

# Postwar trends and (skip to) two living composers

6/8/17

# Follow Taruskin's history

- WWII; bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; East and West Berlin; Cold War; Plutonium vs. Hydrogen bombs; MAD
- Modernism and Capitalism; Adorno; the responsibility of art to resist
  - “Thus the great divide between ‘high’ and ‘low’ became even greater, with a new kind of ‘art for art’s sake.’”

# Rene Liebowitz, *Schoenberg and His School* (1947)

- “every time I hear music, whether in my imagination or through my senses, I begin anew to question automatically all that I know, all that I am. Such questioning automatically enforces the participation of all one’s intellectual faculties, which are thus made keener and stronger by each new experience.”
- “If the activity of composing or of making music is carried on with the intention of solving those profound problems which have confronted the consciousness of the individual, that individual has a chance to become a composer, a true musician.”

# Formalism and autonomy

- Formalism: to deal with the “purely musical” rather than the “extramusical” (taruskin: “the now-discredited baggage of the long nineteenth century.”)
- Autonomy: for Adorno (*Philosophy of New Music*, 1948) this music *cannot be co-opted*.

# Pierre Boulez, “Schoenberg is Dead” (1952)

- “the serial phenomenon itself was not, so to speak, perceived by Schoenberg.”
- “What, then, was his ambition <once he established the series>? To construct works of the same essence as that of those in the sound-universe he had just left behind.”
- “One cannot call that procedure valid...a warped ‘romantico-classicism’ in which the good intentions are not the least unattractive element.”
- “Schoenberg’s failure to grasp the serial domain as a whole.”

# Total serialism or “integral” serialism

- 1949 Messian, *Mode de valeurs e d'intensites*
- 1951 Boulez, *Structures*
  - “the music yields its secrets not to human ears ut, rather, to the mind of a determined analyst armed with the score. The value of technical analysis as a separate musical activity, not coincidentally, experienced an unprecedented boom after the war.”
- Schoenberg still wrote expressively; “Total serialism now offered an excape from both expression and subjectivity.”

# Darmstadt

- “The International Summer Courses for New Music aimed to spread American political and cultural values as part of the general Allied effort, set up with American financial backing, to reeducate the German population in preparation for the establishment of democratic institutions.”
  - Huh?
  - See Amy Beal, “Negotiating Cultural Allies: American Music in Darmstadt, 1946-56”, JAMS 53/1
  - Rebner (partner with American-backed Theater and Music Branch), “**constructed a tradition of American experimental music.**”

# Indeterminacy

- The expressive Cage:  
*Sonatas and Interludes, No. 1*
- The Cage that transcends human volition,  
influenced by DT Suzuki: *Music of Changes*  
(1951)
- What is indeterminacy? Consider Tudor's  
*Realizations*



# Academic avant-garde

- Milton Babbitt, Princeton
  - Unlike “zero hour” European serialism, Princetonian variety is “resolutely committed to the idea of progress.” (taruskin)
- 1946 Ph. D Dissertation does two important things:
  - Establishes theoretical foundation for 12-tone technique in mathematical set theory
  - Effectively argues for music composition as a “**legitimate branch of music research.**”
- Babbitt, **Composition for Four Instruments** (1948)
  - “he sought liberation from potential tyranny of taste by making truth rather than beauty the criterion of artistic achievement.”
    - (so, unlike Boulez, he’ll not have rejected Schoenberg)
- Babbitt, **All Set**

# Elliott Carter (1908 - 2012)

- Early works are definitely Neoclassical
- Fixation on “time” → mozart, Don Giovanni, Atc  
I finale → “metric modulation”
- First String Quartet, I (1951)

# Kate Soper, b. 1981

- *Only the Words Themselves Mean What They Say*
- *Voices from the Killing Jar*
- Performer/composer
- genre

# Johannes Kriedler, b. 1980

- Documentary
- Piece