a synthesis of the arts, most completely embodied in the cathedral. The cathedral was architecture, it is true, but it also embraced sculpture (in relief and in the round) and pictorial art (as mural and as stained glass). Its liturgy comprised drama, literature, and music. Already with the 14th century, each of these arts was beginning to realize itself individually, and the process was completed by the Renaissance. The communally built cathedral yielded to the individual art, the individual artist, and the individual work of art.

We may now be entering a definitive post-Renaissance stage of Western culture, but I find it misleading to look on what is happening as in any sense a return to older and perhaps more natural modes of perception. Rather, we are confronted by an attack on the whole concept of art. If the attackers win, not only the work of art as we know it but art itself may disappear. Some composers—I use the term only because I do not know what else to call them, except perhaps noncomposers—are loudly proclaiming the Death of Music in a manner that recalls certain stylish theological positions, and they are encouraging their followers to complete its doing-in. Others, more reticent, are nevertheless apparently trying to hasten the process by insisting that whatever one wants to call music *is* music, that what one calls a composition *is* a composition. John Cage's position is more honest. A few years ago, in conversation, he said, "I don't claim that what I am doing is music, or art—or that it has any value. I maintain only that it is an activity, and that it is the one in which I happen to be engaged at present." Such a position is, from a purely personal point of view, unassailable; but if generally accepted by those who call themselves musicians, it means the end of music.

Let us not deceive ourselves. The extreme avant-garde is not trying to offer new definitions of what constitutes a work of art, or to create new forms, or to encourage new modes of perception. The extreme avant-garde has only one attitude towards the arts: it wants to kill them.

Bernard Stambler, *Debts and transfigurations*

The materials of Miss Carpenter's article suggest certain quodlibets on the terms and structures of our responses to the arts. Miss Carpenter is quite adept with the two large structures, or frames of reference, she is manipulating and combining for the purposes of her paper: the sense (or concretizing) of musical form that appeared in the 18th century, and certain analytic methods of experimental psychology, essentially of the 20th century. Somewhat less clear and explicit in her article (as, generally, in "histories" of music) is how we are to see the relation between 18th-century and pre-18th-century forms. The 18th century developed the "great formal types of musical organization" that by and large we still live by; it might be more accurate to say, the 18th century provided the ears with which we still hear music. The forms

used before, say, 1740 *can* be described as "precursors" of the later forms; less influenced by solipsistic teleology,[1] we may see them rather as not merely different forms but as different concepts of what "form" is and does. (Professor Crocker's article suggests something of this sort.)

It would be a great convenience if history were continuous: we could thereupon safely measure cause and effect, make clear judgments of better and worse, and above all play one or the other of the favored ploys of man-in-the-street-as-historian: "things grow better all the time", or "things grow worse every generation". Unfortunately, the course of events is more likely to be marked by discontinuities, or by abrupt turnings of corners that did not seem to be there.

The century and a half before the time of C. P. E. Bach is marked by an unusually large number of these radical discontinuities—in social structures, in philosophy, and (one is tempted to say, above all) in literature and music. Let me instance one or two of these, partly to show our tendency to force history into continuous lines. This is in itself a characteristic of our age (by which I mean c. 1750 to the present); other ages have found their happiness by the reverse of this distortion. The literary and philosophical men, for instance, of the mid-14th century who labeled their era the Renaissance and the preceding stretch of time the Middle Ages were explicitly saying: "There was the great period of classical antiquity, and now here we are; in between was a thousand years of marking time and of dull hair-splitting that can safely be ignored."

For an instance, then, of discontinuity and of our tendency to line things up anyway.

Classes in music appreciation probably still argue whether Bach climaxed and culminated the age before him, or whether he essentialized his age and paved the way to the future. Bach was probably the greatest composer who ever lived; but seeing this should not prevent one from also seeing that he had no significant effect on music after him (except possibly in helping to decrease the modes of music from twelve to two and a half) and that the only musical tradition he climaxed was that of the provincial German church composer—that he was almost unbelievably cut off (mostly against his will) from the living musical tradition of his day. But we, preferring Bach, shut our ears to *that* tradition as represented, for instance, by the serious operas of Venice and Naples. As an adornment on this distortion we magnify Pergolesi greatly beyond his stature while we preserve the one comic opera of Alessandro Scarlatti and let his hundred serious operas fall into various limbos. The excuse, "Castrati!", will not answer this accusation: it is rather that we, having chosen J. S. Bach to "represent" the first half of the 18th century, cannot admit to our ears or to our conceiving minds a set of musics contemporary with his and yet so different from his. The present vogue of "Baroque" music (which tends to ignore, or transcend, the question of whether the Baroque—see Professor Lang's *Music in Western civilization*—is of the 16th or of the 17th or of the early 18th century), even to the extent to which it is not

simply precious or commercialistic, does not controvert what I have just said: it simply uses "Baroque" (a word still hovering somewhere between "cute" and "fantastic") to embrace composers as fundamentally unlike each other (and unlike J. S. Bach, in spite of superficial resemblances) as Couperin le Grand, Vivaldi, and Alessandro Scarlatti. Above all, the term excuses us from the tasks of adjusting our ears to deal with the problem of whether a given "Baroque" composer (often with condescension compounded by calling him, instead, "rococo") may not have achieved, along with J. S. Bach, the whole range and the whole task of what music may aim at.

But I am chiefly interested in what the 18th century did, and in how and why. First, the "what". In literature as well as in music this century saw the birth of "the great formal types" that still live. The novel and the short story were both born in the 18th century; even the predecessor of the novel, the romance (picaresque or other), is written today in its 18th-century shapes. Less obviously, poetry (both lyric and longer forms) and the drama have had a continuous history only since the middle of the 18th century. Consider in their effect on the form, content, and purpose of later drama Sheridan, Lessing, and Schiller—and then Corneille or Molière, Shakespeare, or the other Elizabethans or Jacobeans.

How and why the 18th century did these things that provide unbroken threads to the present is less easy to say, but a few parts of it may be said. It is the time in which the major nationalisms of Europe are clarified (though not all were yet established as nations) approximately as they still stand today. Then, and also for the first time, the power and culture of Europe become dominantly bourgeois—with a bourgeois demand for utility even in the arts being subserved by clarity and comprehensibility (or what is also called classicism). Out of a great amalgam of trade among nations, not only within Europe but with the Far East and scattered colonies as well; of general leisure and money enough to afford (for the first time in history) direct public support of writers, composers, and performers; of a breakdown first real and then theoretical of the rigid class-distinctions of earlier societies in Europe—out of these and other ingredients Western Europe evolves an aesthetic (political and social as well as artistic and religious) which in its variations serves until this day—variations on a naïve but good-hearted paradox: essentially parochial insights and constructs yearning by magnification to become "universal". (Or: When I bite a lemon let the world's mouth pucker, now and eternally.) A great sequence of philosophers, from England to France to Germany, sounds with increasing swell this groundtone of the "universal", and the lesser pipes of aesthetics and criticism pick up the burden. One line of this occurs within music itself: the development of an idea we have come to accept as having the full force of a natural truth—"absolute" music, a concept or an aim never attempted before or outside Western music of the past two centuries.[2] Miss Carpenter quotes Pater's remark that all the arts aspire to the condition of music; more to the point is the Western notion that all musics aspire to the condition of absolute music.

Absolute. Universal. Aristotle, twenty-three hundred years ago saddled poetry with the notions behind these terms; critics have borne them as an incubus ever since.[3] Aristotle could no more help organizing and classifying than he could help breathing. He did a better job, usually, with dead things like the parts of animals; by some sad accidents of history it came to be assumed that he had done as well with the *disjecta membra* of plays, of logic, of behavior ethical and political. His systems have mostly come to be seen as timebound, suffering from the same bourgeois ailment as the 18th century's—an impulse to elevate the parochial to the universal. More important: when one remembers that Athenian tragedy had died a half-century before Aristotle came to Athens, that to the Athenians Aristotle was not an Athenian and not even really a Greek, that Aristotle nowhere shows an ability to deal with behaviors or with words that goes beyond taking these things apart to look for their component pieces—one begins to wonder whether his insights into Greek tragedy were *even* timebound.

And then one is prepared to see that this wonderful structure of the *Poetics* explains only one of the ancient tragedies, the *Oedipus Tyrannus* (and it turns out to be an explanation of the play nearly as irrelevant as Freud's). Only a reader taught to accept the *Poetics* as revealed truth would be able, in a triumph of will over intelligence, to derive from it an illumination of any other Greek play (to say nothing of any later play). And yet, ever since the German Romantics revived Aristotle's "insights" into tragedy, critics have kept them alive by a combination of hypnotic language and forced feeding (somewhat like Poe's Monsieur Valdemar) so that—to take the most egregious example—Shakespeare's heroes in the tragedies, who represented to his audience that breed of man, different by nature and God's will from themselves, that man who as ruler dominated every aspect of their lives—these heroes now, by romantic-democratic process, have become the same as those in the audience: every man his own Hamlet, Lear, Macbeth. The error is not in the bourgeois mind but in the absurdities and reversals a bourgeois framework perpetrates when applied where it doesn't fit.

Now, in these pontifications on history and critics' jargons, what of Miss Carpenter's article?

The "solution" of the problem of a Varèse or a Cage (and such a problem implicitly provides the skeleton of her article) is not to be found in a combination of 18th-century musical form-concepts and 20th-century experimental psychologies, treating them as though they were manifestations of what used to be called the perennial philosophy, applicable anywhere and anywhen.[4] Nearly half her paper, for instance, is spent "in the matter of isolating and externalizing a musical object and setting it at a distance—on the problem, that is, of making it discrete in an objective world". While part of her discussion bears upon the Gestaltist's idea of a continuum between subject and object, her vote goes to the object as discrete.

A distinction between "subjective" and "objective" has come to seem one of the revealed data of existence, but such a distinction in today's (psycho-

logical) sense is another creation of the 18th century. It is today a distinction embarrassing to the Gestalt psychologist and specious to the linguistic philosopher.[5] We might do well to throw both terms into the discard before we are forced to do so: are the findings (or the musical compositions) of a computer, built and programmed by a man, subjective or objective?

Somewhat more serious is her fixation on triadic (and presumably tempered) harmony. I am not forgetting Pythagoras or Jeppesen-on-Palestrina, nor am I ignoring the possibility of a convincing dissertation on A Triadic-Sense in Watussi drum music or in Gamelan-Klang. But surely, at this point in history (and in international geography), we should be ready to see that listening to music with the ears of the late 18th century is a habit we might consider breaking, or at least stretching.[6] Of course we can analyze Bach, or Machaut, harmonically, but we might learn a good deal more about their music (and about anything written before the middle of the 18th century, and probably about Chopin and Debussy as well) if we came to think of harmonic analysis as a highly interesting but not highly significant approach to music. It is the place in our ears occupied by triadic thinking (in its 18th-century, tempered-scale forms) that inhibits or even excludes other ways of dealing with music—and this extends to our forgiveness of the early 18th-century composers for the nonsense they uttered about the affects and of the composers as late as Beethoven for their silly beliefs in mode- and key-meanings.

The point, in short, is to decide who is to be the boss—the scholar/critic, or the terms, concepts, or just plain jargon that he has inherited. Someone has said that every work of art should be destroyed when it reaches the age of forty-five; the linguistic philosophers might say that every word should be destroyed at the same age, or at least every word capable of being used abstractly. For when fecundity disappears from a word, when it is a measuring rod that was originally designed for *this* and now is being applied to *that*, thinking turns into a chess game in which terms and concepts can only run through a fixed gamut of gambits and responses.

There is a wholesome struggle in Professor Crocker's mind between an absolutist (or wordbound, or universal) aesthetic and a relativist aesthetic. The final paragraph of his article seems to show a lingering inclination to the absolutist side, but his compromise favors the other pole in his choice of "creative" canons for music not yet written.

I endorse his choice, but think it far more important for historian and aesthetician, for critic and musicologist, to be ready to be creative (or even relativist) in dealing with the past. This is more than a matter of correcting the misjudgments perpetrated by our predecessors—it is being constantly alert to the temptations to hear-and-see through ear-and-eye defined by timebound spectra. In literary studies, the ideas of German Romanticism, of Marx, of Freud have come to be fetters (like those described by Plato in his Figure of the Cave) for looking at the past. Chains for musicology are being forged from the 18th-century musical experience joined to certain

psychological jargons of our own day (jargons that are themselves a heritage from German Romanticism)—but let us hope that the links have not yet been welded tight.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Her explicit description of "the great formal types of musical organization" as perceptual categories" (p. 64) becomes a frank example of this sort of parochialism (p. 68).

[2] We can now, with hindsight, find precursors or progenitors of absolute music earlier than the 18th century, but composers had to cleanse their minds and their music of the ideas and emotions specifically linked with the modes (six or twelve) and with the affects (whether as intarsia or as mystique) before "absolute music" could become a conscious aim and program. Incidentally, one looks through history nearly in vain for a creative artist (as distinguished from critic or philosopher) who clearly displays a belief or an interest in the "universal".

[3] Many of Aristotle's phrases have acquired the quality almost of incantation. A good example of this is the frequent use, by both Miss Carpenter and Professor Crocker, of the Aristotelian phrase "beginning, middle, and end". For Greek tragedy, based on familiar legends, the "beginning" of a play was the point in the story selected by the dramatist as making clear the part of the story he was going to use; the magic of Aristotle's phrase is not easily transferred to another context. For music (with the exception of John Cage), "beginning" means flatly a change from the inaudible to the audible.

[4] An instance which strikes me as combining the perennial philosophy with a bit of Aristotle and some special pleading occurs in glossing *harmonia* as "the perfect attunement between microcosm and macrocosm". True enough, and Miss Carpenter also calls this "one of the oldest images of music". But I hope that no one will start building systems on the fact that, as metaphors, "democracy" or "snowflake" may also serve to symbolize a perfect attunement between macro- and microcosm.

[5] Perhaps this subjective-objective business is only another instance of a trait shown by schools of psychology during the past century, the trait of borrowing fundamental concepts from the physical sciences—and, rather regularly, not fully exploiting the physical concept until the physical scientist has discarded it and moved on to something quite different. On subjective-objective, see, for an instance already old, Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the modern world* (New American Library), p. 50 and *passim*.

[6] Theodor Lipps, who, in an imposing number of works of major size in aesthetics, reduced all music to a departure from and a struggle back to the tonic chord, should have provided, for ever, a salutary lesson for builders of universal aesthetic systems.

David Burrows, *On Patricia Carpenter's "The musical object"*

"The musical object" is neither short nor long enough. I hope Miss Carpenter will take up her big and convincing idea at book length, for, although she argues it most convincingly here, it deserves to be traced in detail through the literature of the period she deals with. One byway that could receive attention in a fuller treatment of the theme is the history of notation