

A Letter from Darmstadt

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*Being a personal account
of the peculiar circumstances and discussions
surrounding the Adorno speeches and the American panel
in Darmstadt in the summer of 1994,
so as to illustrate certain aspects of the current relative positions
of German and American musicologies*

Not precisely a conference report: something more personal and less “objective”—something perhaps very close to gossip. Because what happened was not merely conceptual, not merely a matter of making statements which modified or conflicted with other statements. Several different cultures, which because of their common technical (musical and/or theoretical) background shared large chunks of terminology, nevertheless disagreed at some very basic levels; and the members of those cultures, both as individuals and as representatives of the ideals educated into them, became passionate about these disagreements. As will become evident, I am in no way an impartial observer. My account of the following events approximately illustrates my impression of German musicology after spending a year in Europe, and subsumes many other less dramatic illustrations of that impression. This is that, in the musicology departments of Germany, it is, in some ways, still 1967: the year before the

This was originally an “in-house” report for the “Re-Theorizing Music” group at the University of California, Irvine in fall 1994; the revisions owe a great deal to that group. I have attempted to ameliorate its original bluntness, but this remains a collection of personal opinions; I hope I have not misrepresented any of my colleagues.

student riots, two years before Adorno's public humiliation and death, and long before feminism, poststructuralism and multiculturalism were taken seriously anywhere. This is understandable: Germans can, after all, read Adorno with relative ease (at least compared to our continuing struggle with translations, of which the earlier ones were notoriously poor). They are thus directly struck by the difficult brilliance of a difficult man, and probably overwhelmed by it, for Adorno opened up chasms which are arduous to leap. And many Germans seem to have avoided reading francophone and anglophone poststructuralism, feminism, and so on, apparently assuming that these subversive ventures into culture and philosophy are not important. Certainly, the normal German philosophical education is far better than ours; unfortunately, the ability to leap from systematic philosophies to anti-systems, from classical/modernist oppositions to postmodernism, is a step which few there appear to have taken.

I suspect that the discursive aspects of those changes centered on 1968, the time of the student uprisings and of the beginnings of many of the intellectual shifts that were later named poststructuralism and/or postmodernism, were chiefly ignored in Germany. That is, feminism (in terms of equality for women) and political freedom received a great deal of attention, but only in the most material, concrete manner. When French writers pointed out that our discourse determined our reality—that hierarchy and power were embedded in the way things were said and interpreted—the Germans, apparently scorning Romance-language philosophy, were perhaps the only thinkers in the West to ignore such shifts in analytical focus. It seems that the Dutch and the Scandinavians, the Slavs, and of course the French, Italians and Spanish, as well as most anglophone cultures, all have some connection to or involvement in poststructuralism, and regard French philosophy as at least interesting. Of course, translations of Foucault, Derrida, Lyotard, and others are actually available in German bookstores, in inexpensive paperbacks; but they seem not widely

read. Heinz-Klaus Metzger, who has indeed read all of the major French writers, said to me that very few Germans take poststructuralism seriously.

As a result, the last "great thought" accepted by many German intellectuals is Adorno. This results in a difficult split in German intellectual culture: their daily world has already drifted far from modernism, but they are not sufficiently familiar with certain intellectual tools to relate to postmodernism as other Western intellectuals do. For example, I tend to feel that Habermas on postmodernism is rather ridiculous, of hardly more use than Adorno on jazz; and, similarly, most German writing on Cage and other postmodern music seems to miss the point, repeatedly and ponderously. This is perhaps why there is not much "new musicology" in Germany: they simply don't have the tools, nor do they have a background of taking ideas such as subjectivity, ambiguity, textuality, relativity, and so on as valid.

Before everything happened:

February 1994, Frankfurt; July 13, 1994, Berlin

In February, Heinz-Klaus Metzger and Rainer Riehn planned to give a presentation in Darmstadt on Adorno's speech on *Klangfarben*. This was a four-hour improvised speech given in the 1960s which is preserved on tape, as are many of the Darmstadt lectures. The presentation was to be introduced by Gianmario Borio and Ulrich Mosch, two

Metzger was the most famous musical student of Adorno; he is a political radical who remains somewhat outside the German musicological establishment, yet is read by musicians as a critic of primary importance. His lover Rainer Riehn, a composer, is also a writer and editor; together they produce the important monograph series Musik-Konzepte. Borio is a professor in Cremona, with an excellent dissertation on musique informelle; Mosch is a musicologist at the Paul Sacher Stiftung (the important collection of twentieth-century music manuscripts in Basel). Both were Dahlhaus students, and are considered bright young lights in German musicology.

musicologists who have worked extensively with the Darmstadt archives. All these plans were canceled by Friedrich Hommel, then director of the Darmstadt Ferienkurse, who decided that a respectable figure outside music—Albrecht Wellmer, moral philosopher and Adorno expert—should appear instead. Borio and Mosch planned a brief, quarter-hour presentation by Wellmer, and wanted to bring Metzger and Riehn back into the ring; but Hommel had other expectations and it was, after all, his show.

Before we all went to Darmstadt, Hermann Danuser invited us to a garden party and seminar on July 13th at his Berlin house, which involved a discussion of a draft of Wellmer's lecture "Über Musik und Sprache." Attending were Wellmer, Borio, and some interesting young musicologists who will be worth watching out for—Pascal Decroupet, Simone Heilgendorff, Inge Kovács and Pietro Cavallotti.

In my notes, made after everything was over, I described this draft as "even more pompous and inaccurate than the final one." My understanding of the dense German was only partial, but one of the young musicologists said that the Wellmer article, largely concerned with comparisons between the processes and semantics of music and speech, was very much "reheated Adorno"; she also said that Danuser is one of the most progressive professors in

Danuser is a musicologist who is very important in the hierarchies of German musicology and new music studies; he is now chair of the department at Humboldt Universität, in the former East, and has been given the difficult job of bringing his Eastern comrades up to speed with West German work. Decroupet and his wife Elena Ungeheuer have become "the" experts on electronic music of the fifties; both are becoming widely published, and deserve a great deal of attention. Heilgendorff (who has written on Schnebel) and Kovács (who with Danuser, Borio, and Decroupet is working on documentation of the Darmstadt archives) are more junior in the German hierarchy (and that is very important indeed). I heard Cavallotti give a paper on the Italian reception of Adorno in one of Danuser's seminars; it was quite good. I had the impression that Italian students of musicology in Germany, such as Borio and Cavallotti, have to do exceptional work in order to be taken at all seriously, as happens in America with students from certain foreign countries.

Germany. This seems problematic to me; although he is very gracious and open to discussion, Danuser's studies of postmodernism and American music are largely contingent on dialectical categories, making his work often more serious and morally modernist than seems appropriate.

The discussion included several points: Danuser mentioned differential aesthetics, i.e., an analysis that works over what is *different* in a piece, not its modeling as a form, and referred to the writings of Edward Cone. Borio said, rather elusively, that Wellmer needed to consider two levels: (1) *Musik als Sprache* (and perhaps *Musikalische Sprache*), or the question of syntax; and (2) the construction of the work of music. Danuser brought up the distinction of analyzing musical process in terms of the organic, as opposed to the rational or mechanical (which seems to me rather old-fashioned, especially when used in value judgments—i.e., this musical work is “natural,” that one is “artificial,” etc.).

An earlier Danuser seminar in the same series (the general subject was musical aesthetics after Adorno) involved students reading a paper by Rose Subotnik.² The paper reinterprets aspects of Kant and Adorno, repeatedly pointing out that it is not restating exactly what the philosophers said, but instead working through expanded or altered versions of their ideas. This was remarkably difficult for the German students to accept (although they all exhibited considerably better understanding of philosophy than most American students); most of the session was taken up with answering queries of why Subotnik had not “correctly” presented Kant’s or Adorno’s positions. I found myself explaining subject positions and the personal reinterpretation of philosophies, and the looseness and freedom of American links to tradition; I also told them the story of Subotnik’s tenure difficulties, in order to implicitly present some of the tribulations of the “new musicology” and of women in the academy. Incidentally, it was the first time during my year in Germany that I was treated as a mature colleague with something to say, rather than

Students asked only two or three very careful questions; it seemed that discussion, and certainly disagreement, were not expected. Afterwards, students (and I) asked Wellmer questions, to which he responded in a pleasant, interested way; but I don't think he understood everything, particularly given the different kinds of music with which he seemed to be unfami-

as an American, or a young and ignorant student (I prefer to ascribe this to my complexion, there are indeed negative aspects of not looking one's age). The women students were fascinated with the Subotnik story—not least because I discussed personal histories in a seminar. I have the impression that German women have even more problems in academe than American ones; they are not, for the most part, expected to complain about the difficulty they have with promotions or in disagreeing with senior (male) colleagues.

liar. Over the pasta salad buffet, I tried to explain that a musical argument organized exclusively around common-practice Western music was really too categorically limited these days, but he didn't seem to know anything about *Weltmusik*.

Adorno-Referaten, First Day:

July 30, 1994, Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik, Darmstadt

If you are not addicted to the postwar European avant-garde, you may not know that Darmstadt means the Ferienkurse, or summer courses, in music composition held in that city since 1946, which were central to the European avant-garde in the fifties and sixties. Although notable musical events have been rare since about 1970, the Ferienkurse remain an important locus of education and networking for young European (and American) composers.

The Adorno presentation was made in the largest auditorium, with the audience arranged on the floor around a high platform which contained a table with Ulrich Mosch, Gianmario Borio, Albrecht Wellmer, Hermann Danuser, Heinz-Klaus Metzger and Rainer Riehn, reading from left to right. As one might imagine, this was a distancing, rather overwhelming visual setup. Four lectures were scheduled, by the latter four panel members; Metzger and Riehn had been added back in a week or so before, after Borio and Mosch protested to Hommel (again).

The title had been announced as “Die Aktualität Theodor W. Adornos” (The Current-ness of Adorno, or perhaps: The Contemporary Adorno). On the blackboard where announcements were made, someone had altered this title to: “Die Aktualität ? Theodor W. Adornos **Fehler**” (i.e., questioning

that Adorno is current, and altering the second half of the phrase to read "Adorno's Mistake"). This was seen by everyone that morning and caused many raised eyebrows, but no one erased it. In introducing the lectures, Mosch made the tactical error of referring to this graffiti rather stiffly as *Schmiererei* (smear, or something offensive and crudely scrawled), which even the Germans thought a humorless response. This created a defensiveness in the audience—which was, of course, a youngish audience of rebellious composers and performers, rather than the obedient philosophy students to whom Wellmer may be accustomed—that might have led to much of the ensuing squabbling.

Albrecht Wellmer then gave his speech "Über Musik und Sprache" for an hour and twenty minutes. In my (admittedly negative) view, it was an embarrassing presentation, old-fashioned, abstract and musically ignorant, particularly of experimental music. It was clear that Beethoven and the Western common-practice canon were the only musics he was talking about, but he never acknowledged that (and probably doesn't realize that there is anything else). He seemed cheerful, however, and I believe he didn't expect most of the negative responses.

Some of my irritable notes on Wellmer, scribbled on the back of my program: "German musicology is *so* old-fashioned"; and "at the INMM this may have been bearable,

The INMM, or Institut für Neue Musik und Musikerziehung, held their 48th annual "working days" in April 1994, which I attended. The meeting was oriented almost exclusively towards musicologists and theorists, with several performers (including the wonderful pianist Marianne Schroeder) teaching master classes. The staff at the Ferienkurse maintains that the INMM was originally established as a rival, to present an alternative organization dedicated to new music in Darmstadt.

but in front of these young composers, such stuff is insulting." I had about twenty small complaints, all of which were pretty much paradigmatic of each other. Adorno's *answers* were already problematic in the late fifties, or even earlier when he spoke on mass culture; it is not always useful to employ

his answers as general judgments, and it goes against his approach anyway, as he created a method of inquiry rather than a position. And every time the Germans can get the concept of *Dialektik* in, they do, acting as though they've actually solved something. Ultimately, the here-are-all-the-answers attitude—Wellmer didn't define music or speech, but *did* attempt to dictate universal rules for them—most deeply offended the audience.

Gerhard Stäbler stood to ask whether he was in the right room, what was the point of the previous hour and twenty minutes, and whether the other speakers would be going on for so long. This was meant to be extremely rude, and was taken that way; Mosch, sputtering slightly, countered that this sort of presentation could not be limited in terms of the clock. Hermann Danuser then gave a half-hour lecture on various minor aspects of Adorno's understanding of music, which did not relieve the hostility in the room.

At this point Brian Ferneyhough gave a brief (three-page, handwritten, in English) presentation on the reception of Adorno in England and America, pleasant for its non-pompous and even-handed tone, which referred to some of the more postmodern studies of Adorno recently published. Much of the audience relaxed somewhat.

Young, rebellious British composer Christopher Fox stood and asked an unhappy burst of questions (in English) about what was missing from the discussion. He was physically

Stäbler is a composer who is aggressively and publicly on the political left, and who has gained in renown over the past decade. I will be editing a short book about his graphic and experimental works.

Ferneyhough is, of course, the most famous and most brilliant proponent of the "new complexity." A composer and professor at UC San Diego and the "coordinator" of the Ferienkurse, he is remarkably well-versed in the philosophical and theoretical aspects of a great deal of highly sophisticated music. Indeed, his knowledge and intelligence can be frankly overwhelming, although he evidently does not intend them to be taken that way; but, in this case, he graciously aimed his presentation at the audience, making it lucid and helpful.

shaking as he did so, which was understandable in view of the evident power structures in the room. He asked: why was there no mention of culture? And does

Fox's music includes elements of minimalism, microtonality and a certain conceptual Satie-ism, and is thus somewhat independent of most current European styles. The performance of his clarinet quintet, although it elicited boos from the Italians, was for me one of the most interesting events of the Ferienkurse.

Adorno's idea of musical meaning have any use, outside the common practice and modernist eras—or, for that matter, outside the Central European musical tradition? When Fox first read Adorno years ago, he was struck by the stupidity of his statements about jazz and popular music, as well as his position on Stravinsky; in spite of this, he has respect and affection for Adorno's work, but thinks it involves serious problems which were not acknowledged here.

Composers Gösta Neuwirth (an elder statesman from Vienna) and Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf (a young German) gave rather smug statements of support for Adorno, essentially returning him to the pedestal of "great" philosopher and music critic. My personal response (not publicly stated) was that we must distinguish between critiquing Adorno and critiquing these lectures about him; and, of course, that Adorno constantly attacked the process whereby provocative ideas are reified into "great truths."

There is no appropriate way to convey Mahnkopf's position among his colleagues, although one epithet was used with remarkable consistency. One might euphemistically say that he is considered the most annoying composer at the Ferienkurse.

Wellmer tried to respond to Fox, rather condescendingly I thought, by making the statement that Adorno's concept of musical meaning only holds for European and American music. My (again unstated) reaction: then he doesn't know much American music. He also said Adorno's position on jazz wasn't stupid—it was "hochintelligent, aber

As Laurie Schwartz (American composer and radio presenter who recently married Borio, and who may become an important link between American and European music studies) later pointed out, this

falsch" (highly intelligent but wrong). *means, in English-speaking terms, that Adorno's position was stupid.*

Metzger also tried to answer Fox, but claimed that he hadn't understood all of the English. This seemed acceptable to me, and I thought Metzger made sense (although, as you can see, I happen to like Metzger); but the Germans thought Metzger was being very rude, as he could not have misunderstood the English. (Metzger's reading English is very good, but I think he might have had problems with Fox's northern accent.) At some point Mosch or Borio announced that there was no time for Metzger and Riehn to give presentations, and they were rescheduled for the next day. This left the audience even less amused, as many were waiting for the more famous Metzger to speak, and had been merely putting up with Wellmer.

Borio began to speak to Fox in terms of his "Provokation," which caused Fox to stand abruptly and leave the room. This was unfortunate, and they did not speak to each other for two days. After Fox left, I followed him briefly, then returned to a dissolving situation—Borio apologizing that there would be no more questions and we would continue the next day, while people stood in a buzz of rather hostile discussion. *Schwartz and I later had to explain to Borio that it sounded as though he was trivializing Fox's questions as an obnoxious "provocation," and to explain to Fox that Borio had merely meant his ideas were provocative.*

Adorno-Referaten, Second Day: July 31

The next day, we met in a smaller, duller classroom with no platform. At a classroom table in front sat Borio, Mosch, Metzger and Riehn; Danuser was off to the side, beaming a slightly attenuated but still friendly confidence; Wellmer was hiding rather more, looking more nervous.

Rainer Riehn spoke for a long time in a documentary vein on Adorno's own compositions; he read many letters, and

played recordings which were actually quite beautiful (there is in fact a new Wergo CD with excerpts from Adorno's opera based on, of all things, the story of Huckleberry Finn). Adorno's music includes twelve published works and twenty-three unpublished ones (soon to appear, as he left instructions that they were to be published in two batches, depending on whether he thought they were really good or merely okay). They include three string trios, two string quartets, and various *Lieder* and piano pieces. Borio finally had to stop Riehn's speech for reasons of time, but no one minded much—the talk was rather long, but not at all unwelcome.

Metzger gave a ten-year-old paper³ on Adorno which nevertheless seemed more current than Wellmer's work; my positive response comes partially from the fact that Metzger retained the fractured, decentered aspect of Adorno's thought, rather than making it a centralized system of answers. One of his more unexpected points was that he doesn't understand why young composers are running around, apparently expecting to have fun: he subscribes to the old idea of *taedium artis*, the tedium of art: art as hard, dull work. This is, of course, implicitly rather modernist, as it seems to go against the physical or ludic pleasures that are often so important in minimalism or music under the influence of "popular" styles.

Normal German academic behavior seems to be to write an extended multi-page response to a lecture while it is being read, which states all of one's positions that are opposed to the lecturer's; it makes our typical question periods look hasty and scattered, but is rather repressive of discussion. I also don't know how one can respond to a speech that was only heard with part of one's attention. Only those above a certain level in the academic hierarchy are normally expected to speak; this is perhaps why Fox was somewhat of a shock for the Germans, and perhaps also why Mahnkopf was not everyone's favorite person.

Danuser quoted a statement made by Adorno toward the end of his life (during the time of the student uprisings, when he felt his position to be deeply threatened) that "one must first understand Critical Theory to criticize it." This seemed

clearly aimed towards closing off discussion. Gösta Neuwirth and others offered extended opinions, again.

I had wanted to speak for two days; when I finally got up, last of this whole parade, I spoke less precisely than I had hoped. However, it hit the mark when I said that, in English-speaking countries, Adorno is valued as a question mark, as a possibility, and that we do not treat him as if he were seated on a horse in the middle of the Alexanderplatz. (The younger Germans, with their strong training against nationalism, thought this funny, but the older ones probably found it offensive.) I also said that it is impolite to suggest that non-Germans cannot adequately understand Adorno—which also scored a hit, as Germans are very sensitive to the frequent accusations that they are less polite (*höflich*) than other people.

Anya Suschitzky pointed out a recent issue of 19th-Century Music devoted to German musicology. In his introduction to that issue, Walter Frisch states: "[This volume] does perforce give an impression of the fundamental scholarly values that prevail. None of the authors takes a postmodernist slant; none seeks to develop any streamlined metatheory for history, criticism, or analysis. Rather, each article takes as its point of departure some issue basic to the repertory, the composers, or the intellectual traditions so central to German culture." Frisch does not analyze or critique this, nor does he consider possible implications of the journal issue or the consistency of its viewpoints.

The American Panel, August 2, 1994, Darmstadt

Because I'd been complaining to Borio for six months that American musicology was doing different and interesting things, he decided I should give a presentation in Darmstadt. A certain amount of confusion, none of which was Borio's fault, surrounded the planning of exactly who was going to present and under what circumstances. We finally ended up with a panel of six (fairly) young Americans giving a presentation titled "Analytical & Terminological Problems of Contemporary Music—A Meeting between European & American Musicologists & Composers" (Borio's title). Although I had hoped

to focus on cultural and hermeneutic theories in the presentation, it became skewed more towards a theory presentation of the complex mathematical type (although, to be fair, set theory is not widely known or employed in Europe, and is interesting to many of the musicologists and composers).

Borio posed two questions to us (neither of which were, for the most part, answered): In theory and analysis, what do you do with *noise*? And what do you do with *open form*?

The first speakers were sophisticated representatives of the Harvard-Columbia-Princeton axis, composer/theorist Jeffrey Stadelman and pianist/theorist Anton Vishio, both of whom gave highly technical theory papers on the music of Babbitt. Composer/theorist James Boros gave a personal, very short, almost parodic refusal to talk about anything much; although he has written and published the most aggressive manifestoes supporting "complexity," this is his general reaction when people accuse him of being repressive about it (see recent issues of *Perspectives of New Music*, where his two styles are represented in print). Composer Mark Mantel spoke broadly on a number of subjects; in my view, he helped the situation by giving a presentation which showed a strong personal commitment to various aspects of composing in a rather freewheeling cowboy-style manner. Pamela Madsen extended some of her earlier discussion of feminism in more personally oriented directions.

My own presentation (on which I have, of course, extensive notes) was the last of the six. My announced title was: "New Ways of Theorizing Music: Gender, Discourse, Interpretation." I introduced it as a list aria, mille e tre, meaning that I was merely going to list existing work and theories, giving out

It is important to recall that composed, formally treated noise, as in the works of Lachenmann, Sciarrino and many others, is considerably more central in European music of the eighties than in American music.

Pamela Madsen had given a presentation on Pauline Oliveros, analysis, and female composing, which greatly fascinated the younger Europeans; they were very enthusiastic over her subjective stance, although there was some argument over her apparent essentialism, a concept of which they had evidently heard.

"Irvine" here means "Re-Theorizing Music," the musicological think tank at the University of California's Humanities Research Institute held in Irvine in the fall of 1994. The prospectus, by Philip Brett and Jann Pasler, neatly presented a number of current concerns associated with "new musicology."

copies of the Irvine printed leaflet as a handout. What I talked about is familiar: *Contemplating Music*, positivism, ethnomusicology's methodological self-examination, various conferences and publications; then: American attention to French thought; Adorno as a way of thinking; language as never objective or neutral, dialectics making binarisms; discourse and power. Then a brief mention of gender studies, the analysis of theory, popular music, world musics. (Borio said that all of this was a critique of rationality, which is of course true, but is also a distinctly modernist reaction.)

I continued: America is an awfully big country with a lot of variation, so it's hard to identify a single focus. European philosophical understanding is generally better than ours (because of education and the respect that philosophy receives), but America's current culture, which does not depend on or teach idealism or dialectics, is perhaps philosophically better suited to a postmodern reality. American postmodern music directly brings up problems of corporeality, simplicity, chaos, and erasure of the high/mass culture distinction.

A point made later by a French composer was that one shouldn't split up Continental philosophies, as Derrida has obviously read his Hegel. My response was: but most Germans haven't read Derrida. This is in fact what makes the difference, the crucial lack of understanding that I experienced in German musicology.

I said that I cannot answer Borio's question on noise, because Lachenmann's "noise as musical material" music never really happened with us; American anti-pitch and noise music remains, for the most part, referential rather than abstract. And open form in America is often simply more open than in Europe, not so controlled or "dialectical," and so generally less problematic; we are more often willing to drop formal traditions entirely. Thus, Borio's questions are, basically, mostly outside our bailiwick; but it's often surprising to us how much

more complex, or difficult, these problems are made in Europe. Borio's questions are formal rather than cultural, and my discussion is cultural; the American attention to corporeality (all right, not so much in Babbittian serialism, but in most other American work) makes much of our music very different.

I have written about this at more length in an article on Stabler.⁵ In fact, I made such a point of the difference between American and European postmodern musical poetics that several young German scholars suggested we arrange a conference about it. Nothing has happened yet, but I hope to hear from someone some day.

All of this took too long, of course, and Borio had to cut me off. But finally I emphasized that my examples of books and periodicals were not necessarily representative, and that it was worth looking further; and then announced that I would be sending various American books, articles, etc. to Gießen to be presented at the student musicological conference in October 1994.

I had only brought publications that included my own work, as I had not expected to make a general presentation in Darmstadt; I showed them Queering the Pitch: The New Gay & Lesbian Musicology (edited by Philip Brett, Elizabeth Wood and Gary Thomas; New York: Routledge, 1994), and volume 1, no. 2 of repercussions. Later, with the help of Philip Brett and Susan McClary, I did package together and send a number of articles and a bibliography to the Gießen conference.

The Europeans pointed out that our panel looked as though it were divided East to West; Borio, sitting in the middle, said he felt as though he were in the middle of the Italian Parliament (a tense image in those days of fascist government). The panel did travel from East to West, but with large holes—unfortunately, it was not at all representative of the range of American musical thought. However, everything remained quite friendly, both during and afterwards; and, frankly, I think the Europeans expected us to fight more.

Aftermaths

In the ensuing days, Herr Wellmer wandered the halls and attended various concerts, which was apparently a change in his plans (he was originally scheduled to stay for only two days). Perhaps he took to heart the accusations that he didn't know much about contemporary music, and took the opportunity to explore it. I must admit, though, it was not a remarkable summer, and I'm not sure he could have been impressed (no prizes were given at the end, only scholarships, which happens in years when the judges don't like anything very much); but the efforts of young composers and performers were good to watch and (apparently) generally sincere. Of course, most of the music seemed to battle with the central problems of the avant-garde since the sixties: the frustration of attempting to work through a tangle of available languages without simply repeating what has gone before, or making a hash of attempted and unsuccessful innovation.

Some days later, toward the end of the Ferienkurse, I gave a presentation on "Radical Musicologies in America." About twelve people showed up, mostly students, plus Borio, Metzger and Riehn; I read excerpts from texts that I had brought, and tried to extend the above discussion. I was fairly nervous and uncertain of my ability to amuse such a mixed crowd, but my efforts to destabilize the lecturer/student structure met with general incomprehension (although Inge Kovács and I had a whispered argument later, during the breaks in Marianne Schroeder's beautiful concert, about whether or not women had been allowed to talk freely). Fortunately, people found the subjects interesting enough that discussion went on for an hour and a half beyond the allotted time, particularly after I refused to lecture any more and simply sat down.

This was a "mixed" crowd because the German tendency towards vertical hierarchy means that mixing friends and strangers, professors and students, can create an uncomfortable situation, as one should not speak similarly at different levels. This is not merely a matter of pronouns (du vs. Sie).

And perhaps that is the secret of getting people to have ideas and discuss them: one must stop talking, sit down, and look at them, waiting until they respond.

Notes

1. Gianmario Borio, *Musikalische Avantgarde um 1960: Entwurf einer Theorie der informellen Musik Avantgarde* (Freiburg im Bressgau: Laaber, 1993). The dissertation focuses on various music, but especially works by Schnebel, Clementi and Feldman, and the new music festivals in Palermo; I have found it extremely useful in my own work.
2. Rose Rosengard Subotnik, "Kant, Adorno, and the Self-Critique of Reason: Toward a Model for Music Criticism," in *Developing Variations: Style and Idea in Western Music* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1991), 57-83.
3. Heinz-Klaus Metzger, "Mit den Ohren denken," in *Adorno-Noten*, Rolf Tiedemann, ed. (Berlin: Galerie Wewerka, 1984).
4. Hermann Danuser and Walter Frisch, eds., *Brahms—Liszt—Wagner*, a special issue of *19th-Century Music*, 18, no. 1 (Summer 1994).
5. Paul Attinello, "Hearing Stäbler from a Continent Away: Politics and Silence in the Song Cycles," in *Angefügt, nahtlos, ans Heute: zur Arbeit des Komponisten Gerhard Stäbler* (Hofheim: Wolke Verlag, 1994).