

component objects in conjunction with the basic kind of events that can take place within it. The space of that World is the potentiality for its objects giving rise to those events. The work of art is seen to be a unification of certain experiential effects so organized that they create a virtual space which exactly parallels the actual space of World.

²¹ The necessity, for the perception of change, of a "specious" present was first formulated by E. R. Clay in 1882 and developed by William James as a certain saddle-back of time with a certain length of its own, on which we sit perched and from which we look in two directions into time (William James, *Principles of psychology* [New York, 1891], I, p. 609). Psychologists refer to this by various names, "the sensible present" the "mental present" the "perceived present"; the metaphor quoted is Henri Pieron's. See Fraisse, *op. cit.*, pp. 85f., and Whitrow, *op. cit.*, pp. 70f.

²² Edmund Carpenter and Marshall McLuhan, "Acoustic space" in *Explorations in communication* (Boston, 1960), pp. 67f.

²³ Fraisse (*op. cit.*, Chap. III).

²⁴ Arnold Schoenberg, *Style and idea* (New York, 1950), p. 109.

Leo Treitler, *On Patricia Carpenter's* "The musical object"

I shall begin my comments on Miss Carpenter's paper with a brief summary of what I understand to be its governing aspects. I find three theses represented, and I shall state at once that I find it possible to hold the first without necessarily holding either the second or the third.

The first thesis is a formulation about the essential nature of the music that has long dominated Western high culture. It is a music that is issued in discrete, autonomous, closed, self-contained entities called "pieces". A piece marks off a single stretch of time that is outlined, framed, and conceived as one unified gesture or motion. The concept of the autonomous piece suggests, optimally, a clear relation of part to part and of parts to whole. A piece is given direction in that one part follows from another in a causal way, so that we may say there is a necessity about the sequence as a whole. This defines a unity in the sense of form, but it also requires a unity of substance that pervades the whole.

The second thesis states a conclusion about the relation of the listener to the musical work—i.e. about the nature of musical perception—that is said to follow from the conception of "a piece" given in the first thesis. All music is process, but when a process is closed and unified as to form and substance it is objectified. It becomes a product, a made thing that is set apart. We perceive it all at once and from a single point of view. We observe it from a distance and do not participate in the making or in the happening of it. We know it as a thing in itself, quite apart from any single experience of it, that is quite apart from our own moods, fantasies, feelings, or activity. In short we know it objectively, not subjectively. This dichotomy of process and object or subject and object has consequences for the conception of form. Form is

Gestalt, recognizable because it is familiar. It is limit, boundary, outline, container, frame. It is imposed upon substance from without by the maker. It fixes substance.

The third thesis is the assertion that the history of Western music may be understood from the vantage point of the first and second theses. It is the view that the notion of a piece of music emerged gradually in the Western tradition, that it developed in a steady and progressive manner until recent times, and that there is a significant challenge to it now. This process is described in several ways. The piece is gradually pried loose from the continuous musical stream; there is an increasing differentiation of parts and an increasing subordination of parts to whole; segments of music are initially paced off by such arbitrary measures as the length of a stanza of text, and only later are molded into closed shapes. With these changes there is a new concern for expressivity and at the same time a new attention to the notated and published composition—a composition fixed once for all time, not improvised and ever-changing.

Some attention is given over to the location of these changes in calendar history. In general the chronological limits for the conception of form that Miss Carpenter has developed are given as 1420 and 1910. The main turning point, however, seems to be the Renaissance, and in particular the humanistic era of the 16th century. But then the notion of the work of art in the sense of an object created for itself developed chiefly during the 18th century. I believe there are good reasons for the indecision over this question, and I shall shortly suggest what they are.

But first I should like to comment briefly on the second thesis. It raises epistemological and aesthetic issues of the greatest importance which cannot be discussed in general terms here. But the difficulties over the distinction between subjective and objective knowing, between process and object, are nowhere more apparent than in discussions of the perception and analysis of music. The problematic character of Miss Carpenter's position on this point is brought out by her own language. The musical object is a thing apart, to be perceived from a distance and as a simultaneous whole. But in describing her experience of the Prelude in B minor from the *Well-tempered Clavier* Miss Carpenter writes, "It *moves* like a melody . . . strongly anchored between points of *tension* and *rest*. . . . I *follow* and grasp a single continuous *motion*. . . . The *momentum builds up* relentlessly. . . . It is a single, serious *action*, shaped as one *intensely directed motion*" [Italics mine]. The "object" is described in dynamic terms, and the knowing of it as an experience, an active following, a being with the process. What is more, the terms "tension" and "rest" denote activity, but they also connote personal, subjective involvement.

Related difficulties arise over the form-substance dichotomy, which follows from the object-subject concept. Form is shape or limit imposed on substance. But the famous remark of Pater is cited—and affirmed—that "All art constantly aspires to the condition of music", for music does not "distinguish the

matter from the form". Pater was right about music, of course. We know it as soon as we try to decide, for example, whether a harmonic progression is form or substance. The dichotomy works only in the simplistic sense in which sonata allegro, say, is form, and themes 1 and 2 are substance. But we try to discourage that view of things even in our music appreciation lectures.

Turning now to the third thesis (I shall refer to it as the historical thesis), I should like to draw attention to the short bit of music on page 90.

It is a composition for two voices and its two sections are to be sung in the arrangement AB₁B₂AA. If we study its movement from one moment to another we shall find that it has been wrought with the greatest care. In the interest of brevity I shall confine my observations to the upper voice, remarking only that it is consistently and systematically supported by the lower voice. The melodic line is created as an elaboration of descents and ascents through the octave a¹-a, which is treated as the conjunction of a pentachord a¹-d¹ and a tetrachord d¹-a. The note of conjunction d¹ is treated as the tone of maximum stability.

At first the line descends directly through the pentachord, then it slows its pace by making an elaboration upon d¹ (mm. 4-5). Following this pause it quickly completes the descent to a and returns directly to a¹ (m. 10). At m. 11 the line descends again, but the e¹ of m. 12 is prolonged for eight measures (from the viewpoint of both parts it is a prolongation of the cadence on a-e¹). The A section is completed only with the long-delayed descent to d¹. For the beginning of the B section the line skips to a, then returns by step to d¹ and beyond, as though to traverse the full octave again. But it rises only to g¹ (m. 26), whence it falls to d¹. It rises to g¹ again (first ending, m. 35) but only to fall to the cadence on e¹. With the repetition of the B section the cadence descends to d¹. This establishes a relationship of antecedence-consequence in the two statements of B, which depends on the same tension-release mechanism that is involved in the prolongation of e¹ and its ultimate displacement by d¹ in the A section.

But on a higher level of structure both statements of B lack finality, for they fail to complete the implied ascent through the octave. That is accomplished only with the return to A, where there is an immediate and satisfying upward skip to a¹. To review, the final cadence of A after the prolongation of e¹, the repetition of B with second ending, and the return to A are all required for the completion of a process initiated, for the resolution of an imbalance. The form as a whole has a necessity about it. It is propelled forward from a beginning through intermediate to final goals. The parts exhibit a functional relationship to one another and to the whole. The music commands a unified space (the octave articulated as pentachord and tetrachord) through which it moves in a fashion that is as directed and well-paced as is its movement through time.

It is a "piece" in the full sense of that word carried by Miss Carpenter's first thesis. And it is a counter-example for the historical thesis, for it is an Italian ballata composed by Francesco Landino (d. 1397).¹ It is not a pro-

duct of the age of Humanism and it antedates Alberti's system of perspective. Of course we might say that it is a proto-Renaissance piece or that it is in advance of the main development. But that introduces a familiar circularity which deprives the thesis of its meaning altogether. What is more, the compositional principles that enabled Landino to create a unified and autonomous piece are at work in certain repertories of the 13th century, and of the 12th, and even of the 11th.² On the other hand Caccini's *Sfogava con le stelle*,³ Liszt's Piano Sonata in B minor, and Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps*—to mention only three among many post-Renaissance compositions—do not demonstrate those principles very well. Nor do pasticcio operas, nor as Miss Carpenter observes, do *ricercari* by Willaert.

This brings me to the central point of my remarks. In the historical thesis we are offered a broad interpretation that is not well supported by the close study of individual works. For the principles of unity, directedness, and closure constituted a standard long before the Renaissance, but having once dominated repertories they did not continue to do so with equal or steadily gaining force throughout the history of Western music until recent times. The view of a smooth and consistent development is contradicted by the bumpy texture of the course of events. Still, this interpretation has great currency,⁴ and we are obliged to inquire after the traditions of thought that favor it.

The historical thesis gives substance to a general view of cultural history that we owe to the men of the Renaissance and that we have continued to reinforce with our interpretations.⁵ It is the construction of history into the epochs Classical Antiquity, Middle or Dark Ages, and Renaissance, with the latter given a sense of ultimacy. The very notion of a reawakening or rebirth requires that the preceding age be regarded as a period of dormancy. It promotes the tendency to understand whatever is highly cultivated in the Renaissance to be the replacement of its opposite or its absence in the Middle Ages. This corollary has greatly hampered the study of medieval musical practice and theory. Miss Carpenter's historical thesis—with its implication that, before the Renaissance, music was random or arbitrary in its form and non-expressive in its content—is one consequence. Another, related, consequence is the general and oversimplified view that the sounds of medieval music are "founded upon philosophical and theological bases".⁶ It is oversimplified because of its suggestion that, if prescriptive theory was rationalized on philosophical and theological grounds, musical *practice* can have had no pragmatic basis. This is a traditional failure to observe the clear setting-apart that medieval writers themselves made. Thus, Guido of Arezzo, in the 11th century:

Let the painstaking seek out . . . the book *Enchiridion* most lucidly composed by the most reverend Abbot Odo, from whose examples I have departed only in the forms of the notes, since I have simplified my treatment for the sake of the young, in this not following Boethius, whose treatise is useful to philosophers, but not to singers.⁷

If, in fact, we seek out Odo's book⁸ we shall find that it is shot through with

A

Musical notation for measures 1-5. Treble clef, 2/4 time. Measure 1 has an asterisk above the first note. Measure 2 has an asterisk above the first note. Measure 3 has an asterisk above the first note. Measure 4 has an asterisk above the first note. Measure 5 has a circled 5 above the staff. A dashed line spans from the beginning of measure 1 to the end of measure 5.

Musical notation for measures 6-10. Treble clef, 2/4 time. Measure 6 has an asterisk above the first note. Measure 7 has an asterisk above the first note. Measure 8 has an asterisk above the first note. Measure 9 has an asterisk above the first note. Measure 10 has a circled 10 above the staff.

Musical notation for measures 11-15. Treble clef, 2/4 time. Measure 11 has an asterisk above the first note. Measure 12 has an asterisk above the first note. Measure 13 has an asterisk above the first note. Measure 14 has an asterisk above the first note. Measure 15 has a circled 15 above the staff. A dashed line spans from the beginning of measure 11 to the end of measure 15.

Musical notation for measures 16-20. Treble clef, 2/4 time. Measure 16 has an asterisk above the first note. Measure 17 has an asterisk above the first note. Measure 18 has an asterisk above the first note. Measure 19 has an asterisk above the first note. Measure 20 has a circled 20 above the staff. A dashed line spans from the beginning of measure 16 to the end of measure 20.

Fine

B

Musical notation for measures 21-25. Treble clef, 2/4 time. Measure 21 has an asterisk above the first note. Measure 22 has an asterisk above the first note. Measure 23 has an asterisk above the first note. Measure 24 has an asterisk above the first note. Measure 25 has a circled 25 above the staff.

Musical notation for measures 26-30. Treble clef, 2/4 time. Measure 26 has an asterisk above the first note. Measure 27 has an asterisk above the first note. Measure 28 has an asterisk above the first note. Measure 29 has an asterisk above the first note. Measure 30 has a circled 30 above the staff.

Musical notation for measures 31-35. Treble clef, 2/4 time. Measure 31 has an asterisk above the first note. Measure 32 has an asterisk above the first note. Measure 33 has an asterisk above the first note. Measure 34 has an asterisk above the first note. Measure 35 has a circled 35 above the staff. A first ending bracket spans from the beginning of measure 34 to the end of measure 35. A second ending bracket spans from the beginning of measure 35 to the end of measure 35.

Da Capo

references to the judgment of the ear, and that its author is quite plain in his demand for audible coherence in the use of musical materials (for unity of substance, in the language that has been used here). In view of this when Odo has his disciple ask "What is music?" and replies that it is "the science of singing truly," we really should not leap to underscore *science*—it is to be read as "knowledge", not as something akin to theoretical physics—but rather *singing truly*.

As for the customary foreclosure on the subject of musical expression in the Middle Ages, it certainly goes well with the assertion about the philosophical and theological bases of musical sound. But together these ideas do not go well at all with the evidence of a great interest on the part of medieval writers in musical qualities and musical character. Turning once again to Guido, we find him writing in this unexpected manner:

It is no wonder that the hearing is delighted by the variety of sounds, just as the vision enjoys the variety of colors, the olfactory sense cherishes the variety of odors, and the tongue derives pleasure from the alternation of tastes. Thus, truly, does the sweetness of agreeable things enter the heart, in marvelous fashion, through the windows of the body.⁹

This is a direct concern with musical experience, or, as it was often put, with the *power* of music. Far from ignoring the subject, medieval writers struggled to come to terms with it. Guido's contemporary, Herman of Reichenau, complained of the difficulties of doing so:

I have not yet found special terms to express the force of this sweetness. . . . What wondrous depth there is in music in this respect. It lays itself open to the intellect to a certain extent, but cannot be described except in comparatively superficial terms.¹⁰

These passages, far from what we are taught about the Middle Ages, might easily have been associated with any of the post-medieval waves of reaction against speculative theory—for example that of the 19th century, heralded here by Herder: "So far as melody is concerned, my mind has not been set at rest by Rameau or Tartini [he might have said Pythagoras or Boethius] As explanations for music's appeal to the soul the mere counting of proportions and measuring of intervals make so little sense to me that I would shy away from music forever, if this numerology were all there was to it" (*Kalligone*, 1800). Well, we see that so far as the Middle Ages are concerned, that is *not* all there was to it, the myopic tradition to the contrary notwithstanding.

The serious contradictions that emerge when we confront the historical thesis with such passages as these and with such pieces as the one by Landino are reflections of what we may call the historian's gamble. We recognize that general theories are tactical measures rather than verifiable truths. We require them for making our data intelligible, and we value them for their capacity to organize and to direct further investigation. But we must recog-

nize, as in the case under consideration, their tendency to act as screens that filter out unfriendly material.

And in the present case I suppose my argument has been that the general theory represented by the historical thesis has been a bad gamble, for the gains have not been sufficient to cover the losses. We need better theories to help us understand the differences between the musics that we call Medieval and Renaissance.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Leo Schrade (ed.), *Polyphonic music of the fourteenth century* (Monaco: editions de L'oiseau-lyre, 1958), IV, p. 43.

² To support this assertion I can only refer the reader to three of my own studies on the subject of unified form in the music of the Middle Ages: "Musical syntax in the Middle Ages" in *Perspectives of new music* IV (1965), p. 75; "Tone system in the secular works of Guillaume Dufay" in *Journal of the American Musicological Society* XVIII (1965), p. 131; "On the structure of the Alleluia melisma: a Western tendency in Western chant" in *Studies in music history: essays for Oliver Strunk*, to be published by Princeton University Press.

³ Davidson and Apel, *Historical anthology of music* (Cambridge, 1950), II, No. 184.

⁴ Thus Leonard B. Meyer, writing of the same challenge to traditional Western notions of form that concerns Miss Carpenter, used the title "The end of the Renaissance?"—in *Hudson review* XVI (1963), p. 169. And in a recent issue of *The new statesman* the critic Wilfred Mellers wrote: "Debussy's freeing of harmony from temporal rhythm and Stravinsky's freeing of rhythm from harmony were complementary, both negating Europe's post-Renaissance obsession with progression in time" (March 24, 1967, p. 417).

⁵ See Leo Schrade's essay "Renaissance, the historical conception of an epoch" in *International Musicological Society, Report of the 5th Congress, Utrecht, 1952* (Kassel, 1953), p. 19, and the present author's "On historical criticism" in *The musical quarterly* LIII (1967), p. 188.

The anti-medieval basis of the Renaissance and its lasting effect on interpretations of the Middle Ages have long been recognized outside of musicology. See Giorgio Falco, "La concezione del Medio Evo nella storiographia generale dall'Umanismo al Romanticismo", *Atti del III congresso nazionale di studi romani* Vol. II (Istituto di studi romani, Bologna, 1935); Nathan Edelman, "The early uses of *Medium Aevum*, *Moyen Age*, *Middle Ages*", *Romanic review* XXX (1938), pp. 3-25; XXXI (1939), pp. 327-330; Theodore Mommsen, "Petraarch's conception of the Dark Ages", *Speculum* XVIII (1942), pp. 226-242 (further bibliography there); H. Weisinger, "Renaissance theories of the revival of the fine arts", *Italica*, XX (1943), pp. 163-170; Wallace K. Ferguson, *The Renaissance in historical thought. Five centuries of interpretation*, Boston, 1948, especially concerning "The revolt of the medievalists".

⁶ Albert Seay, *Music in the medieval world* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1965). The passage is quoted in the opening paragraph of the preface.

⁷ "Epistola de ignoto cantu" trans. by Oliver Strunk in *Source readings in music history* (New York, 1950), p. 125.

⁸ Translation of relevant selections in Strunk, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

⁹ Guido Aretinus, "Micrologus" edited by Joseph Smits van Waesberghe in *Corpus scriptorum de musica* IV (Nijmegen, Netherlands: American Institute of Musicology, 1955), Chap. 14, p. 159.

¹⁰ *Musica Hermanni Contracti* ed. and trans. by Leonard Ellinwood (Rochester, 1936), Chap. 19, p. 65.