re-hearing the "Darmstadt School": Or, Politics Beyond Pluralism

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Abstract

Recently music critics have fallen over themselves to paint a picture of musical modernism as plural and multifaceted, democratic and open. The composers of the so-called "Darmstadt School" have especially benefited from this treatment, which serves a more general effort to rehabilitate this music after it came under intense scrutiny in the 1980s and 1990s. There is undoubted merit in illuminating the diversity amongst composers whose distinctness has long been shrouded. However, these pluralizing accounts are not innocent. The understandings developed have—whether programmatically, unwittingly, or surreptitiously—propagated an ideologically loaded understanding, beholden to liberalism. Thus, just as they promise more nuanced, detailed understandings, numerous contemporary commentaries have obscured meaningful historical energies that are otherwise incompatible with this "pluralist" perspective. As an antidote to these repressions, this article will re-examine the pluralist hypothesis against the historical record with respect to the so-called Darmstadt School. This examination will show that the composers' coming to be grouped under this terminology is in itself instructive to our present historical situation, precisely because it registers a collective aesthetic-politics that is directly opposed to the liberal pluralism that has become the baseline ideology of recent music studies.

> Foucault: One cannot speak of a single relation of contemporary culture to music in general, but of a tolerance, more or less benevolent, with respect to a plurality of musics. Each is granted the "right" to existence, and this right is perceived as an equality of worth. Each is worth as much as the group which practices or recognizes it.
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> Boulez: Ah! Pluralism! There's nothing like it for curing incomprehension. . . . Be liberal, be generous toward the tastes of others, and they will be generous towards yours. Everything is good, nothing is bad; there aren't any values, but everyone is happy.[1]

The above exchange between the French philosopher Michel Foucault and composer Pierre Boulez stages, with striking candor, what the art critic Arthur Danto once referred to as the dichotomy between "exclusionary" modernism and "pluralistic" postmodernism.[2] Fortunately, Boulez does not advocate the "ethnic cleansing" which Danto, in a not-isolated moment of rhetorical indulgence, elsewhere identifies with modernism.[3] Nevertheless, the dialogue provocatively brings to the fore a palpable tension between the patronizing elitism and social conservatism of Boulez—who attributes audience incomprehension to "laziness . . . the pleasant sensation of remaining in known territory"—and the tendency in recent music

[1] Michel Foucault and Pierre Boulez, "Contemporary Music and the Public," trans. John Rahn, *Perspectives of New Music* 24, no. 1 (1985): 8, https://doi.org/10.2307/832749.
[2] Arthur C. Danto, *After the End of Art: Contemporary Art and the Pale of History* (Princeton University Press, 1997), *passim*, 37, 114, 171.
[3] Danto, *After the End of Art*, 37.

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studies to use the term "pluralism" in association with composers whose modernist credentials are widely seen as beyond question.[4]

Such tensions, and their ideological consequences, remain largely unexplored. David Clarke's widely read "Elvis and Darmstadt" essay is perhaps the most substantial exception. In this piece, widely accepted notions of cultural pluralism are shown to be entwined with contemporary liberalism and our (postmodern) social situation.[5] But the efforts of scholars like Clarke sometimes seem to have come to naught. Exemplary here are the musicological discussions surrounding noted contemporary attendees of the annual Darmstädter Ferienkurse in the 1950s. After many years of critical conflict, the composers classically referred to as the "Darmstadt School" (most notably Luigi Nono, Bruno Maderna, Pierre Boulez, and Karlheinz Stockhausen) are now held apart through affirmations of their musical distinctiveness. Yet whilst recognizing the diversity of these composers' outputs is a perfectly proper critical endeavor, this debate has rested upon unquestioned and undeclared assumptions. Most crucially, there has been an underlying commitment to a liberal-pluralist understanding of the composers as simply being diverse and autonomous individuals (quite in keeping with Charles Wilson's critique of the ideology of autonomy in music criticism).[6]

Consequently, there remains an opportunity to cultivate a (novel) re-hearing of the sort of music that, for whatever reason, came to be associated with the Darmstadt School terminology in the 1950s, a re-hearing that pushes past the current unchallenged acceptance of "pluralism." To this end, the present article will begin by identifying and problematizing the underlying assumptions that have allowed for the construction of a "plural" Darmstadt School by various musicologists (whether sympathetic to the so-called Darmstadt School or not). This will clear a path to a reconsideration of the discursive grouping of these composers and their music, writings, and other activities. By considering the manner in which and the basis as to why these figures and their music were heard *together*, it will be possible to retain a sense of how their activities exceeded the sum of their parts and gestured towards an aesthetic politics beyond pluralism.

Modernism After 1945 . . . According to Liberal Pluralism

Broadly, contemporary accounts of a "plural" Darmstadt are (usually explicitly) posed against the critical position modeled by Susan McClary's infamous diagnosis of "terminal prestige."[7] McClary's article was not so much an account of Darmstadt *per se*, but rather a rallying cry for a (postmodern) turn within

[4] Foucault and Boulez, "Contemporary Music and the Public," 8. For examples of the use of pluralism in the study of modernist music (some of which will be discussed further below), see Max Erwin, *Herbert Eimert and the Darmstadt School: The Consolidation of the Avant-Garde*, Elements in Music Since 1945 (Cambridge University Press, 2020), https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108891691; Martin Iddon, "Darmstadt Schools: Darmstadt as a Plural Phenomenon," *Tempo* 65, no. 256 (2011): 2–8, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0040298211000118; Christopher Fox, "Darmstadt and the Institutionalisation of Modernism," *Contemporary Music Review* 26, no. 1 (2007): 115–23, https://doi.org/10.1080/07494460601069291; and Björn Heile, "Darmstadt as Other: British and American Responses to Musical Modernism," *Twentieth-Century Music* 1, no. 2 (2004): 161–78, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1478572205000162.

[5] David Clarke, "Elvis and Darmstadt, or: Twentieth-Century Music and the Politics of Cultural Pluralism," *Twentieth-Century Music* 4, no. 1 (2007): 3–45, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1478572207000515.

[6] Charles Wilson "György Ligeti and the Rhetoric of Autonomy," *Twentieth-Century Music*, 1, no. 1 (2004): 5–28, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1478572204000040.

[7] Susan McClary, "Terminal Prestige: The Case of Avant-Garde Music Composition," *Cultural Critique,* 12 (1989): 57–81, https://doi.org/10.2307/1354322.

the university against the then-dominant institutional support for modernism.[8] Like Clarke, she cites Boulez in his conversation with Foucault, where the French composer claims that

> The economy is there to remind us, in case we get lost in this bland utopia: there are musics which bring in money and exist for commercial profit; there are musics that cost something whose very concept has nothing to do with profit. No liberalism will erase this distinction.[9]

McClary associates such remarks from Boulez with those by other composers, namely Arnold Schoenberg and Milton Babbitt, and asserts that even though they

> differ enormously from each other in terms of socio-historical context and music style, they at least share the siege mentality that has given rise to the extreme position we have been tracing: they all regard the audience as an irrelevant annoyance whose approval signals artistic failure.[10]

Of course, as McClary stresses, such music requires support for its survival. By the 1980s, "most university music departments support[ed] resident composers . . . and the small amount of money earmarked by foundations for music commissions" was often "reserved for the kind of 'serious' music that Babbitt and his colleagues advocate[d]." Such funding, McClary decried, did not register the twentieth century's "unparalleled explosion in musical creativity," the fact that

> whereas the music of the canon is the repository of aristocratic and, later, hegemonic middle-class values, this unruly explosion in the twentieth century is the coming to voice of American blacks and latinos, of the rural and working classes, of women, and (in the case of those we might call postmodern) of those whose training in those creepy institutions did not quite take.[11]

Consequently, where modernism and mass culture have been previously regarded by many as "inseparable opponents in the same cultural world," with the former being bestowed prestige as a defense against the latter, for McClary

> the terms of the debate have shifted so much as to make earlier definitions and moral positions no longer credible. . . . If one reflects on the demographic shifts of this century, the emergence of energetic, previously disenfranchised voices to displace a moribund, elite status quo is not at all surprising.[12]

McClary's rhetoric here appears to gesture towards what Fredric Jameson once referred to as the emergence (in the 1960s) of new collective subjects of history, those previously colonized internally in the first world ("minorities," women, and other "marginals") and the "natives" of the Third World.[13] The 1970s and 1980s were then marked by a suppression of the social forces that had been unbound in the 1960s, a diffusion of class struggle across vast expanses and into the minutest nooks and crannies of daily life, in line with an incredible expansion of capitalism that proved remarkably successful at trampling local resistances.[14] The resulting tendential immiseration has come to be accompanied by (consumerist)

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[8] McClary uses the word "avant-garde" in her original publication, though she later replaces this with the term "modernism" in an article that responds to criticisms leveled at "Terminal Prestige"; see Susan McClary, "Response to Linda Dusman," *Perspectives of New Music* 32 (1994), 148–52, https://doi.org/10.2307/833603. To avoid any potential confusions with well-established terminological distinctions between the narrower category of avant-gardism and usually more broadly conceived notion of modernism, here "modernism" has been preferred.
[9] Foucault and Boulez, "Contemporary Music," 8, cited in McClary, "Terminal Prestige," 60–61.
[10] McClary, "Terminal Prestige," 61.
[11] McClary, "Terminal Prestige," 64.
[12] McClary, "Terminal Prestige," 80.
[13] Fredric Jameson, "Periodizing the 1960s," in *The Ideologies of Theory,* vol. 2*: The Syntax of History* (University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 181.
[14] Jameson, "Periodizing the 1960s," 207.

defenses (or celebrations) of cultural plurality.[15] A—or, perhaps, *the*—legacy of this process is the contemporary ideology of multiculturalism, which, as Slavoj Žižek has argued, is in many senses the ideal form of contemporary capitalist ideology, in which everywhere exists as a colony to be capitalized. Accepting that capitalism is here to stay, critical energy has busied itself instead with "fighting for cultural differences which leave the basic homogeneity of the capitalist world system intact"—and, indeed, renders it invisible.[16] Here a disjuncture arises due to the irreducibility of social class structures to the (discriminatory) subjective attitudes with which pluralist positions primarily (and sometimes exclusively) concern themselves. But, as Dylan Riley puts it, "the elimination of 'classism' as a subjective attitude has nothing whatsoever to do with the elimination of classes"; "it is quite possible to imagine a society entirely free from classism nevertheless being marked by deeply entrenched class differences."[17]

McClary's effort to secure a place for communities who had hitherto been "excluded," and her critique of modernist misogyny, are not aligned with the anti-capitalist social energies of the 1960s.[18] Far from it: market success is something she has spent great time defending. Indeed, McClary's recent latter-day apology for elements of modernism hinges upon its viability to be marketed to audiences.[19] As a result of such market triumphalism, her critique of modernism *as such* in many senses lacks nuance, and the consequences of this are profound. Most crucially, she does not properly distinguish between the institutionalized modernism of the 1980s (and the 1970s) and what preceded it. Even as late as the 1950s, support could not be assumed. The activities of Boulez and his contemporaries did not immediately enjoy an easy relationship with or acceptance by the official arbiters of taste (as will be shown below); in Britain composers like Peter Maxwell Davies, Alexander Goehr, and Harrison Birtwistle (the "Manchester School") did not secure a strong institutional standing until the 1960s and 1970s.[20] McClary's universalizing understanding of modernism flattens her historical account, and signals a reluctance to conceive positions distanced from the attendant institutions of capitalism; the commercially successful popular music that McClary defends is simply to be slotted into the "university-as-discursive-community" that was reserved for music from the classical canon (which by the 1980s had expanded to include modernist musical compositions).[21] The university in McClary's argument is an ideal realization of what liberal theorists such as Richard E. Flathman regard as the central merit of liberal-pluralism: a commitment to an "abundant plurality of 'conceptions of the good'" and the concomitant "plethora of groups, associations, and parties that are commonly regarded as the empirical yield and complement of these ideas."[22] McClary's vision is founded on the liberal principle of negative liberty, for a multiplicity of goals and activities, some perhaps incommensurable, to coexist, without infringing upon the activities of

[15] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, Or, The Cultural Logic Of Late Capitalism* (Verso, 1991), 320, https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822378419.
[16] Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject* (Verso, 2008 [1999]), 259, 261.
[17] Dylan Riley, *Microverses: Observations from a Shattered Present* (Verso, 2022), 110–11.
[18] McClary, "Terminal Prestige," 81, 74.
[19] McClary, "The Lure of the Sublime: Revisiting the Modernist Project" in *Transformations of Musical Modernism*, ed. Erling E. Guldbrandsen and Julian Johnson (Cambridge University Press, 2023), 21–36.
[20] Ed Venn, "A Very British Modernism?," *Twentieth-Century Music*, 6, no. 2 (2009): 237–53, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1478572210000186.
[21] McClary, "Terminal Prestige," 76.
[22] Richard E. Flathman, *Reflections of a Would-Be Anarchist: Ideals and Institutions of Liberalism* (University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 32.

others, within the legitimizing orbit of the academy's equivalent to civic virtues.[23] Composers are free to remain, she claims, but we must "cease blocking the teaching of popular and postmodern music, for these are the musics (for better or for worse) most influential in shaping lives, subjectivities, values and behaviors at the present moment." Nowhere does McClary offer critical engagement with the capitalism that sustains what she sees as the "two mutually exclusive economies of music"; she simply advocates for "that which is measured by popular or commercial success" over "that which aims for the prestige conferred by official arbiters of taste," without necessarily banishing modernist music altogether.[24]

The significance of McClary's ideal university becomes clear upon considering Björn Heile's response to her article, where the focus moves from how music is to be studied into a more particular debate around how modernism, especially in the music of figures associated with the 1950s heyday of the Darmstädter Ferienkurse, is to be understood. For Heile, McClary's work was part of a wider trend of "modernism bashing" which "is ostensibly based on progressive ideologies" but is "dependent on a one-sided perception of musical modernism which it shares with earlier conservative disparagements." His target is a supposedly "depoliticized, sanitized construction of modernism," propagated mostly by "American critics . . . uncomfortable with the aesthetic as well as the political radicalism of Darmstadt."[25] Heile's key contention is that McClary (and others) are guilty of over-generalizing. Babbitt, Schoenberg, and Boulez, we are told, are not representative of modernism as such, but at most embody tendencies within modernism.[26] Instead, borrowing Rose Subotnik's claim that modernism was a "quintessentially pluralistic enterprise" (but dropping her acknowledgement of the existence of dominant tendencies within modernism), Heile attempts to show how (many) other tendencies exist which do not conform to this tendency.[27] Heile's ostensible concern is not just to make a claim for diversity, but also to rally against "some traditions or individuals" being privileged over others.[28] Thus Heile responds to McClary's case for pluralism by contending that modernism is *also* plural. This is a position which will then be taken to its logical conclusion by Martin Iddon, who, in different places, has argued first that there was rather a "plurality" of Darmstadt Schools (a collection of disparate projects that served as "centres around which other things revolved"), and elsewhere to expand great energy rallying against the association of the composers as the Darmstadt School on "technical" grounds (a strategy which will also be examined below).[29]

It suffices to say that the lifelong rejection of liberalism by composers like Boulez and Nono is not, in and of itself, incompatible with the Darmstädter Ferienkurse being likened to a pluralistic institution, akin to the contemporary university—not least in light of the latter's success in integrating those with radical politics into its system.[30] Indeed, the composers later referred to as the Darmstadt School did not immediately occupy powerful positions, and there was much music at the Ferienkurse which did not

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[23] Isaiah Berlin, *Liberty*, ed. Henry Hardy (Oxford University Press, 2002), 216; Flathman, "Reflections of a Would-Be Anarchist," 44–45; see also John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (Columbia University Press, 1993), https://doi.org/10.1093/019924989X.001.0001.
[24] McClary, "Terminal Prestige," 60, 76.
[25] Heile, "Darmstadt as Other," 161.
[26] Heile, "Darmstadt as Other," 163.
[27] Rose Rosengard Subotnik, "The Challenge of Contemporary Music" in *Developing Variations: Style and Ideology in Western Music* (University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 272.
[28] Heile, "Darmstadt as Other," 165.
[29] For the first conception, see Iddon, "Darmstadt Schools," and for the latter, see Martin Iddon, *New Music at Darmstadt: Nono, Stockhausen, Cage, and Boulez* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139519571.
[30] Such a capacity has long been recognized. Lionel Trilling notably referred to "the legitimation of the subversive" in 1955—see "On the Teaching of Modern Literature" in *Beyond Culture* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1965), 23.

resemble the practices of these composers. Over time cultural markets have had no difficulty in integrating modernist music into postmodern pluralist consumerism: as the art critic Hal Foster has remarked, "anti-aesthetic forms [have been] recouped in repetition and . . . 'alternative' spaces rendered institutional."[31] Today the textbooks tell us that modernist music "flourishes" as a "niche product" within the contemporary marketplace.[32] In our immediate (postmodern) context there is a truth to those of the supposed Darmstadt School appearing as a plurality of cultural voices (or musical brands); and like all of those who can be called modernist, their music has never *not* been a commodity (no matter what else it may also be). Nevertheless, to retroactively apply and celebrate a contemporary consumerist understanding to this considerably more fraught period is to ideologically homogenize an affirmation of our present. Yet no pluralizing account in the Anglophone literature has explicated or situated the political dimension of their claims or sufficiently accounted for all the activities and formations that converged on the Darmstädter Ferienkurse in the 1950s being contained exclusively within liberal-plural conceptions. This is crucial; as already established, within contemporary capitalism the subtext of cultural and aesthetic pluralism (and, for what it's worth, identity politics as such) is that it has to pay. This is why Herbert Marcuse, in classic Frankfurt School style, dubbed pluralism a "new totalitarianism" back in 1964.[33] More recently, Wilson has explained that the celebration of "unbridled multiplicity and seemingly unlimited novelty . . . tends in practice to mean containing it, regulating it, and ultimately curtailing the parts of it that fail to reap sufficient return."[34] Aesthetic pluralism entails, in Jameson's words, a renunciation of art doing "anything beyond itself (including the transaesthetic thrust of the great modernisms)."[35] And indeed, from McClary to Iddon, such transaesthetic vocations have been devalued, typically in favor of defenses of composers' autonomy and individuality, the like of which Wilson has shown to be fundamental in supporting pluralist understandings of contemporary culture and its corresponding market logic.[36] And so even the barest thought of the before and after of capitalism is swallowed up by its contemporary nowness.

There is to be no illusion that "pluralizing" accounts of those composers associated with the notion of a Darmstadt School are neutral, passive, and disinterested; rather, they require a profound obfuscation of historical materials to suit their ends. There has, for instance, been a quite beguiling readiness to paint unflattering pictures of audiences and the press so as to dismiss the reception of composers like Maderna and Nono and their association as a group as simply erroneous due to the diversity of their compositional methods (not, it is worth noting, their aesthetic results).[37] Consequently the socio-cultural significance of these composers to those *outside* of their circle is not adequately recognized. The point here is not to defend or privilege the insights of once-contemporary critics; indeed, it barely needs stating that the "popular" reception of those referred to as the Darmstadt School was (and remains!) plagued with issues. Nor, indeed, can what was *once thought* be a substitute for *thinking*. Rather, the intent here is to suggest that the dismissal of such criticism is part of a larger critical trend which appears, firstly, intent on throwing the baby out with the bathwater, leaving us with formalistic histories of art rather than art in the world,[38]

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[31] Hal Foster, *Recodings: Art, Spectacle, Cultural Politics* (Bay Press, 1985), 14.
[32] Nicholas Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 1998), 46.
[33] Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (Beacon Press, 1964), 61.
[34] Wilson, "The Rhetoric of Autonomy," 19.
[35] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism,* 173.
[36] Wilson, "The Rhetoric of Autonomy," 20.
[37] Iddon's *New Music at Darmstadt* is an especially exemplary instance of such a position.
[38] Becker, *Art Worlds* (University of California Press, 1982), 1.

and which also pervasively (perversely, even) obscures an alternative hearing which does not fit so easily with the present as "plural" understandings do.

Of course, stressing the particularity of given composers is not *simply* erroneous. And Heile is certainly correct, in a more recent piece, to have asserted that "thinking in terms of centres and peripheries . . . is not necessarily innocent, mirroring as it does the spatial order of colonialism."[39] Yet the matter cannot be wished away; the narrative of the Darmstadt School, the historical significance of the composers being associated with one another, reappears—once we pry ourselves from the microscope of music analysis and individual biographies. Thus, the challenge to the liberal-plural position can be posed with the following question: if figures like Nono, Maderna, Stockhausen, and Boulez were all producing very *different* work during the 1950s, *why*, whether in the adoption of the Darmstadt School terminology (and its variants) or otherwise, were they spoken of, at a certain level, as *the same*?

Reports from the Darmstädter Ferienkurse

With the above in mind, it is worth examining the tremendous wealth of criticism that Iddon presents in *New Music at Darmstadt* as part of his effort to emphasize the divergences and distinctions of those who would come associated together as the Darmstadt School. Centrally, Iddon holds that "at any particular point in the 1950s, the leading composers of the 'Darmstadt Generation' operated on the technical level in ways often wholly distinct from one another."[40] This allows him to assert that

> With the very year in which the "Darmstadt School" could be spoken of as a "real" entity [JD: for Iddon this is 1957], there were already signs perceivable that some members of the new music community gathered there were abandoning serial control, such as it was, in favor of chance operations, although arguably Stockhausen had long viewed statistical procedures as being aleatoric ones, too. Whether the "Darmstadt School" had any real existence or was largely a fiction of the press, no sooner had it been formalized than it was already in the process of dispersal.[41]

Thus, for Iddon, the existence of what has been referred to as the Darmstadt School is tied to the use of certain generative technical procedures (specifically, serial control) rather than aesthetic results. Consistent with his effort to emphasize the gaps between the composers who had been labeled in such terms, he suggests that the term never "meant anything very much as a concept" on this basis.[42]

The first issue here is that Iddon's arguments hinge upon "real existence" *not* being a fiction of the press. Yet the Darmstadt School terminology, as his own analysis reminds us, was employed to associate the production of certain music which was performed at the summer school. It was always a "fiction," but there is a truth to the fiction. The "Darmstadt School" terminology arose within a significant press response that grasped these composers together on aesthetic, social, and cultural levels. With regard to the actuality of this "fiction," it is beside the point whether Iddon or other contemporary musicologists think these composers should be associated on "technical," pre-compositional grounds.[43] After all, the people

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[39] Björn Heile, "Erik Bergman, Cosmopolitanism and Musical Geography" in *Transformations of Musical Modernism*, ed. Erling E. Guldbrandsen and Julian Johnson (Cambridge University Press, 2023), 78.
[40] Iddon, *New Music at Darmstadt*, 152.
[41] Iddon, *New Music at Darmstadt*, 155.
[42] Iddon, *New Music at Darmstadt*, 155.
[43] Which is not to say that this sort of analysis and critical perspective is de facto useless, or that it cannot be made useful, but rather to stress that the fiction has a life of its own, which ought not to be dismissed out of hand.

writing in the press were not spending hours poring over scores and tracing the serial construction of the pieces they were writing about; if Iddon demonstrates anything, it is this. But nevertheless, a discursive position was adopted within the press in which the Darmstadt School terminology could be employed: if they hadn't done so then Iddon would not have needed to spend more than 150 pages trying to dismiss the validity of their claims. Indeed, the historical reality of the critical discourse around the so-called Darmstadt School reflected significant socio-cultural energies. Plenty of evidence for this ideological effectivity is provided by Iddon himself.

The Darmstadt School terminology arose after years of (overwhelmingly) negative press reports and audience responses to music performed at the summer courses. Nono's *Variazioni canoniche sulla serie dell'op. 41 di Arnold Schoenberg* (1950) for orchestra was one of the first works to provoke one of the course's notoriously brutal audience responses. Speaking of the performance, the commentator in the right-leaning *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* adopted an affronted-bourgeois persona, claiming that "this indigestion of a musical stammerer, this corpse of a compositional figure ought not to have got through the barricade of a jury" and that Nono had "sinned against all that is human in music."[44] Interestingly, the essence of this criticism was shared by the German composer-critic Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt. Writing in the American Occupation Zone's official newspaper, *Die Neue Zeitung*, Stuckenschmidt reports whistling and jeering intermingled with the occasional "bravo," and despite his own modernist musical sympathies (and well-established support for composers like Schoenberg), himself expressed doubt over the piece's musicality, suggesting sections were "incomprehensible to the unprepared."[45]

Iddon emphasizes how Stuckenschmidt's commentary is "positively effusive" by comparison with the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* commentator.[46] But what is more striking is surely the fact that from two quite different quarters we are confronted with the notion of dehumanization and meaninglessness being leveled at those who would come to be associated with the idea of a Darmstadt School. It bears noting that this discourse was not restricted to reporting on Darmstadt; indeed, such motifs abound in relation to post-WW2 discourse on serial practice, both from supporters and detractors. In his report on the first day of the 1951 International Congress on Twelve-Tone music, Hermann Heiß (himself a composer who adopted twelve-tone approaches) claimed that following Schoenberg's path would lead to "an absolute isolation of the human."[47] Dispensing with subjectivity was widely proposed as the aim in contemporary serial music: Gertrud Runge, correspondent for the conservative-aligned *Welt am Sonntag*, claimed that "a well-known composer of the Schoenberg school formulated the issue well when he said: 'Enough with feeling and alcohol! I am an engineer!'"[48] Composers attending Darmstadt assumed a particularly central position in these debates, mediated in part by Theodor W. Adorno's "The Ageing of the New Music," where the German philosopher argues that the critical impulses of 1920s modernism are forsaken in favor of technocratic de-subjectivization in much of the music that was performed at the Darmstädter

[44] "Protest Nach Zwei Seiten: "Musik der Jungen Generation" in Darmstadt," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, August 30, 1950. Cited in Iddon, *New Music at Darmstadt*, 38.
[45] Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt, "Spielerei, Pathos und Verinnerlichung: Abschluß der Darmstädter Konzertreihe," *Die Neue Zeitung*, August 30, 1950. Cited in Iddon, *New Music at Darmstadt*, 37.
[46] Iddon, *New Music at Darmstadt*, 38.
[47] Hermann Heiß, "Zwei Wege der Zwölftonmusik," *Darmstädter Echo*, July 3, 1951.
[48] Gertrud Runge, "Gefahren der Neuen Musik," *Welt am Sonntag*, July 8, 1951.

Ferienkurse.[49] These latter day modernists, we are told, fail to tear "the mask . . . from the countenance of false happiness," and thereby do not realize, as a negative critique, the "*promesse du bonheur*" (the promise of happiness), the negative record of an alternative to antagonistic reality.[50]

Adorno's article resonated quickly and widely amongst critical responses to music performed at the Darmstadt Summer courses. Albert Rodemann, a regular correspondent on the courses for the *Darmstädter Tagblatt* (then one of the largest dailies in Germany), follows Adorno's lead in his review of the so-called "Wunderkonzert" in 1952 (which saw premieres of Nono, Maderna, and Stockhausen on one night), writing that Stockhausen's *Kreuzspiel* realizes

> a system of "static music," the indefensibleness of which Theodor Adorno already demonstrated the previous year to its Flemish inventor [i.e., Karel Goeyvaerts], the sound of the piece goes far beyond that which we have been accustomed to call music.[51]

However, such judgments were not necessarily negative. Rodemann would speak much more favorably of Nono, the "father of the Kranichstein model," claiming that "even in the space of autonomous music," *España en el corazón* "create[s] an atmosphere which . . . points towards the content of the poems" by Garcia Lorca and Pablo Neruda through a "bold and charged abstraction."[52]

Rodemann's strategy here demonstrates the capacity for discussions around those who would come to be referred to as the Darmstadt School to acknowledge exceptions against the backdrop of a perceived (dehumanizing, objectifying) aesthetic norm. Such narratives abounded. Adorno would acknowledge Luciano Berio as an exception in 1957, and, in the forward to the second printing of *Dissonanzen* in 1958, exempt Boulez's *Le Marteau sans maître* and Stockhausen's *Zeitmasse* from his broader judgments on then-contemporary new music.[53] Nono, in particular, though his work was often seen as "typical" of those of the so-called Darmstadt School,[54] also attracted "exceptional individual" narratives, with the composer often being presented as an example against which others were set. The reporter of the left-leaning *Aachener Nachrichten* wrote that

> The punctual style, which leads back to Anton Webern, and which the young H. K. [sic] Stockhausen still handles clumsily in his Kreuzspiel . . . has found its master in Luigi Nono. His Espana . . . is a beautiful piece. Tautly constructed, captivating in its dabs of orchestral colour, immediate in effect. The enchanted listeners demanded an encore, which Maderna, conducting, finally allowed. For Luigi Nono, who only two years ago was strongly criticized and lampooned, it was a major evening.[55]

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[49] Theodor W. Adorno, "The Ageing of New Music," in *Essays on Music*, ed. Richard Leppert, trans. Frederic Will and Robert Hullot-Kentor (University of California Press, 2002), 181–202; see esp. 182, 185–86, 187. Iddon spends a great deal of time trying to debunk Adorno's article without addressing the text's political or philosophical stakes; see Iddon, *New Music at Darmstadt*, 129–41.

[50] Theodor W. Adorno, "On the Fetish-Character in Music," in *Essays on Music*, ed. Richard Leppert, trans. Frederic Will and Robert Hullot-Kentor (University of California Press, 2002), 291.

[51] Albert Rodemann, "Ein Tag des Experimentes: Zwei Veranstaltungen in den Kranichsteiner Ferienkursen," *Darmstädter Tagblatt*, July 23, 1952.

[52] Rodemann, "Ein Tag des Experimentes."

[53] For Adorno acknowledging the exceptional status of Berio, see Theodor W. Adorno and Heinz-Klaus Metzger, "Disput Zwischen Theodor W. Adorno und Heinz-Klaus Metzger" [1957], in Heiz-Klaus Metzger, *Musik wozu: Literatur zu Noten*, ed. Rainer Riehn (Suhkamp, 1980), 96.

[54] See Iddon, *New Music at Darmstadt*, e.g., 125.

[55] "Die 'Neue Musik' und die Gesellschaft: Für wen denn eigentlich schaffen unsere Jüngsten?," *Aachener Nachrichten*, July 25, 1952. Cited in Iddon, *New Music at Darmstadt*, 87.

Not everyone fared so well. Günter Engler, another contributor to *Neue Zeitung*, admired Nono's efforts whilst dismissing those of others as "a skeleton of music, with no flesh on it. (To refer to Webern in this context borders on the libellous.)"[56] Elsewhere, the art historian and critic Walter Friedländer claimed that *Kreuzspiel* was hardly distinguishable from the composer (and later music administrator) Lorenzo dall'Oglio's largely forgotten *Cinque espressioni* for orchestra (1951), both of which were written in "the 'punctual' manner."[57]

A more complicated picture than that advocated by pluralist positions is apparent here. At the Darmstadt courses there was an extraordinary space for the performance of modernist music (or New Music, if you prefer), and this gave audiences and critics a space to exercise judgment. They expressed such judgments in varying manners—including clapping, booing and jeering—but all were tied to the forming of generic associations for various composers. In this context, the music performed was distinguished from (bourgeois) conventions and structures of feeling which were tied to well-established socio-cultural contracts that structure audiences' experience of a text or set of texts.[58] The press criticism is a tangible trace of the generic categories and identities which structured the reception of the music performed there, a structuring process which Eric Drott has attempted to demonstrate with regards to post-1945 modernist music more broadly.[59]

The praise "the exceptions" received was structured by equivalences that were perceived across and between the composers that came to be associated with the Darmstadt School terminology. Collective discursive formations enabled judgments to be made on specific composers and works. Thus, discussions around the successful inheritance of Webern's mantle, for example, were employed both to recognize moments of human musicality (or the sublation of objectivism into a "bold and charged abstraction," as Rodemann put it) and also to explicitly tie the composers concerned to the motif of dehumanization. Iddon gives numerous examples of such discourse from a variety of critics for both local and national newspapers. Ernst Thomas, writing for the regional newspaper *Darmstädter Echo*, argued that Stockhausen in his *Kontra-Punkte* engaged with Webern in such a way as to arrive at "total objectivity and [the] complete elimination of the subjective expressive will."[60] Rodemann agreed: *Kontra-Punkte* is "an abstract, dehumanised art." But where Rodemann suggested that Nono remained concerned with a "human element,"[61] the press usually understood all of the composers to be engaging with Webern as part of a turn towards "total objectivation."[62] The young composers were stepping "further along the path toward the abolition of the senses, atomisation, and mathematicisation of music," Runge, again writing in *Welt am Sontag*, claimed.[63] Other works by Nono performed at Darmstadt (such as his *Incontri* (1955)) would

[56] Günter Engler, "Musik der jungen Generation? Experiment und Manier dei ben 'Ferienkursen,'" *Neue Zeitung*, July 23, 1952. Cited in Iddon, *New Music at Darmstadt*, 88.
[57] Walter Friedländer, "An den Grenzen der Hörbarkeit: Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik in Darmstadt," *Der Standpunkt*, August 8, 1952. Cited in Iddon, *New Music at Darmstadt*, 86.
[58] See Frederic Jameson, *The Political Unconscious* (Routledge, 2002 [1981]), 93. See also Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree,* trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (University of Nebraska Press, 1997).
[59] Eric Drott, "The End(s) of Genre," *Journal of Music Theory* 57, no. 1 (2013): 1–45.
[60] Ernst Thomas, "Die Situation des 'Kaputt,'" *Darmstädter Echo*, July 27, 1953. Cited in Iddon, *New Music at Darmstadt*, 98.
[61] Albert Rodemann, "Musik der jungen Generation III: Bandaufnahmen und Diskussions-Quartett im Radio Frankfurt," *Darmstädter Tagblatt*, July 27, 1953. Cited in Iddon, *New Music at Darmstadt*, 99.
[62] G. N. Herchenröder, "Darmstädter Ferienkurse: Musik-Klänge der Maschinen-Zeit," *Abendpost*, August 1, 1953. See also Fritz Bielwiese, "Im Grenzgebiet der Musikalischen Wirkungen," *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger*, August 4, 1953, and Heinz Enke, "Im Zeichen Schönbergs und Weberns: Die Internationalen Ferienkurse in Darmstadt," *Allgemeine Zeitung*, August 5, 1953. All cited in Iddon, *New Music at Darmstadt*, 99.
[63] Gertrud Runge, "Ergebnis der Darmstädter Ferienkurse: Anschluß an die Weltmusik endlich wiedergewonnen," *Welt am Sonntag*, August 2, 1953. Cited in Iddon, *New Music at Darmstadt*, 99.

be recognized as part of a trend towards non-musical, non-expressive abstraction, too.[64] Particularly noteworthy is the contribution of the Swiss composer Armin Schibler, himself a summer course attendee, who launched a ferocious polemic against the "Webern evening." In it, he claimed that the composers gathered at Darmstadt were fueled by an apparent misrecognition of Webern, corresponding to the "elimination of the human element from art."[65] Schibler's polemic reached a wide audience, as recorded by Karlheinz Stockhausen in a letter to Wolfgang Steinecke (a key administrative figure at the courses):

> During the night, Herr Schibler wrote an extremely foolish polemic against us and distributed it to everybody. It even reached the minister. We were a group who wanted to liquidate humanity and so on. And finally it was claimed that we were communists and how could one give us publicity like this. . . .[66]

The difference and antagonism contained within this schism do not amount to proof of pluralism. To even make such a reading one would need to accept the existence of Schibler's position as such; the fact that he *perceived*, like the music critics across local and national press outlets of varying political affiliations, those associated with the Darmstadt School terminology as a faction *within* the summer courses—a perception seemingly accepted by Stockhausen here (who speaks of "us" and "we") and, as will be shown below, others to whom the terminology refers. Iddon's suggestion that Schibler was using Stockhausen as a proxy for a critique of Herbert Eimert, a leading figure at the courses, is, again, beside the point, no matter how instrumental Eimert was in shaping the courses.[67] Even if it were to be proven that such a perception is an absolute fantasy that Schibler mobilized opportunistically, and there were never any musical resemblances between the work of Boulez, Nono, Stockhausen, Maderna and others, the reality of the fantasy, and the effects therein, would remain. The "illusion" would be "on the side of reality itself," the capacity of an ideology to guide activity, as Žižek once parsed the Lacanian dictum that "every truth has the *structure* of fiction."[68] Thus, at this stage it could even be granted, with Iddon, that often the critical responses were couched in dubious musical commentary and over-generalizations, or perhaps prompted by subpar performances.[69] Nevertheless, contemporary critics were assessing (and largely rejecting) the composers who came to be associated with the idea of a Darmstadt School on the expressive character of their music, and not (or at least, not predominantly) its construction. Nor were the composers simply *reduced* to their supposed influences: the association with Webern could also be called upon critically, and even if Webern was given undue prominence in terms of these composers' influences (a matter dealt with further below), the suggestion often was that composers had followed through on the Webernian project in *specific* (supposedly misguided) directions, rather than that these composers' work was reducible to his.

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[64] Heinz Pringsheim, "Kranichsteiner Ferienkurse," broadcast, Bayerischer Rundfunk, June 3, 1955, cited in Iddon, *New Music at Darmstadt*, 124; Everett Helm, "Darmstadt, Baden-Baden, and Twelve-Tone Music," *Saturday Review* (July 30, 1955), 46. Cited in Iddon, *New Music at Darmstadt*, 124.

[65] Armin Schibler, "Rundschreiben," in *Im Zenit der Moderne*, vol. 3, ed. Gianmario Borio and Hermann Danuser (Rombach, 1997), 66–68. Cited in Iddon, *New Music at Darmstadt*, 97.

[66] Stockhausen to Steinecke, August 23, 1953, in *Stockhausen bei den Internationalen Ferienkursen*, 72. Cited in Iddon, *New Music at Darmstadt*, 97, where it is stated that "by 'the minister,' Stockhausen almost certainly meant Ludwig Metzger, by this time culture minister for Hesse" (see note 204).

[67] Iddon, *New Music at Darmstadt*, 98.

[68] See Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (Verso, 2008), 30; Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar, Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959–60*, trans. Dennis Porter (Routledge, 1992), 12.

[69] See Iddon, *New Music at Darmstadt*, 68, for a discussion of *Kreuspiel's* performance in this light.

What is more, those composers who came to be associated as a supposed Darmstadt School demonstrated a capacity to antagonize attending audiences which went beyond mere aesthetic distaste. The generic judgments underlie the socio-historical relationship between the Darmstadt School and its publics. Though not noted by Iddon, the religious overtones of the condemnations from the right-leaning *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, cited above, are not to be missed; nor is the intensity of Schibler's polemic against Stockhausen to be disregarded. This music was "incomprehensible for the unprepared," Stuckenschmidt wrote; others found it to not be music at all. Yet there were calls of "bravo" amidst the audiences whistling at the performances of those dubbed as Darmstadt School composers at the summer courses. Whether the performances were to be accepted as music was a matter for contestation; the music was disruptive to received understandings of what the term "music" means, and the rhetoric that has been employed in the commentaries presented above show the stakes were high. These judgments hinge upon disjunction, as has always been the case with judgments of taste; disjunction is in fact constitutive of what Immanuel Kant in the *Critique of Judgment* (1790) theorized as subjective universality—the presupposition of an individual that their aesthetic judgment must necessarily be valid for others. Aesthetic judgments make *particular* claims to universality which are exclusionary (they presuppose the invalidity of opposing claims). In this vein, the grouping of this music together, both before and after the Darmstadt School terminology came to prominence, registers not only a shared aesthetic antagonism, but also a—not-unfamiliar—social (class) conflict. To view the composers together is to become embroiled in questions of taste, wherein composers were classified and appreciated with reference to their cultural legitimacy against established (bourgeois) standards.[70] This was the context for the criticisms of these composers' "elitism," to which can be added the example of Hille Moldenhauer, writing as the correspondent for *Hamburger Echo* (a paper affiliated with the Social Democratic Party), claimed (whilst also admiring Nono's work) that "'Punctual Music' is the shibboleth for this skeleton, whose secrets only its composers know."[71]

Thus, although critics disagreed over details and specific judgments, they operated within a socio-symbolic space where these composers were distinguished from a well-established aesthetic norm, and this distinction *mattered*. Their experience was far from that of present-day music critics, who have come to know the music of the so-called Darmstadt School as part of a niche canon of music which has long secured institutional legitimacy. For these latter-day critics, the controversies and disputes surrounding the pieces' initial reception that led to the Darmstadt School nomenclature may therefore appear suitably remote enough to dismiss this term as a product of a by-gone era, the remnants of ill-informed and oppositional press commentary. However, doing so is to miss the historical force (and, indeed, failure) of these composers, which shines a light on our own socio-cultural complacencies. There is much to be learned from this modernist effort to envision something new, and its subsequent isolation to what amounts to a collection of now mostly forgotten cultural artefacts. The musical activities of those who would be identified as the Darmstadt School were so striking to their audiences precisely because, rightly or wrongly, they were *not* simply received as the work of an assortment of separate individuals; rather, critics expressed dismay at the emergence of a cultural force that appeared to chart an alternative path to the conventions of (bourgeois) concert hall music, from their eyes further removed even than the work of the first generation modernists who caused such a furore in the first half of the twentieth century. Such critics were experiencing a suspension of, or at least an assault upon, the *necessity* of contemporary aesthetic

[70] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction*, trans. Richard Nice (Harvard University Press, 1984), 6, 170.
[71] Hille Moldenhauer, "'Punktuelle' Musik und Filzpantoffeln: Eindrücke von den Internationalen Ferienkursen für Neue Musik," *Hamburger Echo*, July 26, 1952.

and cultural law as such; they were faced with a "young" generation that reveled in the contingency of tradition, even if they did not blow up the opera houses as the (young) Boulez once proposed.[72] Notwithstanding the social conservatism of Boulez discussed above, those of the so-called Darmstadt School had not yet learnt place in the world of good taste.

The Syntax

In contrast to the incendiary press reception of the 1950s, scholarly attention to composers associated with the idea of the Darmstadt School came to be, and in many places continues to be, dominated by decidedly formalist perspectives.[73] Nevertheless, there remain insights to be drawn from such scholarship as to the qualities that made this music so offensive to the audiences at Darmstadt.

Critics have, explicitly or implicitly, invested in the Darmstadt School distinction with reference to questions of (subjective or objective) expressivity of the musical surface, and its distinction from the conventions of the classical canon. M. J. Grant once theorized music associated with the Darmstadt School grouping through an "unordering" of centered and hierarchic thematic music.[74] Crucial for Grant is what the information theorist Abraham Moles has referred to as the difference between "semantic" and "aesthetic" information.[75] Semantic information is "translatable" with a definable significatory function within a rhetorical system. By contrast, aesthetic information is not translatable without losing the qualities of the utterance. These categories are not rigidly separate; all messages "are a mixture of both." But certain utterances will be more semantic or aesthetic than others. Thematic music is more "semantic" and sets up "logical" (directed) expectations of rhetorical "progression." "The development of a musical theme is based upon the [foreseeable and goal-oriented] development of an argument." The serialism practiced by notable attendees of the Darmstadt courses in the 1950s, Grant argues, sought to "undo" such representational categories. This music realized, via serial ordering, processes of "continual change" that are not goal-oriented. It is music which realizes a "continuum," suppressing traditional logical and rhetorical (expressive) aesthetic categories so as to appear non-foreseeable.[76]

Grant's central exhibit is Boulez's *Structures 1a* (1952), one of those ("rare") examples of fully pre-ordered pieces performed at the summer courses. This piece consists of eleven sections, separated by pauses. Within each section, there are varying serial "threads," though they are inaudible individually. Paradoxically, although the serial ordering of this piece is most strictly employed to individual pitch classes and the duration of tones, not only is the serial manipulation of these categories inaudible, but the categories themselves are so unstable and complex that the (human) listener struggles to perceive meaningful local relationships. Instead, the eleven sections of the work are internally characterized and distinguished by their density, attack and dynamic quality, relative speeds, and octave placement. *Structures 1a*'s serialism "dissolves" the rhetoric of tonal music and foregrounds "categories specific to [the]

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[72] Pierre Boulez, "Opera Houses? Blow Them Up!" *Opera* 19, no. 5 (1968): 440.
[73] Ben Earle, "Twelve-Note Music as Music: An Essay in Two Parts," *Music Analysis* 34, no. 1 (2015): 100, https://doi.org/10.1111/musa.12042.
[74] M. J. Grant, *Serial Music* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 154–55; see also *Serial Music,* 38, where Grant declares her intention to "reclaim serialism from its detractors."
[75] Grant, *Serial Music*, 134–35; Abraham Moles, *Information Theory and Esthetic Perception*, trans. Joel E. Cohen (University of Illinois Press, 1968), 128.
[76] Grant, *Serial Music*, 135, 158, 160, 161, 163, 164.

individual [composition]." The syntax of tonal music is replaced with a "seemingly random progression of events."[77]

Structures 1a, like Goeyvaerts's Sonata for Two Pianos (1950–51), has occupied an important place in the (scholarly) reception of the so-called Darmstadt School, and has come over the years to function akin to a textbook example. Recent critics have attempted to stress the aberrant nature of *Structures 1a* (and other fully predetermined works), as well as the work's ties to a Parisian context; indeed, a simplistic reduction of the music of the supposed Darmstadt School (let alone the music presented at the Darmstadt Summer Courses) to the work of Boulez in the early 1950s is to be avoided. However, it is equally important not to lose sight of the work's presence. Six years after its Paris premiere and five years after its premiere at the Darmstadt courses, a detailed twenty-five-page analysis by the Hungarian emigree György Ligeti would be published in the fourth volume of *Die Reihe*, the summer course's unofficial journal (edited by Stockhausen and Eimert). Though Ligeti had made a strong impression at the courses, he was of course then a relatively fresh face with little institutional clout, and pages in journals do sometimes need to be filled. Nevertheless, it was a large piece to be submitted and then printed if *Structures 1a* was really all that marginal; likewise, if the article's inclusion was part of Eimert's effort to promote a Darmstadt "myth" (discussed more below), then it nevertheless testifies to the actuality of the myth as myth.

There is a broader point here. Grant's analysis of *Structures 1a* allows her to ground her understanding of the (often quasi-scientific) discourse around the Darmstadt summer courses in a musical product. She thus presents a positive narrative of the "objectivization" that so irked contemporary critics. Grant has not been alone in such efforts; notable contributions come from the recent work of Jennifer Iverson (discussed below) and Patricia Howland. This latter provides a pliable vocabulary and perspective on how the music of many of those who attended Darmstadt resisted traditional formal rhetoric, and thus thwarts "phrase-like" understanding. The musical activity, Howland argues, centers around "secondary parameters" like surface rhythm, textural density, dynamics, registration, and timbre.[78] "Audible shapes and processes" are heard by changes in the magnitude of such parameters. Post-tonal music constructs "perceptible formal structures" through "parametric similarities, differences, relations, and interactions." These formal structures, Howland suggests, are akin to "phrase-like units," which she refers to as "integrated parametric structures" (IPSs).[79] Analyzing such work in terms of IPSs shifts the focus to musical states and intensities rather than distinct entities (melodies), to varying magnitudes rather than thematic rhetorical development. Grant and Howland's analyses and theorizations demonstrate a means by which the music composed by members of the so-called Darmstadt School can, indeed, be heard as *together* realizing a post-tonal musical shift without the *differences* of particular works being annulled. There was, in short, a common ("objectivizing") shift in musical language.

It could be contended that this is little more than to acknowledge that much of the "objectivizing" music performed at Darmstadt was, in fact, (late) modernist. Grant theorizes her position via the German philosopher Max Bense's work on literature and fine art.[80] For Bense, art is a sign process. Signs, for Bense, become aesthetic signs through their integration into artistic processes. This shifts the focus to

[77] Grant, *Serial Music*, 150–54.
[78] Patricia Howland, "Formal Structures in Post-Tonal Music," *Music Theory Spectrum* 37, no. 1 (2015): 71, https://doi.org/10.1093/mts/mtv011.
[79] Howland, "Formal Structures in Post-Tonal Music," 71, 74.
[80] Max Bense, *Aesthetica; Einführung in die Neue Aesthetik* (Agis, 1965).

presentation as such (relations) rather than the objects of presentation (things). Abstract art renders the medium itself the sign: "abstract, non-representational painting demands a limitation to color and form if it is actually to attain reality, and to achieve for art the status of an ontological process."[81] Grant suggests that Darmstadt serialism can be grasped in the same terms as abstract art; both realize "a transition from a sign world that *functions*, to a sign world that *is*."[82] Though Grant's phrasing risks positing an overblown immediacy without mediation, it can be said that the work of those associated with the Darmstadt School terminology realizes a process of "autonomation" from conventionalized musical form. It posits itself, as Jameson has said of late modernism more generally, as the materialization of form as such, and establishes a sense of "autonomy" from the meaning-bound culture of "daily life."[83] The question would then be: can the press reception of "sameness" at the Darmstadt Summer Courses be explained away by reference to a broad conception of late modernist cultural politics? Could such discourse, tied as it was to questions of dehumanization and objectivization, not also register the appearance of a more specific collective formation?

The Webern Evening

Commonality was advocated plainly in a speech given by Nono at the 1957 course in which the composer endorsed the Darmstadt School terminology to refer to himself, Maderna, Stockhausen, and Boulez.[84] Discussing multiple works that had been performed at the courses, Nono extolled an account of "the school" in which integral serialism, derived from Webern and Schoenberg, had continued the "historical development of music," and stressed that there was a shared approach, just as the press reception had been implying.[85]

Such direct applications of the terminology from composers themselves are few and far between. There are also numerous instances of composers' performatively distinguishing themselves—as in Stockhausen's "Sprache und Musik" lecture talk from the same year, in which the German composer set out to compare his efforts with those of Nono and Boulez and argue that his own practice was the most advanced. Yet though efforts of differentiation apparently contrast with the collective narrative of Nono, the fact Stockhausen was comparing his practice against the others *made sense* discursively, insofar as the composers of the so-called Darmstadt School were, at this time, contributing to a shared institutional context and also a common ideological field of meaning. Within this field, different positions could be taken by composers (and others). Their positions were not necessarily stable, and varying weights could be accorded to their contributions. Nevertheless, their statements and utterances had relational coherence precisely in the context of this wider ideological formation.

Exemplary here is the association of composers attending the Darmstadt summer courses with Webern, which would have made little sense at the course's inception when the program was largely a neoclassical affair with a strong presence of Hindemith. Later, from around 1948 to the early 1950s, Schoenberg, who had never been well enough to attend the summer school, could loosely be seen as the

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[81] Bense, *Aesthetica*, 44, 55, 63.
[82] Grant, *Serial Music*, 147.
[83] Fredric Jameson, *A Singular Modernity* (Verso, 2002), 91, 146, 204, 209, 176–177, 163–164.
[84] See "Die Entwicklung der Reihentechnik" in Luigi Nono, *Texte, Studien zu seiner Musik,* ed. Jürg Stenzl (Atlantis, 1975), 21–33.
[85] See Iddon, *New Music at Darmstadt*, 152.

figurehead of the course.[86] But Webern came to usurp his teacher. In 1953, the extended "memorial evening" for Webern provoked Rodemann to write a piece entitled: "An Unknown Gives Rise to a School."[87] Five of Webern's works (Opp. 5, 7, 9, 11 and 23) were performed; Eimert gave a brief talk on the composer and also read supportive contributions from the absent French and Belgian composers, Pierre Boulez and Karel Goeyvaerts; Karlheinz Stockhausen presented an analysis of Webern's Concerto for Nine Instruments, op. 24 (1934); and Luigi Nono argued, in a Nietzschean vein redolent of Schoenberg's *Harmonielehre* (1909), that Webern was an example of the "*new man* who possesses the absolute confidence to mold the inner life with tension."[88]

Iddon has, in many senses commendably, taken great pains to complicate the historical record of the Webern evening. His argument is essentially that Eimert's speech was revisionist history, and that the idea that Webern was a "leader" for a new tradition was "Eimert's own invention," which overwrote the differences the composers displayed at the event and elsewhere and which Rodemann and other members of the press bought into simply because it was an easy way of making sense of these "confusing young composers."[89] Along similar lines, Max Erwin has attempted to demonstrate more broadly that Eimert has had a determining role in Darmstadt School discourse.[90] It certainly seems that Eimert's maneuvers were a determining factor in the organization of this event. However, the evening (and associated discourse on Webern), and the composers' complicity with it, was, in a quite literal sense, history in the making. Whatever role people have in history, "they do not make it just as they please"; their actions are mediated by circumstances *not* "chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past." [91] Adjustments according to the situation as it exists through external agents (for artists, very much including critics and patrons) remains integral to praxis. Thus the dismissal of the historical significance of this evening on the basis of Eimert's instrumental role in the courses is a red herring. The Webern evening provided a critical framework for interpreting and understanding the work of the Darmstadt School composers as a grouping, which the press reception testifies was not difficult for attendees to accept. Indeed, there is no reason to suspect it should have been. Those attending the evening heard what these composers said there and then; there is no evidence to suggest these young composers were signaling that these speeches were *not* a sincere reflection of their beliefs, and certainly the press (and presumably other attendees) did not interpret them as doing so.

So, though it is important to keep in mind the differences of the contributors, the fact remains that these composers were discussing Webern and positioning their outputs against his.[92] More broadly, Webern's music had an enduring role in the discourse of those attending the courses. The 1955 edition of *die Reihe* was dedicated to Webern, where Webern's work was dissected by composers to justify their musical approaches.[93] Stockhausen, Goeyvaerts, Pousseur, and others purportedly engaged with Webern

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[86] David Osmond-Smith, "New Beginnings: The International Avant-Garde, 1945–62," in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Anthony Pople (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 340, https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521662567.015.
[87] Albert Rodemann, "Ein Unbekannter bildet Schule: Anton-Webern-Gedächtnis-Konzert im Seminar Marienhöhe," *Darmstädter Tagblatt*, July 25–26, 1953.
[88] Cited in Osmond-Smith, "New Beginnings," 341–42.
[89] Iddon, *New Music at Darmstadt*, 98, 101, 118.
[90] See Erwin, *Herbert Eimert and the Darmstadt School*.
[91] Karl Marx, *The Karl Marx Library*, vol. 1, ed. Saul K. Padover (McGraw Hill, 1972), 245–46.
[92] This would be the case even if, hypothetically, these composers were not directly influenced by Webern all that much, and that they may have said similar things if asked to give a presentation on another composer (though it is questionable as to if an alternative composer could have fulfilled this same discursive function).
[93] Grant, *Serial Music*, 104, 114.

for his "purity" in formal design. Such purity was supposed to enable the production of an anti-classical music that would embrace untouched facets of musical communication (like silence). Webern was also associated with new music not being bound by "oppositional" and "hierarchical" dictations of conventional music.[94] Even if Nono's "tense" Webern conflicted with Goeyvaerts "tensionless" Webern, both of them presented Webern as a means of justifying a departure from established musical approaches.[95]

It cannot be overstressed that discursive positions (and their musical refractions) were often volatile. Telling is the shifting discourse around "pointillism." In the mid-1950s, many composers—perhaps by now sick of the press commentary on the matter—started to identify issues with "punctual" music in their writings, and began to explore solutions to this aesthetic problem: Jennifer Iverson has shown that for many of the composers this surfaces especially in discourse regarding what she refers to as "statistical form," a "statistical" approach to composition influenced by post-war information theory.[96] Though Iverson's focus is on composers engaged with the WDR studio, her analysis more broadly reveals that there was an acknowledgement that serial works (and Cage's aleatoric works) in the 1950s were "extremely information dense" and sometimes "comparable to random noise," and thus composers "began explicitly planning to better accommodate human perception . . . by incorporating more large-scale shapes, gestures, repetition, and audible continuity into their music."[97] There is no denying the methods by which this was attempted would vary considerably, but this does not in itself negate the appearance of a collective effort, both in theory and in practice, to solve a common compositional problem of dis-ordered, late modernist music—it is not by some miraculous coincidence that there were profound resemblances between composers' theory and practice as they attended the same summer course for music, wrote in the same journals and had their music performed at the same concerts. The virulent press reception of those referred to as the Darmstadt School records their displacement from contemporary hierarchies of bourgeois taste as they carved out a besieged aesthetic enclave.

What About the Italians?

In these terms, it remains meaningful for composers like Boulez, Stockhausen, Nono, and Maderna to be spoken of together (whether by the Darmstadt School label or otherwise), and that association bears out in the theory, practice and activities of such figures. However, questions remain over the "exceptional" status of certain individuals, and how broadly the association can be extended. Advocates for pluralist understandings have often made reference to the case of Italy. In his review of Grant's *Serial Music*, Heile argues that "no mention is made of Italy . . . where the absence of a 'clear slate' ideology . . . led to a significantly different cultural atmosphere." He argues that Grant neglects serialists like Maderna and Nono, who he claims more explicitly linked musical avant-gardism to radical politics.[98] "Both [Nono and Maderna]," Heile declared elsewhere, "were adamant that their communist credentials must be reflected in their music."[99]

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[94] Grant, *Serial Music*, 105–107, 113, 118, 119.
[95] Grant notes a certain "pedagogical" tone to discussions around Webern; see Grant, *Serial Music*, 107n. 14.
[96] Jennifer Iverson, *Electronic Inspirations* (Oxford University Press 2018), 105, https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190868192.001.0001.
[97] Iverson, *Electronic Inspirations*, 137.
[98] Bjorn Heile, "Review of Serial Music, Serial Aesthetics: Compositional Theory in Post-War Europe by M. J. Grant," *Music and Letters* 84, no. 1 (2003): 135, https://doi.org/10.1093/ml/84.1.132.
[99] Bjorn Heile, "Darmstadt as Other," 166.

Grant certainly does not foreground the contributions by Italian figures to *die Reihe* as much as she could (and should). Their presence was not small. In volume four of the journal "Young Composers," there were articles on Nono, Maderna, and Berio. The latter two articles were respectively written by Giacomo Manzoni and Piero Santi, both renowned Italian music critics (Manzoni was also an established composer). Both stress the distinct musical personalities of the composers being discussed, but also make a concerted effort to situate Berio and Maderna's musical outputs in relation to Darmstadt discourse.[100]

Such claims are not difficult to substantiate. Maderna attended the courses for the first time in 1950, and, like Nono, would join the PCI that same year.[101] Yet despite this political allegiance, Maderna's output is often characterized by an avoidance of explicit politics and for stringently advocating artistic autonomy.[102] Indeed, Carola Nielinger has noted that Maderna was amongst those who complained about Nono's *La Victoire de Guernica* (1954), for choir and orchestra, which drew criticism from many at the summer courses for its dedication to "the apostle of the German workers' music movement, Hermann Scherchen." On the whole, Nielinger explains, Nono's work treats "politically suggestive material" in a "highly abstract" manner, "often to such a degree that it was no longer recognizable." This is especially apparent in the sketches for *La Victoire de Guernica*, where six pitches from "Mamita mia," an anti-fascist Spanish civil war song, and three pitches from the "Internationale" are conjoined into a new nine-pitch series. Nevertheless, *Guernica* does have some more overtly "communist" features: its use of the rhythm of the *Internationale* and speaking chorus. It is these features to which Maderna (and other composers attending the courses) took issue, preferring the less ostensibly political works like *Polifonica—Monidia—Ritmica* (1951), *Composizione per orchestra* (1952) and *Due espressioni* (1953).[103]

It could perhaps be granted that Heile's statement does apply to some works by Maderna, like his cantata, *Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate* (1953) (known at its premiere as *Vier Briefe* (*Four Letters*)), for soprano, bass and chamber orchestra. The first of the four letters that are set in the work's four movements is a German translation of excerpts from a letter composed on January 31, 1945, by Bruno Frittaion, a nineteen-year-old communist partisan, to his fiancée, the day before his execution.[104] There is, of course, nothing comparable to this in the work of Boulez, Goeyvaerts, or Stockhausen at this time. Yet it is crucial to understand that this work still conforms to what Nicola Verzina refers to as the "community of intent among post-Webernian composers."[105] Indeed, it is little accident that the work's revised title refers to the Darmstadt summer courses. Though Maderna favored serial arrays and never embraced integral serialism in a manner comparable to Boulez, Stockhausen, and later Nono, his work's negation of regular semantic-rhetorical musical discourse is no less profound.[106] The pitch material of the work, as Maderna's sketches show, was derived from the communist partisan song "Fischia il vento," but this is indecipherable in the

[100] Giacomo Manzoni, "Bruno Maderna," trans. Leo Black, *Die Reihe* 5 (1960), 114–20; Piero Santi, "Luciano Berio," trans. Leo Black, *Die Reihe*, 5 (1960), 98–102.
[101] His Fantasia and Fugue for two pianos (1948) was performed there in 1949. A performance of his Composizione II would follow in 1950. His music at this time is stylistically more akin to Berg than to Webern.
[102] For a discussion of this, see Brent Wetters, "Allegorical Erasmus: Bruno Maderna's *Ritratto Di Erasmo*," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 24, no. 2 (2012): 159–76, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0954586712000183.
[103] Carola Nielinger, "'The Song Unsung': Luigi Nono's 'Il Canto Sospeso,'" *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 131, no. 1 (2006): 97, https://doi.org/10.1093/jrma/fkl001.
[104] Ben Earle, "'In Onore Della Resistenza': Mario Zafred and Symphonic Neorealism,'" in *Red Strains: Music and Communism Outside the Communist Bloc*, ed. by Robert Adlington, Proceedings of the British Academy, 185 (Oxford University Press, 2013), 149, https://doi.org/10.5871/bacad/9780197265390.003.0012.
[105] Nicola Verzina, "Musica e Impegno Nella Kranichsteiner Kammerkantate (1953): Il Tema Della Libertà," in *Bruno Maderna: Studi e Testimonianze*, ed. Rossana Dalmonte and Marco Russo (LIM, 2004), 198–225.
[106] Nicola Verzina, *Bruno Maderna: Étude Historique et Critique* (L'Harmattan, 2003), 71.

score and inaudible in the work. The *Kammerkantate* in fact obliterates any sense of harmonic function and the presence of a background meter. Vocal and instrumental lines are thereby prevented from instilling a sense of meaningful continuity. Furthermore, the fleeting character of instrumental entries thwarts any sense of musical phrasing, and there are only brief, scattered instances of motivic repetition.[107]

Thus, despite the ostensible political content, Maderna's music still works within the problematic outlined above. The same can be said for Nono. In much of his work at the time, as in *Il Canto sospeso* (1955–56), moments of melodic continuity emerge unpredictably from a predominantly pointillistic texture.[108] Even *Guernica*, between the choral statements, realizes the sort of serial disordering described by Grant. And it is worth stating that, despite their oft-cited communist credentials, Nono and Maderna's musical trajectory is scarcely compatible with the Gramscian perspective that rooted the PCI at this time.[109] Such a demand, Ben Earle suggests, was more properly met by Mario Zafred's Symphony No. 4, "In onore della Resistenza" (1950), a well-received work in the 1950s and 1960s, though Zafred's output has almost entirely fallen from view in recent decades. This work speaks within the semantic-rhetorical language of the middle-class concert hall institution and concludes with a transparent statement of "Fischia il vento." Zafred's symphony thus resembles a Gramscian effort of cultural negotiation between two classes; it is compatible, in Earle's words, with an effort to secure "the consensual establishment of a 'national-popular' working-class hegemony over other sectors of society, including the bourgeoisie." Maderna's *Kammerkantate* (only performed four times by 2003, with its first Italian performance in 1989) and other products of those who attended the Darmstadt courses are far from achieving such a politics.[110] One could go so far as to say that Nono and Maderna's outputs testify to a certain incompatibility between these politics and autonomizations of musical language affected by integral serialism.

Berio, who never joined the PCI (or any other political party), was even less inclined towards overt and explicitly political statements in his works of the 1950s. Here Heile changes tack and discusses the composer as part of a "second generation" of Darmstadt composers. This second generation of composers, all of whom arrived after Berio, are characterized by their tendency, Heile claims, to "challenge the idea of autonomy by engaging openly with social, ideological, and political issues, and their often extremely physical and messy work makes a mockery of autonomous containment."[111] Such a notion of a "second generation" of Darmstadt composers who turned up with their various "non-autonomous" musics to uproot the dogmas of the Darmstadt School is a popular one in the literature. This thesis is often tied to a recognition of larger shifts in the prevailing trends at the summer school from the late 1950s onwards (often marked by John Cage's 1958 arrival at Darmstadt).[112] It is fair to say that the late 1950s did indeed bring certain significant changes to Darmstadt, not least in the greater Cageian presence from 1958 onwards. However, the "second generation" hypothesis, if intended to limit the existence of music that corresponded to the Darmstadt School rhetoric and suggest an eruption of music that is more acceptable to "plural" accounts, misses the mark, as can be shown with reference to Berio's music from the 1950s.

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[107] Earle, "Symphonic Neorealism," 156.
[108] For a more detailed commentary, see Ben Earle, "Twelve Note Music as Music: An Essay in Two Parts," *Music Analysis*, 34, no. 1 (2015): 108.
[109] Earle, "Symphonic Neorealism," 170; Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Cultural Writings*, ed. David Forgacs and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, trans. William Boelhower (Harvard University Press, 1985), 102.
[110] Earle, "Symphonic Neorealism," 156, 170–71.
[111] Heile, "Darmstadt as Other," 166–67.
[112] Paul Attinello, "Postmodern or Modern: A Different Approach to Darmstadt," *Contemporary Music Review* 26, no. 1 (2007): 25–37, https://doi.org/10.1080/07494460601069176.

The Case of Berio

Berio was not always a card-carrying serialist. The Italian composer's first significant compositional enterprises took place as a student composer in the late 1940s under the tutelage of Giorgio Ghedini. In works like the *Concertino for clarinet, concertante violin, celesta harp and strings* (1949), Berio worked within an essentially neo-classical idiom that was indebted to Igor Stravinsky. In the early 1950s Berio began to engage with the serial tradition of the Second Viennese School. The primary contemporary model for Berio was the Italian composer, Luigi Dallapiccola. Having won a Koussevitzky Foundation grant, Berio was able to study with Dallapiccola in 1952 at the Berkshire Music Festival in Tanglewood, Massachusetts.[113] Berio's scores from 1951 to 1954, the period where his music is most comparable to Dallapiccola's, use serial matrices in a fluid manner for the purposes of melodic invention. The strictures of Webernian methods are avoided, as are the canons that found their way into Dallapiccola's work. Instead, a more transparent and lyrical style is favored. This is exemplified by *Chamber Music* (1953), a work for voice (originally Cathy Berberian), clarinet, cello and harp which sets three early poems by James Joyce.

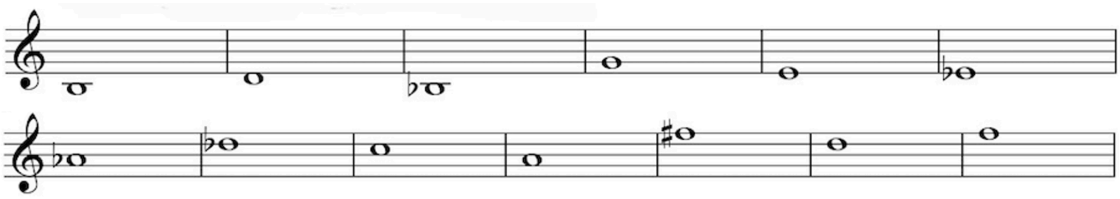
Yet Berio did not settle with this approach. In 1953, the young composer met Maderna in Milan, and the two became very close. For several years the pair funded their musical ventures by writing incidental music for radio, television and theatre together.[114] This friendship proved to be fundamental to Berio's compositional development. Maderna had begun to incorporate the integral serialism that had created excitement in the Darmstadt courses he had attended in 1951 and 1952. He introduced these ideas to Berio, who, Osmond-Smith claims, approached them with a "mixture of curiosity and caution."[115] Nevertheless, Berio rapidly assimilated these techniques. His earlier Dallapiccola-like manner was abandoned in his *Nones* (1954) for orchestra, which was composed after attending—following Maderna's encouragement—the 1954 Darmstadt course. *Nones* would be performed, along with Berio's earlier *Cinque Variazioni* (1952–1953, revised 1966), and discussed analytically by Maderna during the 1956 course.

The title of Berio's work refers to W.H. Auden's 112-line poem, "Nones," which was published in a 1951 poem collection of the same name. The poem links the monastic ninth hour with the ninth hour of Good Friday and was subsequently republished in *The Shield of Achilles* in 1955 as the fourth poem in a cycle called "Horae Canonicae" (a cycle of poems based on the canonical hours). This thematic material is linked with imagery suggestive of the post-apocalyptic mood of post-WW2 Europe. Berio had initially started to devise sketches to set the poem as a cantata, but later decided against this, claiming that "the poem was much too complex and long to allow its total assimilation into a musical process."[116] Abandoning the cantata, he assembled five of the orchestral interludes he had sketched and arranged them into *Nones*.

Berio's composition applies serial procedures to four parameters: pitch, duration, dynamics and mode of attack. Pitch was organized according to a palindromic thirteen-note row that is derived from the row used in Webern's op.24 (music example 1.1). These pitches were assigned numerical values (1–7) in the

[113] Osmond-Smith, *Berio* (Oxford University Press, 1991), 6.
[114] Luciano Berio, *Two Interviews*, ed. & trans. David Osmond-Smith (Marion Boyars, 1985), 64.
[115] Osmond-Smith, *Berio*, 9, 16.
[116] Quoted in Michael Hicks, "Exorcism and Epiphany: Luciano Berio's Nones," *Perspectives on New Music* 27, no. 2 (1989): 255, https://doi.org/10.2307/833415.

composition process, in accordance with the pitch's position in the series in relation to the axis. Numerical values were similarly assigned to pre-chosen elements in duration (1–4), dynamics (1–5) and mode of attack (1–3). From there, Berio's process proceeds in a manner that follows the model of Goeyvaerts "synthetic" number technique from his *Sonata for Two Pianos*; specifically, the pitches are "realized" so that the sum of the four parameters adds up to nine or more, with a quaver rest following any sum that exceeds nine.[117] Each row presentation thus is marked by continual change.



Music Example 1.1: Nones Tone Row

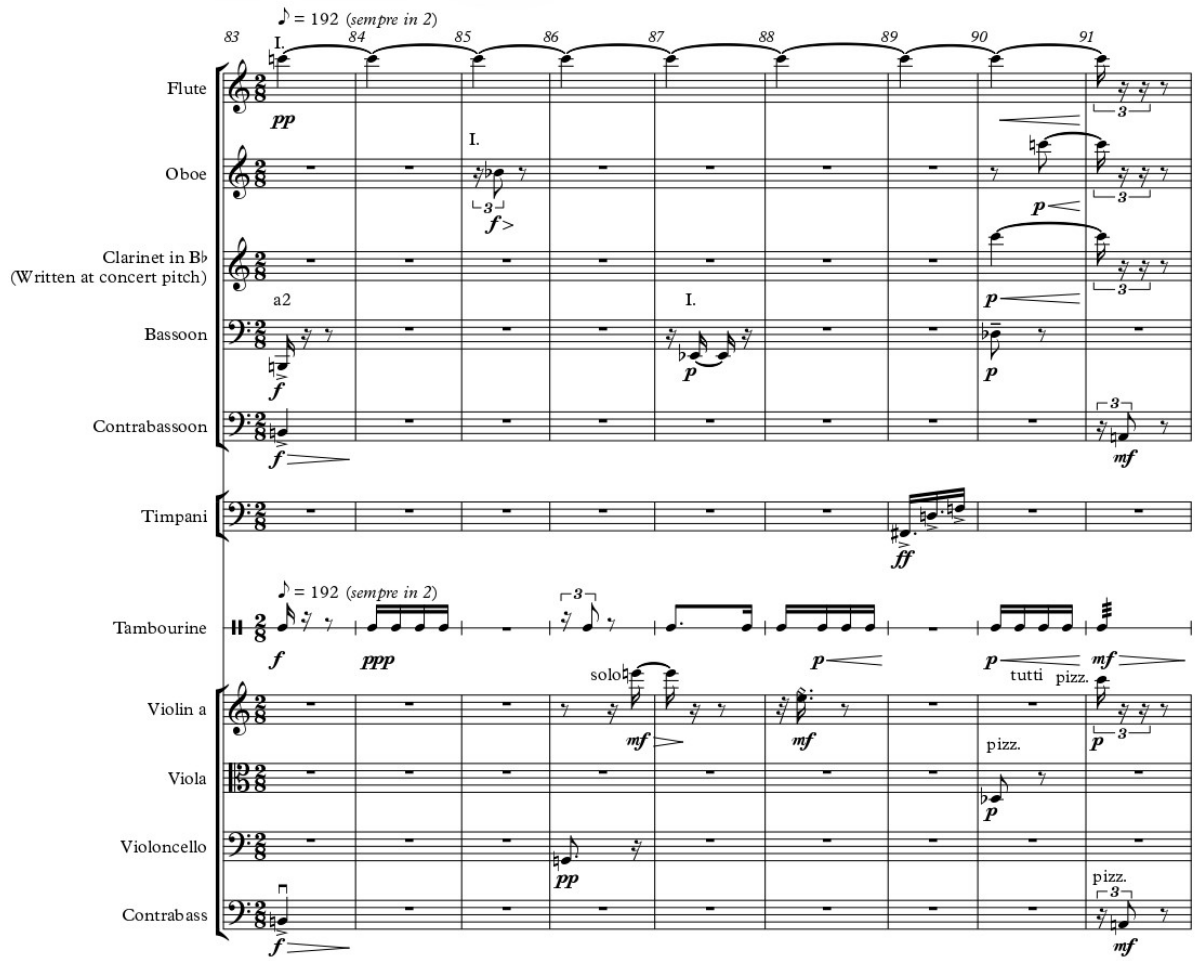
Though Berio's specific methods of serial construction were different to those of Boulez, Maderna, Stockhausen and others, to emphasize these differences as proof of "plurality" would be to fail to see the wood for the trees. It might be worth taking to heart Boulez's warning in 1952 against "arithmetic masturbation" in serial music, asserting that "composition and organization cannot be confused."[118] It will be more meaningful to focus on the musical surface—specifically, how *Nones* undermines motivic musical dialogue. The work is athematic and un-anchored in harmonic function. As with Maderna's *Kammerkantate*, a prevailing metrical instability disrupts musical "phrasing." Any clear perception of a musical line is disrupted by adjunct leaps, occasional disruptive rests and rapid timbral contrasts. The work shifts the focus of its musical activity to variations in secondary parameters; it strings together a thread of successive musical states. Hicks notes how though on "first hearing" one may hear the work's "extreme states," the formal subdivisions between the five sections are considerably less clearly delineated.[119] It is not, however, that these sections are indistinguishable, but rather that there's a certain liquidity to the work's continuous processes of parametric change. Within *Nones*' flux there is an alternation between points of, to adopt Hicks' terminology, "rarefication" (reductions in density) and "condensation" (increases in density).[120] The inner sections all begin with rapid rarefication, in contrast to the gradual condensation and rarefication that occurs within outer sections. Sections three and four both close with points of high condensation, in the form of a multiple octave-doubled pitch class (E-flat and B-flat) before the rarefied pointillistic sections that follow. The peak of musical activity emerges within the center of section three, with the tutti orchestra saturating all registers.

This climatic "condensation" assumes tremendous importance within the piece, filtering the listener's experience of the surrounding music in more detail (music example 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4). The third section begins (at bar 83) in a quiet and pointillistic fashion, with sustained flute sounding against scattered points in the rest of the ensemble. There is a small textural and dynamic crescendo (bar 90), which quickly dissipates (bars 91–92). This is followed by the entrance of a repeated note figure in the viola, against

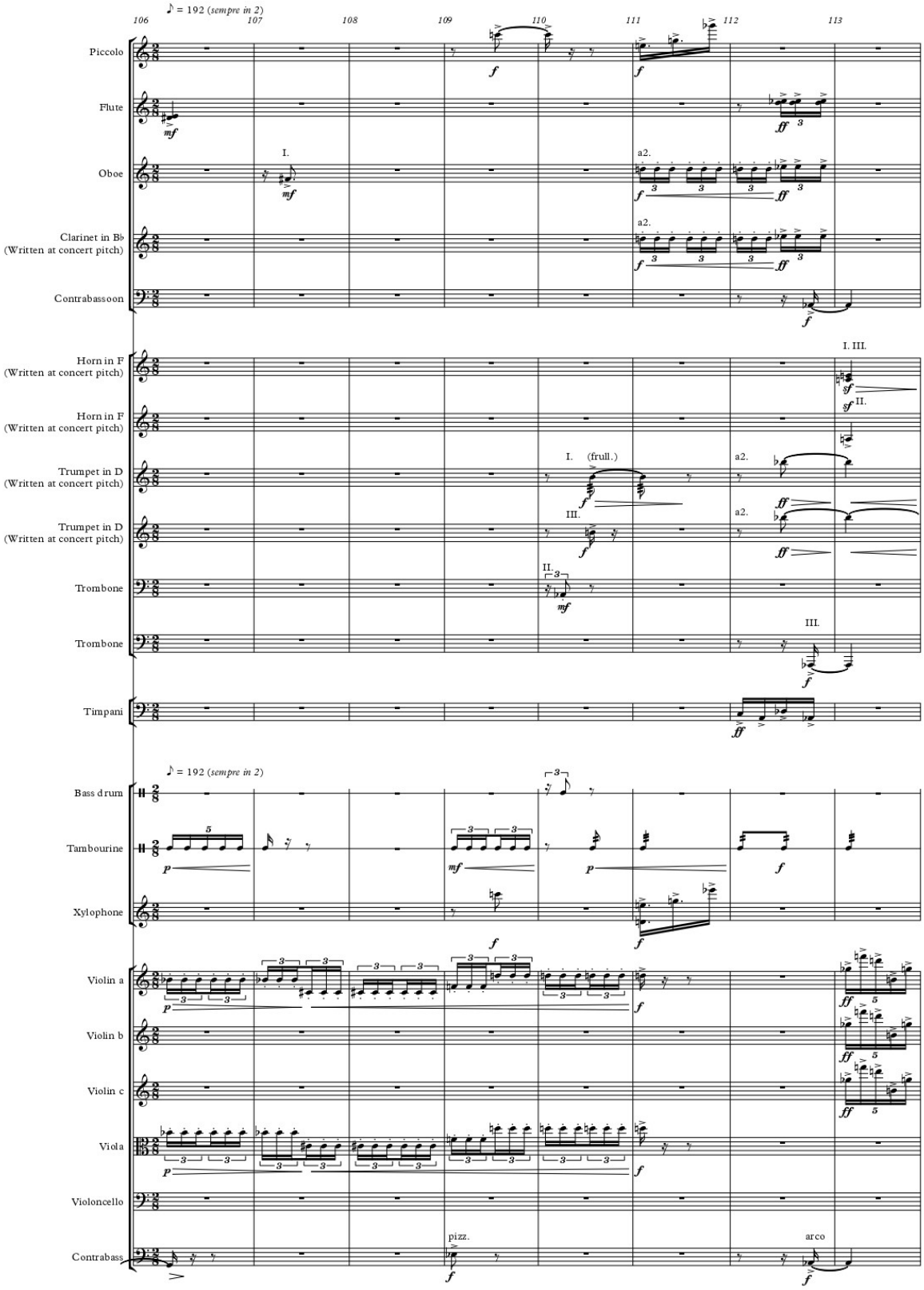
[117] Hicks, "Exorcism and Epiphany," 254–255.
[118] Pierre Boulez, *Notes of an Apprenticeship*, translated by Herbert Weinstock (Alfred Knopf, 1968), 148.
[119] Hicks, "Exorcism and Epiphany," 254–55.
[120] Hicks, "Exorcism and Epiphany," 256. See also Christoph Neidhofer, "Inside Luciano Berio's Serialism," *Music Analysis* 28, no. 2–3 (2009): 301–48, 306.

which the rest of the ensemble resumes its previous pointillistic mode. The pointillistic quality continues as the repeated note figure is passed around the ensemble until it is mobilized as part of a more extended textural and dynamic crescendo (bars 106–110). The figure is repeated once more in the upper winds (bars 111–112), but now the music has shifted. Continuous rapid accented fortissimo notes begin to take hold as angular melodic fragments—without recognizable motivic-thematic qualities—are presented in rapidly changing instrumental timbres. At the same time, the texture thickens, with multiple instruments sounding to produce polyrhythmic conflicts. These polyrhythmic conflicts persist as the climatic "condensation" comes to the fore. The music realizes a considerable increase in musical excitement as the dynamics become louder and the texture thicker until the point of saturation identified by Hicks arrives (bar 121), followed by a dynamic and textural diminuendo from bar 122 onwards.

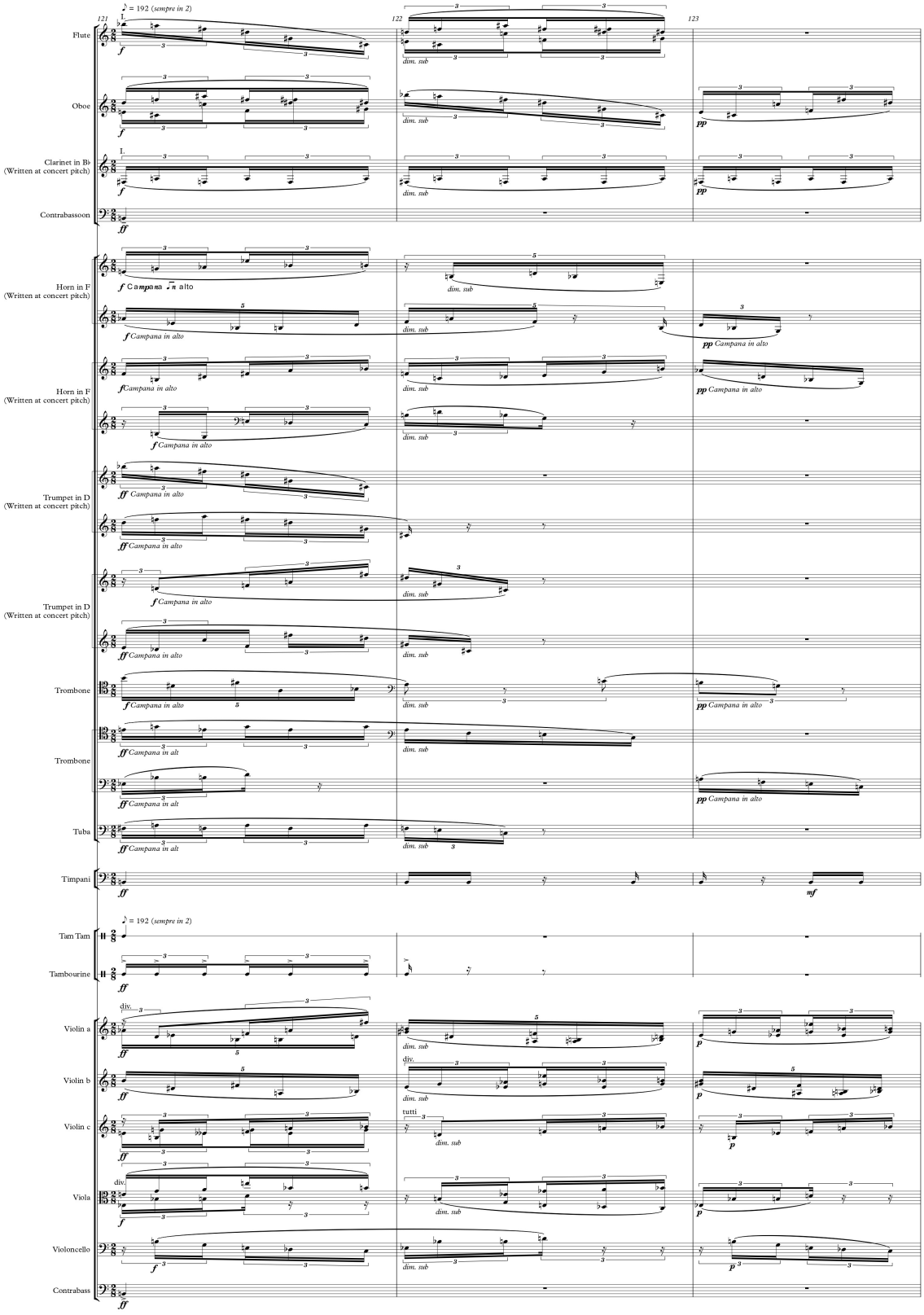
Through attending to how this section utilizes secondary parameters, its musical logic is relatively clear. There is little difficulty in linking this work with the serialism practiced by the Darmstadt School (as it has been theorized here). But before making this leap, there is something that must be addressed. Namely, in bars 93–110, the relatively stable identity of the repeated figure and its stubborn repetition—basically functioning as an accompanimental figure—gives the section a motivic and metric consistency, perhaps even a subdued sense of conventional rhetoric. This is not an isolated case: another example can be seen between bars 278–285. Here a fragmentary and pointillistic "accompaniment" (similarly held together by a repeating rhythmic figure, here in the tambourine) is set against rising string melodies (music example 1.5). One could also note the loud "tutti" that closes the work in a cadence-like manner. These moments are grist for the mill for Berio's commentators who have narrated his cultural production in terms of his persistent individuality.



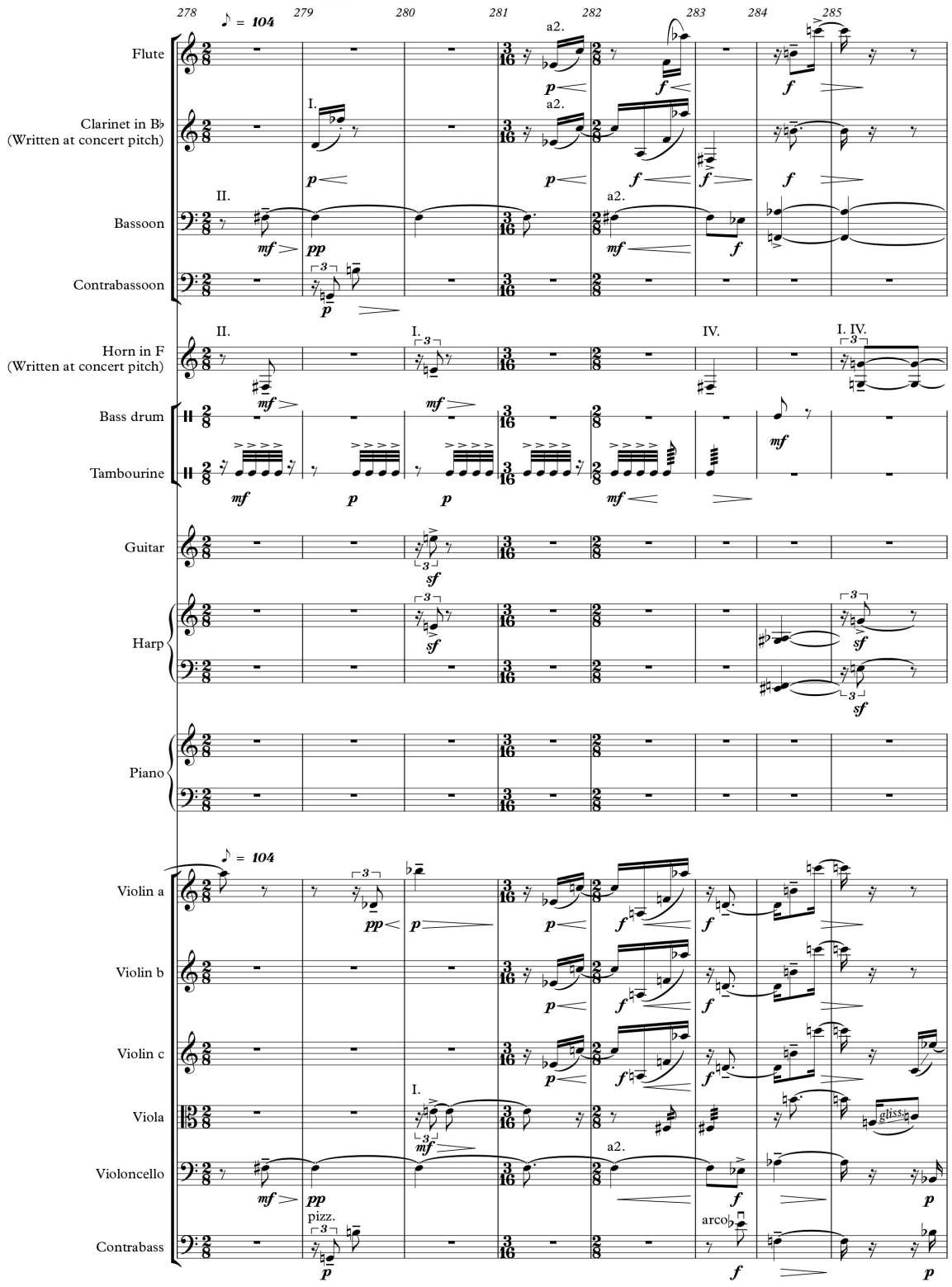
Music Example 1.2: Nones bars 83-91. Copyright by SZ SUGAR – Sugarmusic S.p.A., Italy



Music Example 1.3: Nones bars 106-113. Copyright by SZ SUGAR – Sugarmusic S.p.A., Italy



Music Example 1.4: Nones bars 121-3. Copyright by SZ SUGAR – Sugarmusic S.p.A., Italy



Music Example 1.5: Nones bars 278-285. Copyright by SZ SUGAR – Sugarmusic S.p.A., Italy

Yet in the case of *Nones*, hearing these flickering moments of "old-fashioned" semantic clarity as some sort of momentary indication of Berio's authentic and true compositional voice is, at best, only part of the story, more likely a little wishful, and most definitely quite ideological. The overriding quality of the work tallies with the de-semanticization that gained considerable currency for the composers attending the courses. The loose "resonance" of certain passages in *Nones* with generic qualities of thematic-rhetorical music does not nullify the work's generic "participation" in the "objectifying" qualities associated with the Darmstadt School. There is little sense in which the work can be heard as a product of the thematic-rhetorical tradition of bourgeois concert hall music. Rather, the piece's stylistic tendencies position it with respect to a broader socio-cultural situation.[121] Where the "melody and accompaniment" texture may have contributed towards a conventional musical discourse in Zafred's almost contemporaneous Symphony no.4, here it is rather one modulation in *Nones*' musical language. It is at this juncture that one can perhaps pinpoint the "cautious" quality of Berio's engagement with integral serialism. The flickering moments of rhetoricality, the work's repeating figures (not limited to the examples above) and its loud cadence-like tuttis maintain a minimal presence of traditional expressivity from out of the intensive progression. Yet the surest mark of *Nones*' particularity is that these moments attain their sense precisely by breaking away from the prevailing musical fabric. The "authenticity" of *Nones*, its being what it is and not otherwise, could not have emerged without a reliance on the generic norms associated with the Darmstadt School.[122]

What Hicks refers to as "condensation" and "rarefication" in the work resembles what Iverson has formalized as the turn to statistical form, and allows for the work to be understood in terms of ISPs in Howlands terms. These tendencies were radicalized in Berio's *Allelujah* for orchestra (1957), which was later withdrawn and revised as *Allelujah II* for orchestra (1958). Both compositions are based upon the composition of a large freely composed section that, beginning and ultimately returning to B-flat (a sort of "anchor note" towards which the work gravitates), chromatically saturates almost every pitch within a five-octave register. The resulting music is even more devoid of semantic-rhetorical reference than *Nones.* The later compositions aspire towards an overwhelming complexity of musical information (particularly in *Allelujah II*, where the individual layers are highly intricate). This complexity is arranged into larger intensive distinctions through the division of the orchestra into heterogeneous instrumental groups which were distributed across performing space so as to allow "superimposed layers of material to interact" and explore a "polyphony between layers of sound."[123] In *Allelujah I*, Berio dictated that six instrumental groups were to be spread across the stage, though found the result to be unsatisfactory and the distinctions to not be clear enough. In *Allelujah II*, five groups were spread around the concert hall, the sharper spatial distinctions resulting in a more complex musical texture that promotes a certain free-floating intensive flux. These works can be suggestively compared with Stockhausen's *Gruppen* (1958), which, like *Allelujah*, was initially gestated in 1955. The more obvious surface parallels include the orchestra being distributed into groups that are spatially distinguished and the "exuberant" writing for brass choirs,[124] but more important (and more completely) is the sense in which Berio here, like Stockhausen, moved increasingly towards an intensive music that, whilst not following a "foreseeable" aesthetic trajectory, continually

[121] More precisely: a text's socio-historical logic arises through how it relates to the symbolic textual network in which it is embedded.
[122] A more expansive treatment of this dialectic of universal and particular as it pertains to genre and style can be found in Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Continuum, 2002), 199–225.
[123] Osmond-Smith, *Berio*, 19.
[124] Osmond-Smith, *Berio*, 19.

emphasizes larger, successive states, enabled in part by the removal of the locus of the stage as the spatially centered sound source, as typifies bourgeois concert-hall music.[125]

Berio and Stockhausen did not link their work or explore the commonalities of their approach with reference to statistical form. But this does not matter. The aim isn't to provide Berio with some sort of membership card. As with the other materials discussed here, the homology between their projects demonstrates the truth to the fiction of the so-called Darmstadt School, the common aesthetic problematic that certain significant figures attending the courses were responding to. To stress this connection is not to obliviate their differences, or suggest that *all* the music performed at the Darmstadt courses conformed to this trajectory, but rather to hold onto a significant formation within the courses which appeared to catch the eyes of the public and the press and was seen to hold a dominant position by other attendees, like Stuckenschmidt and fellow composer Hans Werner Henze (who bemoaned the emergence of the Darmstadt School in familiar terms of a turn towards mechanization and dehumanization).[126] Thus their differences arose against a shared context (or world) of aesthetic value, and its accompanying socio-cultural meaning. The composer appears here as an agent within a collective distribution of efforts (in the context of which Webern's work was but one exploitable example). Berio's music in the 1950s progressively purifying the remnants of concert hall rhetoric is not simply some idiosyncratic whim. Nor is emphasizing the similarity between Berio and those dubbed as the Darmstadt School simply a renewed effort to erect a monolithic conception of identity.[127] Instead, it is to show how Berio was part of a larger (transaesthetic) vocation; a moment of aesthetic danger, where what was established and acceptable appeared as contingent through its negation. It is to remember that the composers associated with the notion of the Darmstadt School formed an epicenter of post-1945 musical modernism, and as a collective formation they managed to assume a radical, unsettling presence that all but faded in the later decades of the century. Today, the music of these figures from the 1950s may well only be heard as niche cultural products by a vanishingly small group of connoisseurs. But once upon a time, such music also embodied, in however compromised a fashion, an exceptional and aberrant alternative cultural universe that was incompatible with contemporary norms. By hearing them collectively once again, it may be possible to remember a former moment of historical contingency, and thus to confront the experience of things possibly being otherwise.

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[125] Grant, *Serial Music*, 98–100.
[126] Hans Werner Henze, "German Music in the 1940s and 1950s," trans. Peter Labanyi, in *Music and Politics: Collected Writings 1953–81* (Faber & Faber, 1982), 37–38, 43.
[127] A claim classically identified with Joseph Kerman's *Contemplating Music: Challenges to Musicology* (Harvard University Press, 1985); see Iddon, "Darmstadt Schools," for an example.

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