

## Preface

This publication includes scientific reports made at the 3<sup>rd</sup> international conference on musical theory 'Composing Principles: continuity and innovation in contemporary music' held on 10-12 October 2002 in Vilnius. The organizers of the conference – the Lithuanian Academy of Music, the Lithuanian Composers' Union and the Centre of New Music Communication. The conference was supported by the Fund of Support of Lithuanian Culture and Sports.

The aim of both the conference and publication is to give fresh impetus to the development of a theoretical thought in the sphere of composition practice and a teaching process. The publication targets composers, musicologists, art historians, culturologists and all those interested in the mentioned issues. The organization of conferences on a regular basis and the publication of their materials is significant in several respects. It intensifies a mutually beneficial, regulating link between the activities of composer and theorist as well as expanding the possibilities of collaboration with foreign colleagues, open up new vistas for the promotion of Lithuanian researches in the sphere of music theory and creative work and should make an impact on young musicians not only in respect of the expansion of their tuition curriculum but also in that of their views on the whole.

The publication includes thirteen articles in English and German with summary in Lithuanian. The original idea of the organizers was to orient the reports to four principle subthemes: 1) the conception of a composing principle, its relationship with kindred composing terms, 2) the situation of the newest music with respect to composing principles, 3) the dialogue of contemporary composing principles within a national cultural, geographical and historical plan, 4) the possibilities of the classification of avant-garde and postavant-garde music.

While reading through this collection of scholarly papers presented during the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference "Composing Principles: Continuity and Innovation in Contemporary Music", one will readily notice that every essay addresses the theme in a number of interrelated aspects.

In a number of essays, the authors try to link multifarious repositories of early and more recent music with musical modernism. In examining how medieval canonic techniques influenced the work of contemporary composers in the former Soviet Union, Elena Dubinets reveals syncretic and synthetic tendencies within such influences. Hali A. Fieldman approaches the problem of continuity and innovation in music from an entirely distinctive and, apparently, scarcely investigated perspective. The musicologist envisages a possibility to view minimalist work as a linear retrospective of the music's diverse past. Audronė Žiūraitytė discusses Onutė Narbutaitė's works involving stylization, and detects the synthesis of tendencies towards stylistic blending and reduction of material characteristic of the post-avant-garde. The discussion of musical post-avant-garde is continued in Rūta Gaidamavičiūtė's presentation of one of the most recent works by Osvaldas Balakauskas, opera *La lointaine*, in which she analyzes a good deal of compositional details, including recomposition of some scales, for example that of the tone-semitone scale, etc.

Conclusions, drawn by Rimantas Janeliauskas from his research on cyclic forms in the compositions by the worldwide famous Lithuanian artist and composer Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis, seem to delineate a historical perspective. The author is inclined to think that the previously received opinion about the romantic nature of Čiurlionis' compositions is all too exaggerated. The music of Čiurlionis seems to presage that of Bartók, Stravinsky and other leading composers of the 20th century. Another one paper about Čiurlionis was presented by Darius Kučinskas, who described the peculiarities of composers' musical text as a part of compositional process.

Some other papers, however, are centered more on new music issues. From Carole Gubernikoff's essay we learn about the continuity and experiments with spectral harmony in the works of Tristan Murail and Almeida Prado. Radosveta Bruzaud surveys group improvisation in post-avant-garde decades. Kevin J. Holm-Hudson's analysis of Robert Ashley's piano piece contributes to the understanding of new possibilities of repetitive melodic process. Antanas Kučinskas traces the evolution of serial principle in the works of Lithuanian composers of younger generation and revises the concept of serialism both as a principle and technique of composition.

Another notable group of essays deals with theoretical dichotomies between the musical avant-garde and post-avant-garde. Marta Szoka presents a concise account of Frank Martin's dispute with the avant-garde of the 1950s and stresses the continuity of the avant-garde in the work of his pupil, Karlheinz Stockhausen. Nico Schuler, in his essay "Dietrich Erdmann and anti-avant-garde", sets avant-garde and post-avant-garde in antinomic relationship. In search for criteria that would help to distinguish between the two paradigms, Margarita Katunyan concludes with an assumption that 'avant-' and 'post-' do not negate each other. They rather indicate a change in musical context.

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