I. Book Reviews


MANTRA

CONVERSATIONS WITH STOCKHAUSEN

TOWARDS A COSMIC MUSIC: TEXTS BY KARLHEINZ STOCKHAUSEN

THE WORKS OF KARLHEINZ STOCKHAUSEN, 2nd Ed.

STOCKHAUSEN ON MUSIC

Reviewed by Richard Friedman, P. O. Box 9584, Berkeley, CA 94709, U.S.A.

Stockhausen's Mantra has been recorded only once before (DGG 2530208), in 1971. That recording, by Aloys and Alfons Kontarsky, quickly disappeared, like most of the 100 or so pre-compact-disc (CD) era vinyl disks of 'Stockhausenmusik' on Deutsche Grammaphon that were realized under the composer's obsessive supervision. It is not clear why there have been no digital reissues, for there are treasures in DGG's vaults—everything from Gesang der Junglinge (1955), through Momente (1964) and Hymnen (1967), to Sirius (1977). Perhaps Stockhausen's preoccupation with his mammoth seven-opera cycle Licht, begun in 1977, is partly to blame.

However, some of the smaller works have been recorded recently by a new generation of performers outside the Group Stockhausen. Their effort to reintroduce this composer's pre-Licht legacy to a new audience should be applauded. Already there are multiple releases of his early piano pieces (Klaviertüste I-XI, 1954-56), as well as selections from Aus den sieben Tagen (1968) and Tierkreis (1976). A few of his percussion pieces, including Kontaktk (1960), have been recorded on CD by various groups. New Albion's 1990 release of a spectacular performance of Mantra by pianists Yar Mikhashoff and Rosalind Bevan (recorded in 1986 in Oslo) is a valuable addition to the list.

Mantra (1970), for two pianists who also must play antique cymbals, wood blocks, a tape recorder and ring modulators, is truly a Stockhausen masterpiece that clearly concentrates much of his thinking and experimentation of the 1960s. It also represents a new compositional practice, the 'sound-formula', developed from ideas found in some earlier works (especially Momente), which now dominates his work.

What does Stockhausen mean by 'formula', and how does it function in Mantra? Unfortunately, the notes included in the New Albion CD are of no real help. Stockhausen's own brief explanation on the old DGG record jacket was excellent, and a more complete discussion can be found in Jonathan Cott's book of conversations with the composer, published in 1973. Stockhausen's formula technique is a way of composing self-similar structures out of a generating form. This generating form is 'the mantra'—a 13-note sequence of pitches and durations arranged into four mirrored sections ('limbs') that is heard at the very start of the piece (measures 3-8) in the first piano.

Superimposed on the mantra-formula are 13 'characteristics' or figurations that are attached to each note of the sequence. With 12 ways to expand the material in the sequence and 13 x 12 pitch transpositions, a large number of formal cycles are possible, all based on the generating function of the mantra.

Stockhausen cautions that Mantra (the piece) is not a theme with variations. Rather, the mantra (the formula) 'is not varied; not a single note is added, nothing is 'accompanied', ornamented, etc. The 'Mantra' always stays itself, and appears in its twelveload with its 13 characteristics'.

Yet another overlay in the process results from the use of ring modulators to generate new harmonic relationships out of the pitches of the formula. Each pianist controls electronics that alter the amplified sound of the piano in predictable but complex ways. The transformations of the sound are centered on each of the 13 notes of the mantra.

The score is impressive. Every note is written out in traditional notation, indicating a return from the graphical and verbal scores of his earlier 'intuitive' music. The formal operations can be analyzed, but in listening, few are apparent, at least to my ears. Of course, this is not a concern of Stockhausen's, who said somewhere that the formal procedures are for the composer and remain unknown to the listener. But to Stockhausen, the mantra is "a musical miniature of the unified macro-structure of the cosmos, just as it is a magnification into the acoustic time-field of the unified micro-structure of the harmonic vibrations in the notes themselves".

Stockhausen has described working on Mantra as "the happiest composition time I have ever spent in my life", and the work literally bubbles over with good humor and excitement. This mysterious hour-long unfolding of the mantra through all of
II. Recording Reviews

The book by Smith and Jones offers a comprehensive review of the current state of computer science. It covers a wide range of topics, from basic programming concepts to advanced algorithms. The authors provide clear and concise explanations, making it suitable for both beginners and experienced programmers.

Though the book is well-structured, some readers found the explanations to be slightly concise, which might make it challenging for those new to the field. However, the numerous examples and exercises provided help to reinforce the concepts discussed.

The book is highly recommended for anyone looking to deepen their understanding of computer science, whether in an academic or professional setting.
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MRI of the Hippocampus

The Hippocampus

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Article 1: MRI of the Hippocampus

Jefrey W. Pearlman, Robert A. Peace, and David J. C. MacFall

Article 2: The Role of the Hippocampus in Memory

J. Morgan, J. Davis, and S. Brown

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- "The Neurobiology of Memory" by J. L. Brown
- "Hippocampal Function in Learning and Memory" by J. H. Brown

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