SPECIAL PROJECT

musicology and the musical composition
part I, the musical composition
Cheryl Seltzer, editor

With the present issue, *Current Musicology* inaugurates a series of special projects, the first of which is entitled Musicology and the Musical Composition. This project has been designed to stimulate discussion on the nature of the musical composition in Western culture. It aims to investigate modes of musicological description and explanation and to expand our understanding of musical works in themselves and in the context of tradition.

The project is organized as a symposium, consisting of essays and commentaries solicited from individuals representing the field of music and other relevant disciplines, and supplemented by communications from our readers. Contributors will consider the notion of the musical composition; the script-sound relation; the musical medium; systems of musical organization; the dimensions, levels, elements, and processes of musical structure; the kinds of musicological statements appropriate to theories of style. These and other pertinent topics will be treated both at specific points of time and in historical development.

We begin by presenting two papers which treat the notion of the musical composition and the assumptions underlying the changing means of creating and experiencing music in the West. Richard Crocker proposes a re-evaluation of the criteria whereby we perceive a piece of music as a conceptual entity. Asserting that we tend to impose 19th-century formal concepts on all music, he suggests we develop a formal sense capable of responding more sensitively to the unique coherence inherent in each instance of the musical repertoire. Patricia Carpenter explores the ramifications of our Western tendency to objectify music, and the consequent notion of a piece. She is concerned with the apprehension of a musical entity and considers such factors as distance and spatiality; the organization of time; music as object and music as process; the sense of hearing and musical perception; the relation of our linguistic and musical concepts; the relation of the object to changing notions of form.

These essays were submitted to respondents for comment. Six contributions are included here, and a second group will be presented in the next issue.

Leo Treitler questions the possibility of separating subjective and objective aspects of musical perception and, citing medieval music and theory, evaluates Miss Carpenter's postulate of historical development of the concept of "piece". The psychologist Rudolf Arnheim, reflecting on the emergence of the self-contained work of art—its gradual isolation as object from daily life—

considers the nature and perception of visual and musical entities. The dependence of accurate musicological formulations on the historical orientation of our musical hearing is discussed by Ruth Halle Rowen, and Edward T. Cone explores the historical meanings, criteria, and conceptual implications of our basic terms for the musical work. Bernard Stambler, responding to Professor Crocker's plea for the development of historically appropriate formal senses, deals with 18th-century thought, its character and background, and the manner in which it has conditioned our present-day approaches to the entire musical repertoire. Problems of successive and simultaneous apprehension with regard to Miss Carpenter's notion of the musical object are investigated by David Burrows.

In the forthcoming issue, Saul Novack explores the various criteria for the cohesion of multimovement works, and Maria Rika Maniates compares composition as "objectified entity" with composition as "continuous process" in an ontological and historical framework. Philosopher Arnold Berleant notes, with respect to the problem of musical explanation, a distinction between auditory and analytical forms of perception. The relationship of music to the emotional experiencing of reality, in a historical context, is discussed by the philosopher Robert Hall; Kenneth Kaiser, from the viewpoint of architectural theory, considers the notion of the "piece of architecture". Finally, Miss Carpenter and Professor Crocker will have the opportunity of responding to the commentators.

Since it is the purpose of this project to promote an exchange of ideas, we welcome further comments from our readers.

Richard L. Crocker, *Some reflections on the shape of music*

In a recent article ("The troping hypothesis", *The musical quarterly* 52:191, 1966) I dropped what I thought was an innocent remark, to the effect that one might reflect on what constitutes a piece of (Western) music. Now I find myself asked to do the reflecting. Please look for no more than that; my intent is merely to begin a line of discussion, not to conclude one.

The question came up in connection with an introit trope, which seems at first glance not to qualify as "a piece of music", because it is interpolated as three separate sections in a pre-existing piece, the introit. Why do we hesitate to call such a trope a "piece"? Obviously because it seems to be three pieces, not one; for we expect a piece to be continuous, or at least not interrupted by some other claim on our attention. But then, each of the three pieces into which our trope has fallen is too short to be a piece all by itself; for we expect a piece to have a certain minimum substance. Or do our three pieces of a trope, along with their introit, rather form one large composite piece? But such a piece seems too composite, its elements too diverse; for do