

Stylistic Fusion in a Postmodern Context

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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The purpose of this study is to examine the links between postmodernism and music 'fusing' what are commonly described as popular and classical styles. Much postmodern theory has discussed the relationship between 'high' and 'low' and recognised eclecticism within art, but how does fusion connect with this?

An investigation of terminology and definitions together with a discussion of historical precedents for contemporary cross-influences provides a base from which to explore fusion and the postmodern. A framework outlining postmodernism's background and its relevance to music is used in conjunction with an analysis of works by Talk Talk, Mike Oldfield and Graham Fitkin.

Developing the concept of what might constitute the postmodern in music, the argument moves beyond the consideration of inherent traits which may or may not suggest postmodernism. A broader concept based on a sense of postmodern spirit is developed, recognising the importance of the roles of context and aesthetic as well as characteristics within the text. A detailed analysis of various works by the chosen artists allows exploration of both the concept of fused music and the application of postmodern theory. It will be suggested that, although these musicians produce music which displays a number of traits which are considered by many to reflect postmodernism, the music in question does not necessarily represent a postmodern aesthetic: the most postmodern of the works considered is also the least fused.

It will be argued that the characteristics of music itself cause considerable problems in the application of postmodern theory, and that fusion, by its very definition and because of the connotative qualities that specific musical references often carry, does not correlate to concepts of the postmodern.

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OUTLINE

As the 20th century draws to a close, comment on art and society is littered with references to postmodernism. In music, postmodernism has been linked to the widespread practice of mixing different styles in one work. The purpose of this thesis is to explore whether stylistic fusion can be considered postmodern.

The term 'fusion' is used to refer to a fusing of any two styles, particularly popular and classical due to the focus of this thesis. The usage sometimes found, where 'fusion' is applied specifically to jazz-rock blendings, is not applied in this study.

Chapter 1 explores style through terminology and definitions. Throughout this thesis, the term 'classical' (without capitalisation) will be used to refer to music also often described as 'art', 'serious', and 'Western classical tradition', while pop, rock and dance will be used to refer to particular areas of popular music which are applicable. For convenience, 'pop, rock and dance' will be abbreviated to PRD. The broader term, popular, refers to PRD as well as styles such as music hall, show songs and what is described as 'Easy Listening'.

PRD covers a significant area of post-World War II popular music, including styles ranging from rock'n'roll through to beat, Motown, soul, glam, punk, baggy, swingbeat, techno, drum & bass and countless others.

The reasons for choice of terms are numerous and there are also arguments against the choices made. Reaching an adequate compromise is important since definitions of classical and PRD are vital in order to establish what a fusion of both might entail.

In Chapter 2, a general background to fusion will be discussed, demonstrating how cross-influences, evident in many examples from music's history, appear in contemporary works.

In Chapter 3, postmodern theory will be considered and connections with music and music theory will emerge. There is an exploration of what postmodern music might entail, and consideration of how the postmodern in music relates to architecture, literature and painting. Having established that the postmodern does not necessarily tally from one discipline to another, there will be a focus on how musicology has approached its ideas.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 deal with the music of three artists who have fused PRD and classical influences: Talk Talk, Mike Oldfield and Graham Fitkin. These musicians have produced very different works to each other, and this makes similarities which emerge during the study all the more striking. It will be argued that the more fused different influences are, the less they correspond to what it has been suggested might constitute postmodern music.

The conclusion is hence an assertion of contradiction. Postmodern theory suggests certain types of music reflect postmodernism and that this music is eclectic, with no clear identity. The examples analysed in detail certainly display eclecticism, often with no clear stylistic identity, but the ambiguity achieved through integration contradicts the fragmentation and focus on surface which are recurrent motifs in postmodern theory.

It will therefore be argued that fusion, which simultaneously contradicts and reflects postmodernism, reveals the instability of connecting contemporary cultural theory to contemporary musical expression, and the reasons for this will be examined.

1 DEFINITIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to propose terminology to be used in this thesis and to explore possible definitions of the music concerned. There are two main problems that arise with regard to this objective. Firstly, there is a lack of standardisation within musicology which results in inconsistencies between different authorities; this is particularly apparent when quotations are used.¹ Secondly, success in attempting to define fields covered by terms such as 'pop', 'rock' and 'classical', or any other of a number of words used to refer to similar music, has been limited.

In the outline, it was stated that PRD and classical would be used to refer to particular areas of music, PRD being an abbreviation for pop, rock and dance and referring specifically to post-World War II styles. It will be argued that terminology currently in use is, in many cases, either ambiguous or outdated with regard to recent developments in popular music. PRD is obviously a term unique to this thesis and inevitably will not correspond to terms used in other writing: it is, it will be argued, nevertheless more suited to the music in question than established terminology is.

It is not my intention that this thesis should exhaustively debate definition and terminology, but rather be considered as (a) a key to establishing the field in which the study should operate and (b) as a means to promote awareness, should ambiguities and discrepancies result from the issues discussed.

The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is not to offer solutions to the problems of music definition – there are good reasons for why these should be elusive – but rather to outline and discuss the dilemmas concerned in order that the study may proceed with

¹ Note particularly references 8 and 9 in this chapter. While I will endeavour to maintain consistency in use of terminology, any critique of others' ideas will result in the use of (their choice of) different expressions.

an awareness of the limitations of musicological language and an appreciation of the compromises necessary.

This chapter will consist of:

- 1 An outline of the choices of terms used and reasons for their selection
- 2 An examination of possible definitions of the various terms in parallel usage in the context of terminology selected.

It is also important to differentiate between genre and style. The Concise Oxford Dictionary describes genre as "a kind or *style* [my italics], esp. of art or literature (e.g. the novel, drama, satire)"² which confuses the issue somewhat. The definition of style as used in this context is perhaps more helpful: "the distinctive manner of a person or school or period, esp. in relation to painting, architecture, furniture, dress, etc."³ In this thesis, genre is used in a broader sense: for example, the rock genre. Style is narrower, and within the rock genre would be included styles such as psychedelic, progressive, hard and soft. Genre can also be applied to a particular type of work, such as a symphony: within the symphony genre are many different styles, including, for example, symphonies written as a continuous movement, or symphonies in the Classical style. This usage is consistent with the examples given by the dictionary: the examples of genre are reasonably broad while it is implied that style is more specific.

1.1 Choice of terms

In the opening chapter, classical was outlined as referring to music of the Western classical tradition while PRD was used to designate pop, rock and dance. In other writing, 'pop', 'rock'n'roll', 'popular' and particularly 'rock' are used to refer to the same general area (albeit in perhaps a broader or narrower sense) to which PRD is applied in

² Allen (1991) p.491

³ Ibid. p.1212

this thesis. Alternatives to classical such as 'art', 'serious' and 'concert' are widespread and reference to the 'European tradition' are not uncommon. All these terms have been quite widely appropriated by musicologists.

The disadvantage of using PRD is that there will be an inconsistency with regard to quotation since no other writers use this term. It will be established which terms correlate to some degree,⁴ and since there is a problem with consistency of terminology in the various areas of academic writing on music, any term, even one in wide circulation, will not necessarily correspond to the terminology of all the writers that are quoted.

With fusion being the focus in a study of cross-influences between classical and PRD music, it must be compared to concepts such as thirdstream, eclecticism, polystylism, pastiche, parody and crossover.

Moore suggests that the proliferation of terms indicates a variety of musics being referred to.⁵ Certainly his observation – that diverse practices are considered in a manner which over-emphasises homogeneity through the application of a single term – is justified. Nevertheless, there is not necessarily consistency between the use of different terms: for example, rock'n'roll is applied in some cases to a style concentrated in the late 1950s while in other cases usage implies a far broader repertoire.⁶ There is also the problem that as popular music and popular musicology continue to evolve, terminology may become outdated; the importance of dance-influenced styles within current popular music means that the terms 'pop' and 'rock' alone are no longer satisfactory in the context of post-rock'n'roll developments. The term pop may have been considered adequate for discussion of disco styles of previous decades, but this is

⁴ Correlation between musical styles is itself a questionable concept and one on which opinion varies - to what degree, for example, do pop and rock overlap?

⁵ Moore (1993) p. 4

⁶ Landesman's article 'Rock'n'roll suicide' (1997) argues against the fusion of classical and rock - rather than rock'n'roll - referring particularly to the appropriation of Hendrix by Nigel Kennedy

becoming less the case with styles such as techno and drum'n'bass. The degree of experimentation produces music defying categorisation as either pop or rock, and this suggests that the term PRD may become obsolete should another distinctive strand begin to operate within a similar cultural area.

Although the various fields interact and overlap, there are within these areas certain tendencies that differentiate them; without these contrasts, the concept of fusion would be defunct. We have two distinct kinds of music (PRD and classical) and a third strand of style (fusion) that combines elements of both in some way. To examine PRD-classical fusion, we need to identify these three areas more specifically, beginning with descriptive terminology intended to distinguish them.

1.1.1 PRD

PRD is used as a term less specific than pop, rock or dance which includes all three of these categories. It is not intended to be as broad in meaning as 'popular', which is also used to cover material from shows and musicals, Tin Pan Alley, and music often described as 'Easy Listening'. Popular also implies a more established tradition, and, as will be seen in Chapter 2, popular music has been influencing classical for centuries (for example, being used as a source for material for masses). PRD refers to music in the latter part of the twentieth century, which has beginnings in rock'n'roll of the mid-fifties, although obviously its roots are situated in music being played prior to that time — blues and hillbilly, for instance.

It could be argued that, much like the classical canon of 'great' composers, PRD has its own key figures — the Beatles, Hendrix, and the Sex Pistols are examples. Like classical too, more recent developments seem increasingly eclectic, defying categorisation in a manner which appears to instigate fragmentation within the industry's

terminology.⁷ There surely comes a point where the categorisation of ambiguous styles becomes so problematic that 'pigeonholing' recordings is a hindrance rather than an aid to the industry.

A number of alternatives to PRD are in circulation, most notably popular, which has already been outlined, and also rock and pop. Rock and pop are to some extent interchanged: Whiteley describes how "*rock* appeared to provide the means whereby young people could explore the politics of consciousness" [my italics],⁸ quoting Neville:

From Berlin to Berkeley, from Zurich to Notting Hill, Movement members exchange a gut solidarity, sharing common aspirations, inspirations, strategy, style, mood and vocabulary. Long hair is their declaration of independence, *pop* music their Esperanto and they puff pot in their peace pipe.⁹ [my italics]

It is clear that the same music is being referred to in both contexts, yet the terminology's use is inconsistent.

In addition, it could be argued that pop and rock do not have the same meaning:

The term pop overlaps [with rock] but is not quite synonymously used; to rock practitioners, 'pop' may denote a more commercialised, more juvenile, and more easily assimilable product than 'rock'.¹⁰

PRD denotes a cluster of overlapping yet simultaneously separately identifiable styles. Popular musicology has perhaps tended to focus on rock rather than pop or dance, with rock often being considered less 'commercial' and more 'authentic' than pop. These qualities simply cannot be substantiated: any music appearing on the market via a

⁷ Note, for example, how Britannia Music (mail order CDs and cassettes) has increased the PRD categories of 'favourite music' from rock and pop to hard rock, soft rock, soul, chartpop, dance, lovesongs/ballads and indie/alternative.

⁸ Whiteley (1992) p. 1

⁹ Neville (1970) p. 18

¹⁰ Jacobs (1985) p. 345

record company is bound to have some element of commercialism, with record company representatives having control over many aspects of what goes into the shops. This commences with the A&R department's selection process, through the production in the studio to the marketing, artwork and so on. Record companies are investors, not patrons. If authenticity is, as Moore suggests, based "on the notion of unmediated expression"¹¹ (that is, direct communication from artist to listener) any record company involvement is going to have a mediating effect that revokes the possibility of authenticity.¹²

However, the authenticity myth remains, and while it is *perceived* to exist, it is relevant to the cultural position of rock. In a climate where increasing legitimisation of various kinds of popular music is aided by implication of artist control, discussing 'rock' is going to have more impact than discussing 'pop', and this may explain why the term is particularly widespread in the relevant areas of musicology. There is also a trend of focusing on music which sits comfortably with the rock label, perhaps again a sign of a discipline in its early stages fighting to be taken seriously. However, to concentrate on rock music at the expense of pop and dance is no longer appropriate, firstly since the interaction of different styles is currently particularly widespread, and secondly since, in the past few years, the emphasis in innovation has shifted to dance-related music. The 'ambient' style is particularly relevant here, using electronic processes related to those used in the early studios in Paris and Cologne, and aesthetically linked to Satie's concepts of music as furniture. The same artists have often been responsible for techno/dance and ambient music. For example, Future Sound of London, whose 1994 *Lifeforms* was primarily ambient, produced techno records in the late '80s under the name Stakker. Both kinds of music are used by the same culture, at the same venues, ambient as an aid to 'chilling out' in a separate room after dancing to energetic,

¹¹ Moore (1993) p. 105

¹² Ibid p. 4, p. 105

electronic-based styles. Music previously considered 'authentic'¹³ such as rock-based styles (Oasis, for example) has become increasingly nostalgic, and even plagiaristic: its role is, perhaps, increasingly under scrutiny.

For a band such as Prodigy, fusing rock and dance styles, categorisation is elusive, and the PRD label becomes particularly useful. Of course, it can be argued that some music described here as PRD draws on non-PRD influences; however, since much of this music seems to be based in pop, rock or dance styles (or a combination of these), pulling other influences into the aesthetic, PRD seems an appropriate term to refer to such music along with less eclectic approaches.

1.1.2 Classical

It is notable that while books on popular music define the subject matter as such, this is not the case with writing on classical music. For example, *Music Since the First World War*¹⁴ covers only music of a relatively narrow tradition, excluding the vast array of material that might be described as, for example, popular, folk or jazz. The title *A History of Western Music*¹⁵ specifies only vaguely; much popular and other non-classical music is equally worthy of being described as Western. *Twentieth Century Music*,¹⁶ while acknowledging the significance of non-classical influences, still considers music very much from an classical perspective. These three examples are representative of a relatively wide practice in which academic writing on music is assumed to be classically-focused unless it is made clear that this is not the case. This reflects classical music's role within a musical hegemony, with the consequent need for more peripheral musicology to differentiate itself rather than classical practice to make clear it is

¹³ E.g. 'indie' music, which following the take-over of small independent record companies by large multinationals, is increasingly mainstream — for example, in the form of Britpop

¹⁴ Whittall (1988)

¹⁵ Grout and Palisca (1988)

¹⁶ Morgan (1991)

referring to a relatively narrow field. Consequently, academic terminology for classical music is often simply not considered, and there is no single accepted form of reference.

'Classical' is perhaps the most commonly-used term describing this practice and tends to be the choice in general language while other options are preferred within musicology. It therefore carries with it the advantage that it is in wide circulation and immediately understood. The main argument against its use is that 'Classical' (note capitalisation) is also used to describe an era within classical music, usually dated at around 1750-1820 and applied to music such as that of Mozart and Beethoven (although both display characteristics of the Romantic aesthetic). Classical art reflects the influence of the Ancient Greek approach of clean lines and balanced structures, particularly in architecture, although the aesthetic was also influential in music.

Capitalisation differentiates classical (general term) from Classical (period) when written, but not when spoken, and confusion may also arise if Classical/classical is the first word of the sentence and therefore capitalised anyhow. Context becomes paramount, and there is no guarantee that meaning will be clear from it.

The concepts of Classical and classical music are further confused since, in the late eighteenth century, some of Mozart's works (for example) would have fulfilled a quite different purpose from others, with Austrian dances functioning more as 'popular' music while the Requiem fulfilled 'high' liturgical requirements. In Victorian Britain, differentiation between 'high' and 'low' was often flimsy:

The success of the music halls that put on programmes of ballet and opera demonstrate to us that the Victorian definition of popular music was wide. All music was popular music.¹⁷

Much of this music would today probably be termed classical by listeners (assuming they would apply the most common terminology). The contemporary role of classical music continues to evolve through the promotion of 'popular classics' (rather than

¹⁷ Pearsall (1973) p. 36

'classic' pop or rock), often made well-known through their use in TV advertising, which is itself a relatively recent concept. The shifting roles of classical and popular outline a lack of stability, suggesting that any conclusion reached in this thesis is likely to be superseded in the future as music changes.

Some kind of terminology nevertheless needs to be used simply to grant musical metalanguage the capability of discussion in this study. 'Classical' may be problematic, but this can be even more the case with other terminology. 'Art music' is widely used by specialists, and avoids confusion between Classical and classical music. However, the implications of discussing 'art music' particularly in contemporary culture cannot be ignored:

the modern aesthetic question is not 'What is beautiful?' but 'What can be said to be art?'¹⁸

The ambiguity surrounding postmodern expression has resulted in an aesthetic shift, and in an environment where popular styles are increasingly awarded the status of being art, the presumption that music of a certain type is automatically art seems inappropriate.

'Serious' is less widespread, but still not uncommon: it is, however, unsatisfactory, suggesting that other music, including popular, is in some way not serious. Expression in popular music can be serious (the Manic Street Preachers' work is an example) and the term 'serious' trivialises non-classical music. It also draws into question our relationship with works such as Mozart's comic operas and Milhaud's depictions of Brazilian carnival.

'Concert music' is a problematic description because the main form of dissemination today is the recording, although the work may be commissioned and/or conceived for the concert hall. For a few works, dissemination is normally concert-based – this applies particularly to very new works, which may not exist in recorded

form, or there may be a visual aspect that can only be realised in live performance. For many PRD bands, the concert is a promotional exercise to help launch an album (hence music that is conceived for a recording is reproduced in a concert situation), but at a performance in a local pub, for example, the band will be quite likely not to have recorded all, much, or any of their set. Tapes of maybe three or four songs are quite often on sale at such events, but the emphasis will be on the live performance. It would be usual to refer to a concert of this type as a gig, although this is to some extent language that emanates from popular culture, and the difference between a gig and a concert is somewhat vague. Thus the 'concert' label is confusing in terms of type of music, the purpose for which it was conceived, and the usual form of dissemination.

During work on this thesis, the term ECI was used, being an abbreviation of 'European Cultural Institutional', referring to institutions such as royal courts and the church, where a great deal of classical music evolved. Such institutions require further differentiation - it could be argued that the Top 40 is a cultural institution, as might be a night club. 'State-run/religious' could prefix the ECI, but SR/RECI is rather cumbersome and the importance of practicality and ease of understanding need to be reprioritised.

Despite some misgivings, 'classical' appears to be the most acceptable of the terms considered. As Moore argues:

Popular understanding frequently lumps together under a single heading the work of Bach, of Mozart, of Beethoven, of Wagner and a multitude of other composers, as if the stylistic and cultural practices of which they are part are in some sense monolithic. Our contemporary practices (concert going, record buying etc.) make them appear so, but only through placing them in these, altogether new, contexts.¹⁹

Tendency to group types of music together is not restricted to classical practice. High street record shops will, generally, place an eclectic mix of music in the pop/rock

¹⁸ Lyotard (1984a) p. 49

¹⁹ Moore (1993) p. 4

section. It is important that classical should be recognised as a general umbrella term, comparable more with popular than with PRD.

1.1.3 Fusion

There are two main aspects to consider regarding the application of the term 'fusion'. Firstly, it is already in circulation as a general and specific term, and its interpretation varies according to such circumstances. Secondly, there is a requirement for fusion's meaning to be placed in the context of related terms, such as cross-influence, parody, eclecticism, polystylism and so on. This is not, as was the case in the previous sections, to justify the choice of fusion as a term rather than, say, 'crossover', or 'polystylism', but to draw attention to subtle differences in their meanings. It will become necessary to discuss cross-influences that do not show the traits of fusion, and so the applications of the different terms will be considered here.

Later in this chapter, I will examine the scope of fusion, and consider the possibility of defining it. It will be demonstrated that the meanings of PRD, classical and fusion cannot be pinpointed, but are terms applied to various kinds of hybrid, containing elements that cannot be quantified. The conclusion of this is that PRD, classical and therefore PRD-classical fusion (containing a balance of the two elements) are not practical concepts but can only exist theoretically, and perceptually. A piece with a mixture of influences may be heard as predominantly one or the other, but to quantify it as x% of A and y% of B is impossible, and interpretation can differ radically from person to person, suggesting that important criteria for cognitive processes of identifying style depend on the individual.

Meanwhile, it must be explained what practical meaning is being attached to a term applied to what will later be described as purely theoretical. The important issue here is the recognition of understanding of fusion to be perceptual. If a piece of music combines elements, one person may interpret it one way, one another, but some criteria

can be outlined in order to allow both interpretations. For example, a fundamental quality of fusion is level of integration, and it will be argued that superficial references to a style – the simple addition of a drum machine track to a relatively traditional performance of a Bach piece, for example – are not fusion. But what is held up to be integration might be heard by another listener as superficial, and the exercise requires qualitative judgements which cannot be proven. Music psychology recognises that musical perception is linked directly to experience, and since all individual experiences are at least slightly different, perceptions are bound to vary.

However, if this is taken too far, no explanation or attempt at definition is going to be forthcoming. Thus Moore's "belief that all readers will bring with them common sense, and highly diverse understandings of what 'rock' [or any of the other terminology applied here] is to them"²⁰ is applicable to this study.

Cross-influence is used as a 'blanket term' for all music that displays an element of non-idiomaticism – that is, draws on ideas from styles other than itself. Where one draws a line between what is within a style and what is outside it is subjective. There is the additional problem that although fusion and thirdstream are referred to as types of cross-influence, if these concepts are examined more closely and defined theoretically, neither is really so. The interpretation of fusion as music where two disparate elements are integrated thoroughly, implies that neither of them are external, or non-idiomatic. The style is fusion from the outset – not PRD with classical imported into it or vice versa. In thirdstream, the aesthetic is of a 'third' style, neither PRD nor classical, but drawing on both. In this case, all the elements are external, and there is no 'home' style into which these elements are drawn. In practice, the thirdstream and fusion concepts are different ways of describing music that could sound very similar. The problem with thirdstream is that any composer who considers all his influences to be outside his approach is going to have problems writing in one of these styles, let alone integrating them, and in practice composers of works considered thirdstream are melting together

²⁰ Ibid. p. 1

two languages in which they are fluent and which are integral to their musical expression – that is, their music is perhaps better described as fusion. This is why the concept of fusion is preferable to that of thirdstream, and in this case ‘cross-influence’ refers to the crossing (mixing, like cross-breeding) of two influences, neither of which is ‘alien’.

Polystylism and eclecticism are similar ideas, both reflecting the concept of many elements from a variety of sources within a single context. Eclecticism is mentioned in much postmodernist discourse and can mean drawing on many different styles in one piece, or deriving philosophy or taste from various sources without an attachment to one in particular. Polystylism refers to approaches in art or music, perhaps suggesting a method less integrated than fusion (which the Concise Oxford Dictionary defines as “the blending of different things into one”²¹) in order to retain this sense of separation. Eclecticism is used in a more general sense referring to technique rather than result; it involves taking a number of diverse elements and combining them. Its application varies: Jencks, referring to the arts in the 1970s, comments that “In this era of eclecticism ... often it was hard to tell whether the artist or architect was making a serious attempt at combining traditions, critically contrasting them, or was simply confused”.²²

Pastiche and parody require differentiating because their application by postmodernist theorists is subtly different from their musicological usage. Parody in its general usage refers to imitation with a “humorous or feeble element”,²³ whereas in musical application it can be used to refer to music that simply uses pre-existent material without any humorous or satirical intent, the form of a parody mass being an example. In Fredric Jameson’s influential work *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, parody is defined as using devices that “ostentatiously deviate from a

²¹ Allen (1991) p. 479

²² Jencks (1987) p. 22

²³ Allen (1991) p. 866

norm which then reasserts itself".²⁴ This means that the imitation is given the purpose of referent, to comment on its context and underline contrast. This is, suggests Jameson, "a particularly fertile area in the idiosyncrasies of the moderns",²⁵ and has relatively little in common with techniques such as those used in the parody mass.

If parody is, in Jameson's eyes, modernist, then pastiche is postmodernist, "amputated of the satiric impulse, devoid of laughter and of any conviction that alongside the abnormal tongue you have momentarily borrowed, some healthy linguistic normality still exists".²⁶ The dictionary definition of pastiche focuses on its imitation, rather than suggesting any intention behind this action. If terminology consistent with Jameson's was maintained, then it would perhaps be more accurate to refer to 'parody masses' as 'pastiche masses', but the parody mass is an established concept, which barely comes into consideration in the context of this study. To be aware of a discrepancy between the musicological application of 'parody' and its usual meaning is sufficient, but ideas of pastiche and parody are so relevant to considering cross-influences in the context of postmodernism that application has to be considered.

The terms 'parody' and 'pastiche' will be used in this study in their more general sense, corresponding with Jameson's statements above, 'parody' to imply some kind of inference and 'pastiche' to imply quotation or imitation with no obvious agenda. Of course, when actual examples are considered, the differences can be unclear, and the presence of an agenda open to debate.

Crossover is interpreted in a variety of ways: for Lebrecht it concerns "pop musicians playing classics and vice-versa",²⁷ whereas Pickering describes it as "a style of music in which the features of any two distinct genres are mixed".²⁸ The latter

²⁴ Jameson (1991) p. 16

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid. p. 17

²⁷ Lebrecht (1992) p. 83

²⁸ Pickering (1994) p. 101

definition is perhaps more appropriate since it tends to place crossover towards the 'integrated' end of the cross-influence/eclecticism scale (see figure 1.1), as is implied by Pickering's references to the "attempt to fuse classical music with pop, jazz, or other modern forms".²⁹ The relevance to crossover styles of Beethoven's Fifth symphony appearing in the Billboard Hot 100³⁰ is not clear since commercial concerns are clearly responsible for the incident rather than the music being presented as non-classical, or blended with PRD in some way. To try and apply a characteristic often considered to relate to PRD, such as chart appearance, which does not apply to all PRD music and which is so independent of content, to a classical work and imply it is somehow 'crossing over' is a questionable approach, especially in the context of the definition outlined above.

Crossover could perhaps be interpreted as applying to music slightly less integrated than fusion, although in practice differentiation could be difficult. For this reason it is not envisaged that the term will appear in this study unless in a quotation.

To summarise:

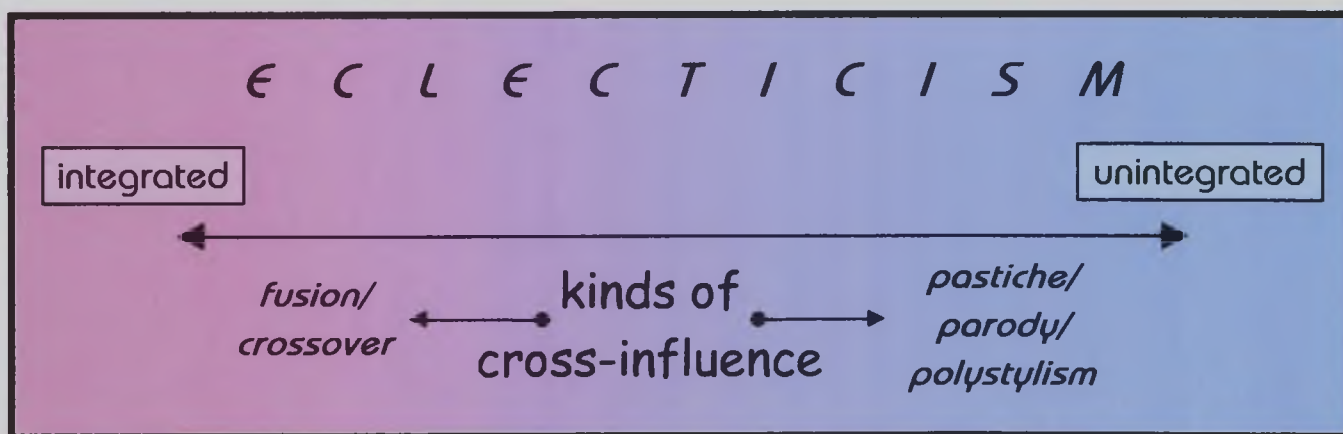


Figure 1.1: summary of types of cross-influence

If the approaches towards the blue area in figure 1.1 were integrated, they would not be heard as distinctively separate elements, which is a fundamental aspect of their use.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

Although, with regard to what has been said above, polystylism could be taken to correlate to pastiche or parody (depending on the intent), polystylism can also be interpreted either as a very direct reference to a particular style or artist, or as a more general adoption of an aesthetic which is less obviously imitative, having affinities with rather than lifting directly from a source.

Obviously distinctions are to some extent arbitrary, and applications of categories will vary. For example, Lebrecht describes Schnittke as polystylistic, using many styles in one work. In the case of his works based on Mozart, he is perhaps more parodic. There are direct references to specific works, and these are with the intention of treating Classicism nostalgically, as a distant, lost, desirable approach, in comparison with which contemporary music is unstable – in fact, the Mozart extracts behave as the normality against which the present is parodied. This will be considered further in Chapter 3. Schnittke is perhaps a particularly complex example (his works are open to various interpretations), but this underlines how, despite outlining differentiations between terms, their actual application can still vary.

From these discussions, it is clear that the 'listener' has a role to play within the musical event. What is communicated is, presumably, received. It has also been suggested that any listener's perception will be individualised by experience.

The recognition of style or genre is clearly more than simply perceiving that a musical gesture has been made - it involves interpreting the gesture in some way. Stefani suggests a theory of musical competence that would seem particularly appropriate to this study.³¹ Stefani's aim is to provide a model of competence pertaining to all kinds of musical activity within a culture. For the purpose of his paper, Stefani takes a broad area of culture, looking at competence "within our Western culture especially, but not exclusively".³² He puts forward five levels of codes:

³¹ For more details, see Appendix. Chapter 7 discusses Stefani further in the context of postmodernism and the analysis in Chapters 4 to 6.

³² Stefani (1987) p. 10

1. General Codes (GC) pertaining to every sound experience, including basic qualities of sound recognisable by all listeners - for example, recognition of high and low pitch.
2. Social Practices (SP) which demand some level of competence to recognise the music's position within a culture: for example, is it ceremonial or dance music?
3. Musical Techniques (MT), defined by Stefani as "techniques, instruments, systems and devices specially designed or employed for music making".³³
4. Styles (ST) involving the deduction from elements of the GC, SP and MT levels of what movement, era or approach is reflected
5. Opus (OP) involving the precise recognition of a piece by, for example, artist and title. Often repetition of a piece will provide this; the skill is particularly valuable if the listener is trying to guess the creator of something not well known.

Stefani then proposes that high competence privileges level five (OP) first then the other levels in descending order, while for popular competence the reverse is the case.

But what is 'popular' or 'high' competence? The implications of using this terminology is that they relate to how competence is measured in popular music listeners and high (classical) music listeners. This does not seem to be the intention - after all, 'high' music can be listened to with popular competence by those possessing high competence. High competence when listening to popular music need not be the domain of the individual competent in listening to high music. High competence in listening to music is not necessarily the same as competence in listening to high music. Also, should recognition be objective and analytical or does 'gut instinct', a more subconscious cognitive process, qualify?

These questions are not addressed. Also the importance of ST for popular competence seems underprivileged. This surely enables new music to be connected with a social practice by recognition of musical elements and perhaps Opus. Identity is

not merely articulated through listening to music but also its purchase. This may often hinge on artists involved and is perhaps more relevant for debut and early material - nevertheless, it should be considered.

The theory of musical competence is exactly that: a theory of how competence can be described or recognised. It provides a model which gives a basis for discussion of further research. It does not recognise particular tendencies or trends. Are most people 'popular competents'? Do certain competency trends exist within particular groups? Stefani lists a selection, which appears to be largely based on assumption (see Appendix). Problems surface when competency is considered in more detail.

It can be argued that competency is not constant because the semantics on which it depends undergo change. In the 1980s, boy bands such as Duran Duran, Spandau Ballet, Bros and A-ha performed playing instruments, providing a visual connection with the music heard, demanding more focus on the MT level. Nineties bands with the same market - for example, Boyzone, Five, Take That - are vocalists and/or dancers, resulting in more focus on the SP level. This takes the competence beyond listening: musical competency theory does not rule out visual aspects of delivery. In terms of listener competence, even if we are listening to a piece, our experience takes into account the visual aspects. Although there will be variation between members of boyband audiences, it could be argued that competence has generally shifted further towards lower levels (GC, SP). Simultaneously, it could be that the greater stylistic homogeneity (the eighties examples are more diverse in sound than those from the nineties) is the result of greater competency at the ST level - a higher level - and the demand for a particular style.

Stefani offers several models for considering competency, which can be found in the Appendix. The model applied to a number of situations is one arranged not as a hierarchy but at the five points of a star with musical object, producer or observer at the centre. This provides a means for discussing competency (see Chapter 7).

³³ Ibid. p. 12

Taking all the above into account, Stefani's theory is certainly useful for recognising certain competencies being reflected in, for example, the results of music psychologists' experiments. It also recognises that audiences react to content and context in different combinations and on different levels. Beyond this, its application is limited. The inconsistencies caused by evolving musical styles and practices question aspects of theories of competency, and the assumption that the SP level is of less relevance to high competency than popular competency is problematic (consider the reaction in a classical concert to anyone who claps at the end of the first movement of a symphony or concerto). It appears that the interaction between the different levels is highly complex and, furthermore, unstable and Stefani's theory and models, although useful, are nevertheless limited in how they can be applied.

1.2 Defining terms

In the previous section it became clear that use of certain terms depended not necessarily on objective reasoning, based on characteristics which it is possible to isolate, but also on how a type of music is perceived, or what it is believed to entail. In practice, the listener's opinions may be unsubstantiated or even disproved, but remain relevant if they affect the way music is listened to by that individual. For a thorough consideration of creation, communication, and reception, both substantiated theories and 'myths' should be taken into account. The result of this is that the following definitions form only one aspect of a comprehensive study of the subject area.

The most striking characteristic of the many approaches made by writers to defining stylistic terminology is failure – either the proposal of an inadequate interpretation or the admission of defeat. It is significant that the latter tends to apply to the writings of specialists, and that no satisfactory solution has been identified. It will be seen that there are straightforward reasons for this and that those reasons cannot be dealt with and overcome, rather indicating that some kind of compromise needs to be

made. PRD-classical fusion cannot be studied without some sort of idea of what defines the separate elements and what constitutes a fusion of them, yet definitions are unachievable. Reasons for this and possible ways of navigating around these obstacles while maintaining an awareness of their implications will be discussed later. First, definitions need to be questioned.

1.2.1 PRD

Since attempts to define tend to approach the broader concept of popular rather than pop, rock or dance music, consideration of the definition of PRD should perhaps begin with an examination of what constitutes popular music.

Frans Birrer identifies four basic approaches to defining popular music:³⁴

- *normative definition* — popular music is inferior
- *negative definition* — popular music is music which is not something else (e.g. classical, folk)
- *sociological definition* — popular music is associated with a particular social group
- *technologico-economic* — popular music is distributed by the mass media for a mass market

Most definitions of popular styles, including those covered by PRD, draw on one or more of these types, but all the types are flawed. The normative definition is subject to arbitrary criteria; what makes something 'good' very much depends on individual taste and opinion. The negative approach does not constitute a definition because it fails to offer any suggestion as to what popular music *is*, neither does it establish what other kind of musics are and why popular music is not covered by their 'labels'. Sociological definitions are problematic because in practice it is often impossible to tie a particular

³⁴ Middleton (1990) p. 4

kind of music to a specific type of listener or producer. In terms of perception, sociological definition is important since a listener may be attracted to a music because of perceived cultural connotations, but it is of comparatively little value for a definition backed with specific evidence of certain traits, be they inherent or contextual. The technologico-economic definition fails to recognise that certain musics are minority interests, and an unsigned band playing a gig in the back room of the local pub may still be producing popular music. In addition to this, many other kinds of music are subject to mass media and mass market dissemination.

Dave Russell provides a similar listing of typical definition types:³⁵

- popular music is a commercial antithesis to nobler 'art music; or purer 'folk music' (normative, negative and technologico-economic elements)
- popular music is more commercial than other styles (technologico-economic)
- popular music is simple, classical is complex
- popular music is by or for the 'ordinary' person (sociological, hints of normative)

The third type of definition is perhaps particularly problematic, as it depends on how 'simple' and 'complex' are themselves defined. It could be argued that there are intricate, involved PRD pieces (the processed electronic layers of techno or ambient, and the extended workouts of progressive rock bands such as Yes and Genesis) and relatively simple classical pieces (Schumann piano miniatures, perhaps). An attempt to transcribe or reproduce in some way a Hendrix guitar figure would surely be a challenge for any musician because of the intricacies of style. Complexity is to some extent dependent on the individual's perception and the parameter being considered; if, for example, pulse is being considered, a steady 4-beat, common in PRD, will seem simple compared to a shifting metre as is often found in contemporary classical music.

³⁵ Russell (1987) pp. x-xi

However, on grounds of rhythm, the inflections within the 4-beat may be intricate, and perhaps more complex than the classical music. It should also be noted that a classical score is not meant to be followed with absolute precision; rhythmic inflections in the appropriate style are expected from performers. If the performance was notated in the same manner as the Hendrix solo, it would undoubtedly be considered to appear more complex than the original score, since slight rhythmic flexibilities would require, perhaps, the addition of a demisemiquaver tied to what was initially a relatively straightforward minim. On the other hand, if a style such as Hendrix's was relatively typical of guitarists and there were PRD conventions for interpreting scores, a simply-notated line could then be subjected to the necessary alteration and addition in order to become Hendrixian. There is a difference between the classical score, for which there is no ideal with regard to reproduction, and the recorded Hendrix performance, which is taken as an absolute. Classical and PRD are complex to compare because the primary source for the former is usually a score, and for the latter usually a recording. In addition to these different media, both allow different approaches to flexibility, aggravating the problems concerned with comparison and making the simple-complex definition appear even less satisfactory.

The final kind of definition is of little practical use since it depends on establishing what an 'ordinary' person is and even then, musical preference will vary — one would not, for example, expect an 'ordinary' OAP to enjoy listening to drum'n'bass, and it is not clear whether an ordinary social status or ordinary experience of a traditional classical training is referred to.

A different method is suggested by Andrew Chester,³⁶ concentrating on the construction of music. Classical is 'extensionally' complex:

³⁶ Chester (1970)

Theme and variations, counterpoint, tonality (as used in classical composition) are all devices that build diachronically and synchronically outwards from basic musical atoms. The complex is created by the combination of the simple, which remains discrete and unchanged in the complex unity.³⁷

Popular, he suggests, is 'intensionally' complex:

In this mode of construction the basic musical units (played/sung notes) are not combined through space and time as simple elements into complex structures. The simple entity is that constituted by the parameters of melody, harmony and beat, while the complex is built up by modulation of the basic notes, and by inflexion of the basic beat.³⁸

Hence popular and classical music are contrasted on the basis that classical builds a large, complex structure from small, simple units, while popular styles have a simple overall structure, made complex by slightly altering constituent elements.

Chester suggests that all types of Afro-American music (highly significant to the development of PRD) show characteristics of both extensional and intensional development. It is also possible to find classical music which suggests an intensional approach: 'Pan' from Britten's *Six Metamorphoses after Ovid* (Op. 49) seems to combine extension and intension. Units containing elements of modulation and inflection intensionally are repeated, varied and developed extensionally, yet Britten would normally be considered very much a composer from within the classical establishment.

The problems of defining popular, and hence PRD (and, for that matter, classical) are beginning to become clear: it appears impossible to isolate a universal characteristic in one which is completely absent in the other, and the variety of styles within either genre means that there are no homogenised entities to contrast with one another. Effectively a collection of PRD styles are to be differentiated from a collection

³⁷ Ibid. p. 78

³⁸ Chester (1970) p. 79

of classical styles which overlap, and also demonstrate many centuries of cross-genre musical exchange. Trying to establish definitions from a popular or PRD standpoint is clearly unproductive.

1.2.2 *Classical*

One might perhaps expect a definition of classical music to have been produced, considering the musicology and academic dissemination that surrounds it. In practice, there is little evidence of this happening, for various reasons, and defining classical is no easier than defining popular styles.

As a starting point for discussing definitions of classical music, consider the following, taken from the Concise Oxford Dictionary:

classical (of music) serious or conventional, following traditional principles and intended to be of permanent rather than ephemeral value.³⁹

This does not distinguish classical from other music, including PRD. Labelling classical music as serious fails to recognise the frivolity often found within it (for example, Walton's *Façade* or Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*), or the serious intent of some PRD. PRD's 'seriousness' can be found both in lyrical content (that of New Model Army or the Manic Street Preachers, for example) and musical devices; the layers of detail and arrangements of many PRD songs are often carefully constructed. Pete Waterman's indignation that popular music he has produced is overlooked at music awards ceremonies (Steps being the latest example) demonstrates how serious he is about the importance of it.⁴⁰ Certainly classical music is taken more seriously than other genres by the musicological establishment, but to others — from cultural theorists to teenyboppers — PRD is of greater significance.

³⁹ Allen (1991) p. 208

⁴⁰ For example, in Rayner (1999) p.7

Convention is also of little assistance in distinguishing classical music from other types since all contain a certain degree of conventionality and originality; if this were not the case, music would never have evolved. Similarly, traditional principles are not exclusive to classical; a twelve-bar blues outline could be described as a traditional principle which much popular music has subsequently drawn on.

Value of music in terms of longevity is a recurring feature of contrasts of PRD and classical. For a number of commentators, the charts demonstrate PRD music's disposability, and songs may only be 'popular' for a few weeks. Of course, the charts only reflect purchases, and listening patterns may differ significantly. The idea of classical music having some kind of permanence is also, it seems, often inapplicable. Brenet explains the loss of some of Haydn's works as follows:

By the nature of their origin, as entertainments of a day, these scores were condemned to obscurity, and to an ephemeral life, which the efforts of Haydn or his friends rarely succeeded in extending.⁴¹

Expectations of longevity were unrealistic for Haydn, whatever he might have wished, for a number of reasons. His contract with the Esterházy initially prevented him from selling or giving away his works (it was later relaxed), and was thus not conducive to establishing his reputation, and thus any hopes of permanence, outside the Esterházy court. Although Haydn's status within classical music now appears established and ongoing, the same cannot necessarily be said of contemporary works. Gavin Thomas describes:

valuable works which are commissioned, played and then immediately abandoned . . . Most are consigned to the vaults of the national music information centres, never to be heard of again.⁴²

⁴¹ Brenet (1972) pp. 62-3

⁴² Thomas (1993) pp. 502-3

The Oxford Dictionary's definition of 'classical' music contains a balance of supposed inherent and contextual traits of classical, and the underlying implication – that musical style is defined not only by its content – is worth looking at more closely. It has already been suggested that individuals will vary in what label they apply to a piece of music, and also in their opinions of what constitutes the sound world of a particular genre. Certainly it would be difficult to convince a listener with even only moderate experience of classical and PRD styles common in Britain that an Oasis single was actually the work of Elgar or vice versa. If PRD and classical styles are considered to be overlapping fields, then Oasis and Elgar's styles are, to most listeners, not close to that overlap. In certain circumstances, however, listeners can be confused.

The context in which music appears, or is believed to appear, affects the listening process, demonstrated with striking effect by Chapman and Williams.⁴³ They played the same piece (a work by Takemitsu) to two groups of 14 and 15 year olds, defining it to one group as progressive rock and to the other as the work of a contemporary Japanese composer. The subjects were more favourably disposed to the piece when it was introduced as progressive rock. This suggests that either (a) the mental processes of style identification were overridden by the information given or (b) the styles were too alike to be differentiated on the basis of inherent characteristics. It is quite feasible that both possibilities had some bearing on the results of the experiment although this cannot be proven. Nevertheless, the results provided strong evidence on the importance of non-musical information on perception.

The ability to 'confuse' styles appears to be governed to some extent by the prominence of certain key traits. Progressive rock typically adopts certain traits that are more typical of classical music – lengthy structures, gradual developments, irregular timings, less repetition than much PRD – and is thus more likely to be confused with classical than many PRD subgenres.

⁴³ Hargreaves (1986) p. 197

In Chapter 4 it will be seen how, in the music of Talk Talk, PRD traits are gradually subverted questioning PRD identity. In many situations, if one parameter is distorted so that the trademarks of the genre are no longer present in it, the ear will turn to other traits in order to interpret it. If these are suggesting a number of genres, it is probably individual choice which is responsible for the way in which the piece is interpreted; this will be discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters.

This suggests that although PRD and classical cannot be defined, a list of characteristics could be drawn up by which a listener might distinguish between one style and another: the less this theoretical list is adhered to, and the more the distorted traits are fundamental to the style, then the more ambiguous a piece of music, and the more likely the listener to be influenced by information given about the piece. This puts forward the concept of PRD and classical as, rather than separate entities, being hazy-edged areas of a continuum, or points on a scale; whatever is between these areas or points (whether a merging or a space) and the instability of this is what allows the entities perceived as popular and classical to be presented, and furthermore allows the articulation of fusion.

Background information, investigated so effectively in the Chapman and Williams experiment detailed above, need not only be given verbally, but can also arise from the situation in which it appears. The social forces surrounding PRD music are well documented, since studies of it have concentrated on sociological and cultural rather than musical aspects. However, classical music is no less subject to such forces: Christopher Small argues that:

a symphony concert partakes of the nature of a ritual, a celebration, undertaken not fully aware of the shared mythology and values of a certain group within our deeply fragmented society.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Small (1987) p. 6

If, as widely suggested, musical styles are linked with certain behaviours as well as certain inherent traits, it is realistic to suppose that a stylistic definition may depend on social as much as musical characteristics. The elusiveness of musical definition does not necessarily suggest style has no dependence on musical traits, and although the non-musical definitions discussed so far have been shown to have faults, on the same basis it does not follow that non-musical traits are irrelevant to style.

Perception of style appears to rely on both musical and social factors, but specification of these is problematic largely due to exceptions. The closest compromise is to recognise certain characteristics as typically PRD rather than classical, or vice versa, and hence to recognise juxtaposition and subversion of these traits in music. It is therefore assumed that whether or not a piece of music is fusion, or polystylistic, or something else altogether, depends on the way in which these characteristics 'cross over'.

1.2.3 Fusion

Earlier in this chapter fusion was described as music where influences were integrated, with two (or more) elements 'melted together' by a composer fluent in the languages of all the styles. This was in order to differentiate it from various other kinds of cross-influence, but an actual definition of what might be considered integrated, or melted together, was not discussed.

Another issue to consider is the source of the influence. For example, George Martin, a former student of composition at the Guildhall School of Music, was responsible for many of the quasi-classical arrangements on records by the Beatles. Whether we consider the Beatles to be influenced by classical music depends on the extent to which they might have envisaged, say, a particular kind of string arrangement and asked Martin to realise it. With PRD records it is often impossible to establish how much of the sound is the work of the artist and how much that of producers or

collaborators. There is, on one hand, concern with a piece of music as text, with a focus on audience perception – that is, the way music is perceived – while simultaneously to ignore the composer's intentions is to overlook one significant aspect of the text: however the text might be interpreted, intent is surely not insignificant (although often subject to speculation). A comprehensive study of a piece of music is surely one which takes into account the many aspects that constitute its content and context, creation and reception (see discussion of Nattiez, section 4.1). In terms of the recording itself, rather than the band concerned, it is of little consequence who was responsible if only the inherent characteristics are to be considered, but such a study would surely be lacking if there was not some examination of how it came to be. In traditional musicology, focus is very much on composer's intent, but in PRD music it is often impossible to tell how much control an artist may have had over the final recorded version of a song. Should the content of a piece of music form the basis for it to be termed 'fusion', or is the method of composition more important?

The process of defining fusion is further complicated by these issues, but using the concept of key traits outlined in the next paragraphs, it is suggested that a fusion is a piece of music where characteristics typical of PRD and classical are combined to the extent that there is no sense of a context distinctive in style from these traits; the overall effect is one of integration rather than an awareness of different styles co-existing with some independence from each other. This point itself will vary from individual to individual depending on the degree of integration necessary for ambiguity to be perceived. Since individuals have differing experiences of music, what is fundamental to a style according to the perception of one listener may not be important to another. It should also be noted that subversion of a trait from idiom A may suggest idiom B, and thus that cross-influenced music does not always arise simply from bringing together traits, but also from pushing traits away.

Expanding on the idea of key traits, elements of a style can perhaps be divided into two groups: primary and secondary characteristics. The primary characteristics

might be described as those which strongly influence perception of a style: for example, a regular drum pattern based on a four-beat bar would be a primary trait of PRD. It is by no means present in all PRD music, but it signifies the style nonetheless, and a number of classical pieces have been aimed at the PRD charts simply by adding a drum track to the music. It can be argued that the timbre of a string ensemble denotes classical to many listeners when placed in a PRD song. The arrangement may not be particularly classical in style — possibly merely using a transcription of the guitar chords in the appropriate ranges of string instruments — but my own experience of discussing research into PRD-classical cross-influences with 'non-musicians' has suggested that string ensembles are strongly associated with classical music.

Secondary traits, on the other hand, would be devices not widely linked with a particular style during the act of listening, but which nonetheless tend to be found in that style rather than elsewhere. Loose timing and rubato, for instance, are far more common in classical music (particularly contemporary styles) than in PRD. They are found in PRD, particularly in vocal lines, but tend to consist of 'bending' a regular timing which is stated simultaneously by (usually) the drums and bass. To exchange this underlying regularity for something less constrictive has the dual effect of subverting a primary trait of PRD and displaying a secondary trait of classical. The discussion of Talk Talk's 'Chameleon Day' in section 4.4 demonstrates the track as an example of this.

If fusion is an integration or melting of styles, it will be created by musicians with some degree of fluency in the kinds of music involved. Lack of familiarity with a genre frequently leads to its more obvious, primary traits simply being transplanted. For a more blended piece of music, competence in several styles will be likely to result in both primary and secondary characteristics of the kinds of music involved being present. There are still arbitrary aspects: where should the line be drawn between primary and secondary traits, for example? There is also the possibility that, when quoting

something unfamiliar, both primary and secondary traits will be transferred subconsciously.

It would appear that fusion can perhaps be described as music where the primary and secondary traits of two or more styles are present in a form other than quotation, in relatively equal quantities. However, individuals may differ on what constitutes these characteristics, and quantifying their usage is a practical impossibility. Quantity is, however, important; if a piece of music is predominantly PRD, but contains some references to primary and secondary traits of classical, it will probably nonetheless be perceived as PRD. No clear-cut lines between PRD, fusion and classical can be drawn, and so this element of the definition is arbitrary, again depending heavily on the individual. Nevertheless, this explanation, although unsatisfactory (since in practice perception will vary greatly between individuals), is the most acceptable basis to use for the time being. Chapters 4 to 6 will provide an opportunity to explore the application of this more thoroughly.

With regard to the examples taken from Talk Talk's music in Chapter 4, it could be argued that fusion is achieved through awareness of a continuum with PRD and classical situated at opposite ends, with a reconciliation taking place from both directions. The PRD aspect approaches classical as its typical traits are subverted and hence become traits more common to classical, although they are not fundamental to it. For example, regular metre, groupings and repetition are typical of PRD, but Talk Talk's style becomes progressively less regular and less repetitive. These characteristics are not themselves fundamental to classical music, but they are more associated with classical than PRD. Simultaneously, instruments normally associated with classical music are used — the cor anglais, for example — and the method in which they are incorporated indicates a fluency in writing for such instruments, further suggesting classical influences.

There is obviously a significant difference between this multi-directional cross-influence, which both brings ideas together from different genres and reaches out to

other genres by distorting what is present already, and the often-used technique of 'lifting', which is far more straightforward. In the music of Talk Talk, it is not possible to identify a single, obvious reference to classical music because the processes which combine PRD and classical influences modulate the many different elements so that ambiguity results from the weaving of ideas; there is no sense of a small deletion (a drum track, say) having the potential to alter radically the identity of the music.

However, the issue of what constitutes a fusion is complicated by the fact that, although much music is perceived as being firmly rooted in a particular genre, if the history of that genre is taken into account a variety of external influences will have contributed to its makeup. An interchange between popular and classical music has existed in some form for centuries, and so the situation as it applies to fusion is not merely that PRD (which is, after all, a development directly from popular styles), and classical are mixed, but that the 'raw ingredients' are themselves hybrids. It is perhaps more realistic to consider musical style as a variety of criss-crossing planes, with PRD and classical existing as two extremes of a theoretical continuum. Since a great deal of interaction has taken place, truly pure PRD or classical would be music untainted by the influence of the other; both are impossibilities, and hence merely theoretical concepts. This is particularly the case with the term PRD, which is itself based on three types of music, and which can therefore not by definition be pure: however, since 'popular' and 'classical' are blanket terms for similar profusions of musical styles, this is no less the case for them. The concept of purity of style is, to reiterate, completely theoretical. A fusion would be placed towards the centre of the line, but, since the extent to which a piece of music is PRD or classical varies depending on the perception of the individual, and is not quantifiable, it is arbitrary as how a particular piece of music would feature in the context of a continuum, as is the case with the point at which fusion is no longer ambiguous, but becomes more PRD than classical or vice versa.

Talk Talk represent a multi-approach fusion, but if a piece of music displays PRD and classical characteristics by stating rather than subverting, it could be argued

that the resulting piece of music is just as much a fusion as some of the later Talk Talk pieces. It would, however, be feasible to differentiate between fusions which state, fusions which subvert, and fusions which state *and* subvert, bearing in mind at the same time that subversion and statement do not necessarily denote fusion: whether this is the case or not is perhaps a more subjective decision.

Since pure PRD and classical are theoretical concepts, and in practice both are hybrids, some way of differentiating between different manners of cross-influence is required. It is important, therefore, to distinguish between cross-influences that are already absorbed into the style or genre⁴⁵ and those which are taken from outside. The former of these, the internal cross-influences, can be referred to as inherent eclecticism, the latter, taken from sources external to the genre, as first generation eclecticism. It is perhaps subjective as to where the line between these should be drawn, if at all. Substantial problems were discovered in defining PRD and classical practices previously, partly because popular and classical music have already been influencing each other for centuries, and some level of stylistic ambiguity is not uncommon. In addition to this, it is not always possible to substantiate the source of a composer's references: what appears to have been purposely 'lifted' from a source may in fact be a subconscious appropriation. Since the historical exchange is continuing, there may be debate over whether certain elements are a constituent of the hybrid or incorporated from external sources: at what point can a new characteristic be said to be of the style concerned?

A fusion, with both PRD and classical displaying a strong presence, will contain the inherent eclecticism of both. The perfect fusion, however, would be a completely ambiguous music which could not be said to be rooted in one particular style or genre. Under these circumstances, first generational eclecticism would not be a possibility because it involves using a source outside the aesthetic forming the basis of the style.

⁴⁵ For example, string washes in the backing of PRD songs are very widespread. Does their use suggest an influence from classical, or an influence from previous PRD songs with string arrangements?

If the basis is shared, neither PRD nor classical can be an external reference point. Since there is no way of quantifying an influence, it is impossible to isolate the perfectly-balanced fusion as anything other than a hypothetical concept.

1.3 Summary

To summarise, there are a number of aspects of music that might suggest a fusion, but in practice the identification of these is largely arbitrary, and therefore concrete methods of defining fusion cannot arise from them. In addition to this, no example can be proven to be a perfectly balanced fusion; instead, opinion will vary as to whether it is biased towards PRD, classical, or is ambiguous (this is particularly apparent with responses to Graham Fitkin's music – see Chapter 6). Nevertheless, certain ideas may establish some sort of framework for discussing types of cross-influence:

- an influence may be a reference to another style or genre taken directly from it, or already present in the operational style or genre from stylistic exchange over the centuries
- external references demand that music is biased towards one style rather than ambiguous, in order that the influencing style or genre can be separated from the operational style or genre
- references to another style or genre may involve subverting a (normally primary) characteristic of the operational style or genre in a way that allies it more with the outside influence, or/and:
- references to another style or genre may be made by incorporating its characteristics into the operational style or genre and placing them alongside non-subverted concepts there
- characteristics may be primary, strongly identified with a style or genre and perceived as 'alien' when placed elsewhere, or secondary, more typical of one style or genre than another, but less specifically linked with it

- thirdstream and fusion represent two different theoretical concepts outlining how styles and genres can be blended, the first suggesting aesthetics being combined are both non-idiomatic, the second suggesting both are idiomatic.

In practice, highly integrated cross-influences may be slightly biased to one source of influence, but their level of ambiguity is, I think, sufficient as to warrant the term fusion. This contradicts the idea that a fusion will not contain first generation eclecticism. In practice, music may develop similarly to that associated with Talk Talk, which becomes gradually more classical in content to the point of significant ambiguity; analysis, however, assumes a PRD bias since the style develops gradually from a relatively conventional PRD sound. It would be pedantic, especially for music biased towards a particular style that nonetheless seems ill-served by the relevant label, to insist that a fusion was free from any slant. In practice, the kind of pieces which seem to reflect ambiguity of style are not often labelled 'pop-classical fusion' (or similar), but 'pop' by one listener and 'classical' by another — this suggests different slants may be perceived in the same piece of music, which is a further reason for some flexibility.

Definition of style may be an impossible task, but listeners will generally have some concept of the style of a piece that will correspond with other people's based, it is widely believed, on experience and instinct. There are *individual* traits, thus explaining the discrepancies between the perceptions and definitions of different listeners. It is probable that key traits are interpreted as some kind of code.

Much writing appears to take the reader's stylistic instinct for granted. Terminology such as that discussed in this chapter is introduced without explanation, interchanged, and seems to lack standardisation. The remarkable level of inconsistency suggests some kind of guideline might well be appropriate. In the meantime, the most satisfactory approach is to use terminology with an awareness of its inadequacies, acknowledging that characteristics may be considered as typical or common, but not universal nor exclusive.

This exploration of terms and definitions may be somewhat inconclusive, but nevertheless is an important basis from which to explore the subject in question with an awareness of the problems that surround it and a recognition of the compromises this may necessitate.

2 CROSS-INFLUENCES: A Historical and Musical Background

Fusion, as was suggested in the previous chapter, utilises a highly specific approach, yet may use the techniques applied more broadly in cross-influenced music. What differentiates the fusion of Oldfield, Talk Talk and Fitkin is perhaps the development of their own individual techniques to incorporate cross-influences. The purpose of this chapter is to establish a background to cross-influence in order to place the fusion considered in Chapters 4 to 6 in a context of interplay between styles and genres.

2.1 Use of cross-influences

The concept of musical cross-influence is represented by a range of examples, showing methods varying from relatively simple, superficial copying or imitation (of, for example, themes or instrumentation from another musical context) to far more integrated aesthetics, and from a conscious presentation of elements of 'otherness' to a complex interaction between artists and genres.

Most such music appears to be stylistically allied to either PRD or classical, although for some works classification varies depending on the listener, reflecting ambiguity. This will be discussed further in subsequent chapters (see particularly Chapter 6, on Fitkin's music); it is sufficient for the time being to suggest that certain musical qualities within a piece point to its stylistic identity, and that recognising these will depend on the individual listener's experience. It is also possible that different parameters may be of varying levels of significance for each listener, again leading to inconsistency between individuals in the way they categorise music. Artists who produce music where the style is particularly difficult to pigeonhole still tend to be categorised, with the industry

promoting them accordingly, even though audiences listening to the music with no background information may assume it is representative of a quite different idiom.¹

2.1.1 *Simple transplantation: themes*

The practice of transplanting thematic material from non-idiomatic contexts is evident in classical music in Renaissance times. Masses of the era would often take a popular theme and use it as a cantus firmus, a melodic line in one part around which were woven additional vocal lines. *L'homme armé*, "on which nearly every composer of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, from Dufay and Ockeghem to Palestrina, wrote at least one Mass",² was a common choice; Josquin de Prez, for example, based his Mass *L'homme armé super voces musicales* on this particular popular song.

Another frequently-found practice was contrafactum, a technique which involved adapting a secular song to chorale form and replacing the words with a sacred text appropriate for church use. Thus Hans Leo Hassler's Lied *Mein Gmüth ist mir verwirret* ('My peace of mind is shattered [by a tender maiden's charms]') was adapted a number of times, to *Herzlich thut mich verlangen* ('My heart is filled with longing') around 1600, and later by Bach in the St. Matthew Passion.³ The use of established themes provided a familiar reference point for congregations unable to understand the Latin services, and also had the advantage of not being tied to a particular time of year, unlike plainsong, and thus a Mass using a popular theme could be used more widely than one using an antiphon. In terms of musical characteristics, secular material tended to have a more pronounced structure than plainsong, with shorter phrases of more regular lengths.

¹ This is discussed particularly in relation to the music of Graham Fitkin in Chapter 6.

² Grout and Palisca (1988) p. 193

³ Grout and Palisca (1988) pp. 312-313. Note also Bach's use of popular themes within his secular music: the *Goldberg Variations* features a quodlibet, a form based on the use of popular material. The Goldberg quodlibet incorporates two well-known melodies of the era.

These practices perhaps seem sacrilegious today, but it should be remembered that many commonly-used hymn tunes are derived from popular models, although in many cases the sacred form is well-known and its popular origins less so. In these particular circumstances, originality was not a primary concern, and popular music does not seem to have acquired connotations that might hinder such practices until later, by which time certain themes had been absorbed into a sacred role in which they continue today. However, there is evidence that this was not the case universally even back in the seventeenth century; Lully (1632-87), for example, was parodied by his contemporaries, who set texts he had used to popular melodies and his music to popular wording. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, hymn melodies have been taken from secular classical sources in preference to popular themes — the use of an excerpt from Holst's 'Jupiter' (*The Planets*) is an example of this. Attempts to make church music more appealing to congregations, particularly with regard to maintaining relevance for younger people, have drawn on simple harmonies and rhythmic patterns (syncopation, for example) rather than adapting specific themes.

Thematic quotation of classical music in PRD idioms has been more common. The late Sixties and early Seventies produced a number of bands who were particularly inspired by nineteenth-century music. Emerson, Lake and Palmer's version of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* is an adaptation of the original, beginning with a transcription for rock group of the opening 'Promenade', with 'Gnomus' making particular use of effects available on the keyboard, subsequently drifting into a melancholic guitar-accompanied ballad followed by a lengthy blues instrumental, drawing on other themes from the piece with a strong sense of improvisation. The keyboard elements depend heavily on classical proficiency, and despite the traditional training of the band, Mussorgsky's subtlety is lost as the clarity of his piano writing is transferred to the thick-timbred keyboards of the time with no compromise to the different forces being used. The comments of Tristram Cary, who was experimenting with electronic sound as early as the late Forties, that "in general, electronic music is at its least successful when it is

playing tunes or trying to behave like an orchestra",⁴ perhaps apply here. Nevertheless, ELP had some influence in terms of bringing electronic music into PRD. Emerson was one of the first musicians to take electronic keyboards on the road, and the band is sometimes credited as being the first group to use a Moog on a rock recording, although the Beatles incorporated one on *Abbey Road* in 1969, the year before ELP formed.

ELP formed in 1970, playing *Pictures at an Exhibition* at the Isle of Wight festival that year and recording it in 1971. Keith Emerson had played with The Nice, who were notorious for performing Bernstein's 'America' from *West Side Story* while simultaneously setting fire to an American flag. In 1970, Emerson released his *Five Bridges Suite*, inspired by the bridges over the Tyne, and ELP's 1977 double album, *Works Vol. 1* featured his *Concerto No. 1*. It appears that Emerson was keen to operate somewhere in-between PRD and classical, yet his influences and inspirations, drawn particularly from Slavic and Latin Romanticism, seem to prevent any spectacularly ground-breaking contributions to either sphere. It has also been noted that ELP failed to credit Bartók and Janáček on several early works which borrowed heavily from their compositions,⁵ although it is not clear whether this was an oversight or intentional.

The focus of classical influence at this time among many progressive rock artists was the Romanticism of the late nineteenth century. Certainly contemporary composers such as Stockhausen influenced some music within the genre, but the inspiration of composers such as Brahms⁶ and Mussorgsky demonstrates a concern with late Romantic expression. It is perhaps significant that this was the era of the cult of the 'great composer', associated with 'artistic genius'. By utilising this music, progressive rock represented its own desire to elevate popular music not merely to the status of contemporary concert music, with its strong connections with university music

⁴ Cary (1968) p. 31

⁵ Macan (1997) p. 169

⁶ Yes's album *Fragile* features a keyboard interpretation of Brahms' 4th Symphony in E minor, third movement.

departments and conservatoires, but to a bygone expressive era which provoked nostalgia for the master composer.

The Electric Light Orchestra used classical quotations juxtaposed with PRD references, questioning the positions of the genres in relation to each other. *ELO II* combines themes from Beethoven's Fifth Symphony with Chuck Berry's 'Roll over Beethoven'. This contrasting of PRD and classical has been used extensively in cross-influenced music and is reflected in a recent article about Nigel Kennedy's incorporation of Hendrix influences into an classical concert context.⁷

Landesman suggests that "in more than 25 years, not one decent record has been made as result of mixing rock and classical music together".⁸ However, the examples he uses to support his argument are the self-conscious juxtapositions of orchestra and band (Jon Lord's *Concerto for Group and Orchestra*, The Moody Blues' *Days of Future Passed*), and the relatively unsubtle placing of thematic references in non-idiomatic contexts (Zappa's fondness for "breaking into Stravinsky's *Petroushka* during live performances", and Sky, most famous for their version of Bach's *Toccatina and Fugue in D minor*). The more subtle integrations discussed in this chapter, and in Chapters 4 to 6, are not considered.

Landesman argues that:

Fortunately, pop musicians no longer feel what they do is so trivial that they have to rock along with the Royal Philharmonic to prove they can really play. Pop has lost its inferiority complex and thus its infatuation with classical music. If only classical musicians would lose their interest in pop. But I fear they won't for one simple reason — they seriously believe they have a great artistic mission to open our minds, to break down the barriers between the two forms. They have this arrogant belief that the only reason their

⁷ Landesman (1997) p. 11

⁸ Ibid.

crossover works are resisted by the public is because you and I are so narrow-minded.⁹

The suggestion that PRD artists no longer utilise classical music is not borne out in actuality; the frequent use of the harmonic progression of Pachelbel's canon, by The Farm ('Altogether Now' in 1990), Future Sound of London (on *Lifeforms*, 1994), and most recently Coolio featuring 40 Thevz ('C U When U Get There', 1997), bears some resemblance to the thematic borrowings of the early Seventies, yet within the current climate, which is rich in sampling and recontextualisation, adaptations seem far more concerned with the potential of fragments of material within a new piece than on making a statement about the relative cultural positions of classical and PRD, or indeed any other styles.

An example of this is the Coolio and 40 Thevz track, using not merely Pachelbel's harmony but also the counterpoint of the interweaving string parts as the backing for a text. The Canon is familiar to many, not only in its usual classical form, but also through its use by previous PRD artists; its identity as representative of classical becomes less integral to its use, and it is, after all, a repetitive and simple pattern that has much in common harmonically with contemporary PRD despite its origins. Among classical artists, those who express an interest in PRD approach it in different ways. The attitudes criticised by Landesman are perhaps encapsulated by David Matthews:

I agree with Tippett that our living vernacular is jazz, blues and especially rock, and that somehow (though with necessary caution) we must find a way to relate ourselves to this contemporary vernacular.¹⁰

There is still clearly an awkwardness stemming from consciousness of cultural difference which is of far less concern to PRD artists. Referring to Tippett's correspondence during the composition of *The Knot Garden*, which incorporates electric

⁹ Ibid. Note rock and pop used as interchangeable terms in this and the previous quote.

¹⁰ David Matthews in Morton and Collins (1992) p. 632

guitar and blues elements, it can be seen that Tippett was not entirely sure how to use popular influences. The following is an extract from a letter of October 1965 to Meirion Bowen:

[I'm] considering what kind of orchestra for the new opera [*The Knot Garden*]. Hence the enquiry as to that tough effect Boulez (?) got with electric guitars. It seemed to me potentially excellent for certain music out of a theatre well. But I can't remember how he did it? Just a single line? And is that the normal use of it with beat groups?¹¹

The following extract is from another letter to Bowen written the following September. Tippett's knowledge of the relevant terminology demonstrates that he is familiar with the style in question, but he prefers some assistance with writing in it.

I'd meant to ask you on the phone to write out for me a possible 12-bar blues bass sequence for L.H. (piano) using a boogie-woogie formula. I think I cld do it myself but wld v. much welcome it from an 'expert'!¹²

Bowen supplied the material, which was adapted for the final blues ensemble of Act 1 of *The Knot Garden*.

Another response is reflected by the late Tim Souster:

Previously I was dreaming of an integration, but not actually doing rock music myself; nowadays I do it, but keep it separate from my concert music. Because I think both kinds of music are better if they are concentratedly themselves.¹³

Souster's approach may be more satisfactory as far as Landesman is concerned, but it is now almost fifteen years since the Griffiths book in which it appeared was published, and the handling of different genres by PRD artists has become quite assured. For some

¹¹ Tippett (1991) p.233. Note inspiration being taken from another classical composer, Boulez, and the suggestion of a relative lack of familiarity with 'beat groups'.

¹² Ibid.

classical artists this is also the case; it could be argued that Graham Fitkin's music reflects an ease with cross-genre influences, and this will be explored in Chapter 6. Yet Matthews' comments (p.44) demonstrate that Fitkin's approach is by no means universal.

The approach of PRD artists such as ELP and ELO went some way to rejecting the short popular song format in favour of lengthy structures capable of supporting the influences of the large-scale forms of the nineteenth century. In contrast, Barry Manilow's 'Could It Be Magic' (1973) follows a format more typical of PRD to draw on elements of Chopin's C minor Prelude (Op. 28 no. 20). The sleeve notes describe the song as being "inspired by" the Chopin piece, and it borrows extensively from a section within the Prelude, with the chorus copying the harmony (save for the sharpening of one A flat) and changing the melody line only slightly: this is shown in figure 2.1.

The 1993 remix of the song for Manilow's *Greatest Hits* album opens with bars of the Chopin original played on a piano, then enters into a wash of electronic strings backing a piano verse and chorus, adding further strings and horns to lead to the entry of a disco-style drum pattern. After a short instrumental section, the second verse leads to a repeated chorus, with increasingly dense texture created by the instrumentation fading to reveal Chopin's closing bars on the piano. The song operates as a PRD expansion of the original Prelude, stating the opening and closing bars in a manner faithful to the Chopin work, and replacing the central section of the Prelude with the song which borrows from that passage so extensively.

A significant contrast between the original and Manilow's version is in terms of dynamics, and the way the structure is interpreted through these; Chopin's middle section is quiet with the opening and closing sections louder, but Manilow treats the central section as a climax between subdued ending and beginning. Manilow's dynamic contours are perhaps the more obvious choice to underline Chopin's harmony, as the middle section is based in a higher register, the C minor and A flat chords over a tonic pedal,

¹³ Souster in Griffiths (1985) p. 137

which subsequently falls, depressing the music's atmosphere, then rises again for a bold reiteration.

(a)



(b)

Come ———— , come ———— , come in-to my arms ————



(a)



etc.

(b)

Let me know the won - der ———— of all of you Ba-by I want you



etc.

(a) Chopin: Prelude in C Minor Op. 28 No. 20 Norton, 1973, US

(b) Manilow/Andesa 'Could It Be Magic' 1993 BMG Music Publishing
(arrangement altered slightly with reference to the recording)

Figure 2.1: Comparison of Chopin Prelude and Manilow/Andesa adaptation

Chopin's dynamics take the opposite approach, with the sombre opening chords more severe for their loud marking, and the 'hope' of the middle section more distant.

Manilow also alters Chopin's harmony slightly; in the third bar of figure 2.1, Chopin's A flat is raised to an A natural. This has the effect of altering the harmony to a relatively simple B minor seventh, rather than opting for the more pungent chromaticism of the original. Chopin's harmony, in conjunction with the movement from the A flat to the G via an F sharp, draws particular attention to the G because it is prepared for by two notes that are particularly dissonant in its context. The third chord of the Chopin extract would be a G major — the dominant in the context of C minor — but Chopin's harmony delays the resolution onto G until the raised seventh has been flattened to produce a bittersweet major-minor juxtaposition. The Manilow version removes this tension; since there is no suggestion of G major (because of the substitution of B minor), and no suggestion of minor 2nd dissonance, the effect is quite different. This less chromatic version is perhaps symptomatic of the PRD preference for a modal focus on the unraised seventh, provided by the A added to the B minor triad.

Steve Martland's *Remembering Lennon* mirrors the technique used by Manilow, incorporating a PRD theme into an classical context, using the theme from Lennon's 'Imagine' as a cantus firmus. Yet quotation by classical composers appears far more likely to take the form of using thematic material from their own tradition — Berio's *Sinfonia*, for example, takes Mahler's *Resurrection Symphony*'s third movement as a basis, weaving excerpts from various other classical sources around it.

It is not clear why the use of PRD themes is less common in classical composition than vice versa. It appears that, because of its higher cultural status, classical is attractive to certain PRD artists who wish to grant their music some kind of artistic superiority. It also seems to be the case that incorporating material from what is still perceived by many classical practitioners as an inferior musical culture is considered to compromise one's classical credibility; Martland's use of PRD influences, as will be seen

in Chapter 6, tends to take a confrontational approach, which, as with ELP, serves to highlight differences.

Michael Torke has described how his use of rap rhythms in *Rust* drew criticisms that he was incorporating culture alien to his own.¹⁴ This was, Torke says, perceived as unacceptable, despite the processing rendering the source unrecognisable, acknowledged only when revealed by Torke. One should also bear in mind the strict copyright controlling the use of most PRD sources, which can cause significant administrative problems for the composer.

For composers such as Schnittke, who has quoted Mozart (among many others) in a number of compositions, or Berio, in whose *Sinfonia* a number of quotations are clearly audible, the use of classical sources has the advantage that those most likely to listen to the piece will tend to have a background and knowledge corresponding with the material used. By quoting Mozart, Schnittke achieves more of the unexpected by beginning with straight reproduction, using an orchestral style very much in the manner of Mozart, which he is then able to distort. Steve Martland's approach is less focused on the classical tradition, and with regard to genre is particularly eclectic; it could be argued that he is writing for an audience with corresponding tastes – Schnittke is very much more confined to an classical aesthetic. Martland has worked with individuals such as Sarah Jane Morris, who featured on a Communards PRD-style single, 'Don't Leave Me This Way', which had considerable chart success. For Barry Manilow, the quotation in 'Could It Be Magic' was probably inspired by the effect of Chopin's chords on the emotions, and since the Prelude in question is homophonic, the harmony can be used as a relatively flexible basis and lends itself particularly to use in other idioms.

With such a wealth of culture to draw upon, there is always the possibility that ideas are borrowed when they are not ideally suited to the composer's approach. It can be presumed that ELP chose to incorporate a piece of Mussorgsky into their composition because it appealed to their musical taste and corresponded with the classical-influenced

¹⁴ Torke in Smith/Walker Smith (1994) pp. 248-9

aesthetic, reflecting their musical backgrounds, which they wished the band to adopt. The result is that large sections of the piece are less effective than the original partly because of problems with transferring music with timbral clarity to instrumentation obscuring that clarity (refer back to page 41). Simon Miller encapsulates the problem:

The central issue is . . . how to avoid the 'anything goes', everything-can-be-plundered cultural 'tourism' of a decontextualised musical practice.¹⁵

The problem is not the actual use of non-idiomatic quotations, techniques and sounds; in a multi-cultural society with well-developed communications, the composer is exposed to an incredible variety of musical ideas, and designating what constitutes 'tourism' is difficult. What should surely be avoided, however, is borrowing for the sake of borrowing, appropriating ideas which are compromised rather than developed into an original expression; it is for this reason that the improvisatory blues section of ELP's version of *Pictures at an Exhibition* is perhaps more successful than the sections adhering more closely to the original score.

It is notable that Talk Talk, Fitkin and Oldfield all avoid quotation of recognisable themes, with the exception of Oldfield's *Voyager* album, where a number of the tracks are arrangements of traditional songs. Oldfield does not attempt to integrate such themes with his own material. There could be many reasons not to use well-known themes, or simply no inclination to adopt them, but their absence in chapters 4, 5 and 6 should be noted.

2.1.2 Simple transplantation: instrumentation

The novelty of exotic cultures was an inspiration to composers long before the efficiency of modern communications made such music more accessible. Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven incorporated fashionable Turkish influences, which were affecting various

¹⁵ Miller [Ed.] (1993) p. 23.

cultural elements at the time (styles of dress for example), into their compositions. The representations of Turkish music are not idiomatic, suggesting rather how the composer imagined it might sound. In his *Military Symphony* (No. 100), for example, Haydn uses “Turkish” instruments — triangle, cymbal and bass drum. Parallels can perhaps be drawn with the interest in Indian culture in the late Sixties, where the actual absorption was, in most cases, extremely limited.

Debussy’s interest in the Javanese gamelan orchestra that appeared at the Paris Exposition in 1889 is more significant since its effect is seen in less traditional pieces. While Haydn’s instrumentation merely ‘colours’ an otherwise generally conventional piece of music, Debussy’s aesthetic is far more revolutionary (although he imitates rather than incorporates the gamelan). It has been questioned whether Debussy, despite his enthusiasm for the gamelan, actually used it as an inspiration in his music. Sorrell points out that Debussy’s passion for Bach is not evident in his compositional techniques,¹⁶ and that, “although the delicate nuances of Debussy’s piano music very often are evocative of the gentle murmuring of the Javanese percussive”, the pentatonicism found in Java is also found in traditional Scottish music, as well as many other folk styles world-wide.¹⁷ This perhaps oversimplifies gamelan influences; the intricate modal delicacy and drifting cross-rhythms of piano pieces such as ‘The Snow is Dancing’ from *Children’s Corner* (1906-8) hint strongly at the gamelan style. The appearance of the whole-tone scale in the piece, with its use of tritones (‘diabolus in musica’ from Medieval times onwards, according to classical musical thought), evokes the non-Western tuning of the gamelan.

Since the emergence of PRD styles, borrowing of instrumentation between classical and PRD has been widespread. The Beatles experimented with arrangements on songs such as ‘Eleanor Rigby’, with its quasi-classical string writing using contrasting bowing techniques and idiomatic alternating between two notes. As mentioned in Chapter

¹⁶ This is not necessarily the case; ‘Dr. Gradus ad Parnassum’ from *Children’s Corner* is, for example, reminiscent of Bach’s keyboard writing, demanding a strict, even technique to produce semi-quavers building lengthy harmonic progressions.

¹⁷ Sorrell (1992) p. 66

1, this appears largely to have been the work of their producer, George Martin, who had studied classical composition at the Guildhall. 'Something' from *Abbey Road* also demonstrates how Martin's arrangements were carefully constructed in an idiomatically classical manner, with strings adding motifs and sequences in an interplay with the band's music that enables the two forces to become interwoven.

The use of instrumentation normally associated with classical music in PRD and vice versa appears to centre around 1967. The American composer David Del Tredici used a rock band as a 'concertante' against an orchestra in works such as *The Last Gospel* (1967) and *Pop Pourri* (1968). Lukas Foss, once a pupil of Hindemith, used electric guitar in *Phorion* and *Paradigm* (1968). PRD artists were beginning to use orchestras on their recordings; when Peter Knight met with the Moody Blues, the original intention was to work on a rock version of the *New World* Symphony. However, the song 'Nights in White Satin' was the end result, and subsequently an album incorporating the track and exploring the use of orchestra and band was released. This album, *Days of Future Passed* (1967) is credited by the New Grove Dictionary as "the first attempt to synthesise rock and classical music", although 'Eleanor Rigby' appears on the Beatles' *Revolver* album, released the previous year.

Days of Future Passed was described as "a fusion of pop composition and classical writing" in which the Moody Blues "extended the range of pop music, and found the point where it becomes one with the world of classics".¹⁸ Interplay of orchestral and rock band instruments is explored, with 'Nights in White Satin' featuring the rock band's sound elaborated by horn and strings, and with flute and acoustic guitar providing a quiet interlude. Elsewhere the strings are found imitating the guitar sound with accented, quickly decaying chords. The interaction of the forces is, however, fairly limited for the majority of the album. The orchestration hints at Mahler and Debussy in the rich textures and timbral qualities employed, concentrating particularly on a lush string sound; the band sound remains relatively raw, and the orchestra and rock group behave very much as

¹⁸ Mendl (1967)

separate forces for most of the album, each written for in its own idiom. Thus two very distinctive, unrelated styles are brought together and attempts to marry them rarely go beyond shared thematic material. The suggestion that “poetry [which runs through the album providing additional narrative], the beat group and the symphony orchestra feed on each other’s inspiration”¹⁹ is rarely evidenced.

It cannot necessarily be claimed that swapping forces, moulding the ‘borrowed’ aesthetic to the idiom in which it is being placed, constitutes a synthesis. Electric guitar parts written by classical composers often demand the ability to read music, not a skill universal among PRD artists. The possibilities of the electric guitar as displayed by exponents such as Jimi Hendrix are not easily represented by traditional notation, which itself is not a perfect representation, relying on performers’ grasp of conventions such as dynamic fluctuations and rubato — conventions, that is, of classical practice.

The practicalities of of putting together a score and performance incorporating electric guitar are outlined by Tippett, who used the instrument in his opera *The Knot Garden*.

Finding a player who could cope with the part was almost impossible. You either used an acoustic guitarist who could read accurately but had limited knowledge of the special sonorities of the electric instrument; or you engaged a rock musician, whose variable reading ability and inexperience at playing to a conductor’s beat placed the security of the ensemble at risk. Indeed, to try and surmount the problem at that time, an electric harpsichord was often substituted; this was unsatisfactory.²⁰

Despite the climate of eclecticism in the late 1960s, Tippett’s experiences suggest that only recently have standards of musicianship developed to be able to cope with the kind of cross-influences interesting him:

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Tippett (1991) p. 210

In the late 1980s . . . players like Steve Smith are at home with any kind of guitar, acoustic or electric, and their musicality and intelligence are an asset. Writing *New Year*, I was able to consult with this particular performer all the way through, and his instructions on which special effects are needed have been incorporated into the published materials.²¹

Toshi Ichiyanagi in his 1964 *Life Music*, instructs the percussionist to improvise in the style of jazz or rock. This passes considerable control to the performer, and is feasible for a less rigidly structured piece, but the problems encountered by Tippett may well have applied to early performances of this piece. However versatile the percussionist, the application of the terms 'jazz' and 'rock' is of little help: does Ichiyanagi require the style of the Beatles or Chuck Berry? Should 'jazz' reflect Dixie or Bebop influences?

There is perhaps less impetus for the classical composer to utilise instrumentation taken from PRD influences, since the timbral palette of classical composition is wide-ranging. Conventional classical instruments' sonic possibilities can be expanded (by, for example, the attachment of foreign objects to piano strings) while retaining the same technique in order to generate sound.

The implications of cross-influenced instrumentation are largely timbral. The context in which non-idiomatic sounds are placed in many cases offers no concessions to their source, and the practice does not necessarily imply any significant crossover – this is so in the case of orchestral backing on PRD recordings, which is extremely common and often little more than a string wash. The more imaginative interplay between PRD and classical instrumentation shown in, for example, the music of the Beatles and Talk Talk (see chapter 4), is of greater significance, and may often take place in the context of other non-idiomatic compositional techniques.

Unlike thematic references, instrumentation plays a significant role in the music of Talk Talk, Oldfield and Fitkin. For Fitkin, brass and saxophone timbres provide a strong

²¹ Ibid pp. 210-211

timbral link with jazz-related styles, perhaps particularly big band, while for Oldfield the many different guitar timbres, from clear classical to heavy fed-back rock, are used to evoke particular styles. For Talk Talk, in contrast, instrumental timbre and texture offers both allusions to and contradictions with particular styles and genres. Rich 'cello lines on, for example, 'Taphead' (*Laughing Stock*) against string backing perhaps hint at a concerto theme while the often sparse combinations of woodwind soloists, drums and guitar on *Spirit of Eden* avoid connotation through alluding to different styles.

In many respects, the processes described in sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 are relatively straightforward and immediately obvious to the listener as referring to a specific non-idiomatic source. For listeners not familiar with the Chopin Prelude of 'Could It Be Magic', the source is referenced on the sleeve notes of the recording. There is clear acknowledgement of cross-genre influences.

However, in many cases, the influence of non-idiomatic artists and music is far more subtle and perhaps less easy to detect. In the next sections, less obvious interaction between genres will be considered.

2.1.3 Complex interaction: philosophical stance

The influence of non-musical philosophical concepts on music has been great, and this is perhaps particularly true of the 1960s. The cross-influences here are not necessarily taken from classical and used in PRD or vice versa, but were adopted from a variety of sources, including Indian and African cultures, and spread through PRD and classical, with a number of artists being active in both these genres.

Although contemporary classical composers have a wide range of instrumental colours at their disposal from their own tradition, compositional methods have been influenced by non-Western outlooks and philosophies. Perhaps the most influential of composers looking to Eastern philosophies has been John Cage.

While Cage was reputedly described by Schoenberg as an “inventor of genius”,²² operating predominantly in an avant-garde style influenced relatively little by classical or PRD traditions, his effect within experimental forms of PRD has been widespread. Much of this is due to various key figures, some associated with PRD, others with classical, taking inspiration from his ideas. The dancer/choreographer Merce Cunningham, painter Robert Rauschenberg and pianist David Tudor all became involved with the concept of ‘happenings’ (multi-media events), which Cage was instrumental in creating. The first happening is considered to have been that which took place in 1952 at Black Mountain College, where film, slides, poetry, music and dance were controlled by random time brackets. Cage influenced the avant-garde musician Brian Eno, who has in turn worked with a variety of PRD artists, perhaps most famously U2. Additionally, Cage worked with Yoko Ono prior to her involvement with John Lennon.

It was also during the Fifties that Earle Brown, Morton Feldman, Christian Wolff and John Cage were active in New York, exploring concepts such as indeterminacy, abstraction and new forms of notation. By around 1960 artists such as La Monte Young and Yoko Ono had become involved with the New York avant-garde circle based around Cage and the Fluxus performance group. Ono accompanied Cage on a tour of Japan, and produced a book, *Grapefruit*, in 1964, which gave directions for Cageian performances along with other writings and poetry. Cage is perhaps most influential on later music because he helped to establish the experimental scene in New York, inspiration from which has been incorporated by a variety of musicians continuing through the decades following its inception; Ono’s subsequent association with the Beatles and John Cale’s early links prior to forming the Velvet Underground are perhaps most noteworthy. Philip Glass, Laurie Anderson, David Byrne and Brian Eno have all been involved with New York experimentalism, and Byrne’s group Talking Heads has been influential within PRD.

²² Kostelanetz (quoting Schoenberg) (1988) p. 6

An acknowledgment of non-PRD experimentation is perhaps reflected in Hugh Davies' appearance on Talk Talk's *Spirit of Eden*, playing shozygs, his own invention. Davies once worked as an assistant to Stockhausen.

The inspiration offered by the New York scene appears to take the form of a philosophy or outlook rather than specific musical techniques. Composers such as La Monte Young, Terry Riley, Steve Reich and Philip Glass, Americans born in the late Thirties who developed aesthetics commonly referred to as Minimalism, were key figures in the experimental circles in the Sixties. All four cultivated interests in non-Western idioms, particularly Indian and African styles. Reich went to Africa to study Ghanaian drumming, while Glass's rejection of classical approaches as they were practised in Europe was partly a result of working with Ravi Shankar, transcribing Indian music into conventional classical notation. Many Minimalist works share PRD's generally tonal, repetitive constructions, and although these are the result of African and Indian influences rather than taken directly from PRD, there is common ground with PRD styles which enable interaction. Glenn Branca's symphonies, for example, utilise a number of electric guitarists to play heavily repetitive music that has parallels with Minimalist techniques and PRD styles. Philip Glass used lyrics by David Byrne, Laurie Anderson and Paul Simon on his album *Songs from Liquid Days* (1986), which was intended as "an homage, very much on his own terms, to the popular audience already involved in his music".²³ The same could be said of the recent *Low Symphony*, which draws on themes from David Bowie's album *Low* and material by Brian Eno.

The Sixties were characterised by a disillusion with the status quo. Higher standards of living had left many with the view that conventional ideas offered them nothing more to attain, and consequently individuals looked to alternative philosophies as a route to finding challenge and purpose. This is perhaps epitomised by George Harrison:

²³ Salzman (1988) p. 220

Having all these material things, I wanted something more. And it happened that at just the time I wanted it, it came to me in the form of Ravi Shankar, Indian music and the whole Indian philosophy.²⁴

Eastern philosophy and religion was particularly popular as the view given was so different to conventional Western thought. Indian classical music is based around the idea of a piece that changes gradually, creating a contemplative, relatively static style, contrasting greatly with the traditional classical aesthetic of contrast and structures based on tension and resolution. The more static construction of Indian music is evident in post-1945 styles, particularly those of Cage and the Minimalists.

To expand the comparison between Eastern and Western music, consider the standard key structure of sonata form, which may be varied greatly, but will nevertheless retain a sense of departure from and return 'home', with the creation, on various levels within the structure, of harmonic tension which subsequently resolves. In a work in a major key, using a basic sonata form, the exposition starts in the home key for the first subject, modulates to the dominant for the second subject, explores a variety of keys in the development, and returns to the tonic for the recapitulation. This is the most basic pattern, and its tension-resolution and sense of contrast between keys, underlined by the different moods and themes of the various sections remains integral to classical music. Twentieth-century classical music is often arranged in sections with ideas recurring, and with the development of material structured to aim for climactic points even though traditional forms may have been abandoned by many composers.

The fundamental differences between Western classical and Indian classical music arise with regard to technical structure and overall focus. Structurally, Western classical has horizontal (melodic) and vertical (harmonic) elements, and this is apparent from the themes and keys of sonata form. Indian classical practice is based on melody, and the intricate development of the horizontal line; there is no equivalent to harmony or vertical elements. In terms of focus, Western classical music contrasts different moods

²⁴ Michaels (1977) pp. 30-1

and textures, whereas the Indian classical performance explores just one emotional idea, “thus the effect becomes intense and hypnotic and often magical”.²⁵ This is reinforced by the fact that the music retains the same tonic throughout the composition. To those schooled in Western classical tension-resolution devices, music that turns to Indian sources for its inspiration sounds extremely static, even monotonous (hence the ‘Monotonist’ tag sometimes applied to the Asian-influenced Minimalists).

Exotic sounds music held great appeal for the psychedelic culture of the late Sixties and sources as diverse as traditional Indian instruments and synthesisers were explored. Pink Floyd, Jimi Hendrix, Tangerine Dream, the Beatles and Frank Zappa were among musicians using advanced tape techniques during this period, and Hendrix and Pink Floyd are particularly associated with the Sixties counterculture, it having been suggested that the unconventional timbres and motifs they produced related to acid culture, evoking a sense of ‘tripping’.²⁶ From origins as an intended orchestral force in the form of instruments such as the Ondes Martenot of the twenties, electronic music had evolved not only to integrate with PRD styles but also with the culture that surrounded it. In this environment peripheral classical compositions such as Morton Subotnik’s *Silver Apples of the Moon* and Terry Riley’s *Rainbow in Curved Air* became popular among rock audiences. The concepts behind the titles are not clear; they could have been intended to reflect ‘unworldly’ musical language, yet they seem to echo psychedelia-influenced rock titles — ‘She’s a Rainbow’ (from the Rolling Stones’ *Their Satanic Majesties Request*, 1967), ‘She Walks Like a Bearded Rainbow’ (from Cream’s *Disraeli Gears*, 1967) and ‘Set the Controls for the Heart of the Sun’ (from Pink Floyd’s *A Saucerful of Secrets*, 1968) are examples.

²⁵ Shankar (1968) p. 18

²⁶ Whiteley (1992)

Ravi Shankar was, however, keen to distance Indian classical music from the use of LSD and marijuana within the counterculture, accusing those participating of superficial appreciation of Indian culture and “using our music as part of their drug experiences”.²⁷

From the early Fifties, Cage embraced Eastern philosophy in his use of the I Ching to assist in the creation of indeterminate scores; Cage’s approach to chance operations in music composition has been one of his most influential philosophies, and America remains a haven of experimentation. The West Coast is cited as being philosophically distant from Europe because of its geographical position, and Cage, born in Los Angeles in 1912, is representative of the composers who have established its reputation as an area rich in experimental music, although he was based in New York from 1942. The East Coast has also provided an environment supportive of experimental composers; Ives, born in Connecticut in 1874, lived in New York for a number of years from the 1890s until 1911. Henry Cowell, another relatively experimentalist composer, in 1931 helped found the New York-based Composers’ Collective, in which figures such as Charles Seeger and Ruth Crawford soon became involved. At the age of seventeen, Cowell (1897-1965) was writing music influenced by European and Oriental folk styles, and it has been suggested that the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the United States has been of greater influence than its location on its composers:

Each new wave of immigrants brought with it its own culture, which was then added to the existing *pot-pourri* . . . [Thus] the musics and ideas of . . . American experimental composers . . . reflect, in their underlying allegiance to the principle of unity being created through diversity, a fundamental characteristic of American society.²⁸

That Australian composers should not be equally regarded as influential experimentalists, despite a comparable cultural environment, raises questions about this particular theory.

²⁷ Shankar (1968) p. 94

²⁸ Nicholls (1990) p. 221

It should also be noted that speculation has been aroused by the current health of New York experimentalism, as expressed by a New Yorker in *The Musical Times* in 1994:

Most of the popular downtowners were middle-aged by 1980, and by then John Cage was out of style.²⁹

Cage's influence has nevertheless been important in various areas of PRD and classical music. His aleatory processes mentioned earlier have been utilised by various musicians, Brian Eno being one example. Brian Eno's use of chance operations was perhaps more a case of taking a philosophical stance than applying the technique strictly in compositions, although his approach echoes Cage's aleatoric methods.

While still at art college, Eno devised a deck of 'Oblique Strategies' based on the I Ching used by Cage. The deck consisted of a number of small cards, on which were printed texts such as "Would anybody want it?", "Retrace your steps", "You are an engineer" and "Turn it upside-down". The purpose of this was that, should Eno become over-engrossed in the detail of a painting, the maxims would help him retain a wider perspective. When he later became a member of Roxy Music, he would sometimes place the cards around the recording studio, drawing on random phrases and letting his reflections on these influence his creative direction.

In 1985, Cage and Eno were interviewed together for the first time, and Eno acknowledged Cage's influence:

I must say that you're the reason, or you're the excuse for why I became a composer. The alibi, I should say. Because I never learned to play an instrument, and still haven't.³⁰

Taking into account also the use of the oblique strategies, it appears that Cage's influence goes beyond merely questioning of traditional classical training and approaches.

²⁹ Carr (1994) p. 421

³⁰ Tamm (1989) p. 22

Experimental philosophy still features strongly in Eno's aesthetic:

I tend towards the roles of the planner and programmer and then become an audience to the results . . . the key configuration here [an operational diagram of apparatus used] is the long delay echo system with which I have experimented since I became aware of the musical possibilities of tape recorders in 1964.³¹

Eno's methods can be linked to classical approaches reflected in the compositions of Satie and Cage, both relatively experimental within the classical genre with which they are associated. As mentioned previously, Eno has worked with a variety of musicians – Gavin Bryars, U2, John Cale, Robert Fripp, Penguin Café Orchestra, Cornelius Cardew, David Bowie, Talking Heads – who are also influential across several fields, and this demonstrates a complex pattern of exchange of ideas, rather than a simple process of incorporating non-idiomatic references into a piece of music.

The influence of Eno has arisen particularly through his development of ambient music, of which he is widely acknowledged as the 'inventor'. While ill in bed in 1975 he was listening to recording of harp music playing on a very low volume; he had not the energy to get out of bed and adjust the setting. He was inspired by the effect it had in the circumstances; the result was:

quiet, unobtrusive . . . music that could tint the atmosphere of the location where it was played . . . decorative rather than expressionist.³²

Eno subsequently incorporated the effect into his compositional technique, producing albums such as *Discreet Music* which has been compared to Satie's *Vexations* because of its repetitive use of limited material.³³ Eno acknowledges Satie's ideas regarding music as furniture in the sleeve notes:

³¹ Eno (1975)

³² Tamm (1989) pp. 131-2

³³ Tamm (1989) p. 20

I was trying to make a piece that could be listened to and yet could be ignored . . . perhaps in the spirit of Satie who wanted to make music that could 'mingle with the sound of knives and forks at dinner'.³⁴

Eno's influence is acknowledged by those involved in contemporary ambient music, with Aphex Twin being described as "the inheritor of Brian Eno's art-muzak crown".³⁵ Ambient is one of the more experimental areas of PRD; Aphex Twin builds his own electronic instruments, while Future Sound of London have examined the latest in electronic media, performing over the internet and exploring the combination of visual images and music.

Whatever the state of the New York scene, it has nevertheless left a legacy in PRD music. One of its major impacts was the involvement of Yoko Ono with the Beatles. Lennon and Ono had met in 1966, and by 1968 were collaborating on projects outside of the Beatles, with Lennon recording *Two Virgins* with Ono while simultaneously working on *The White Album* with the Beatles. 'Revolution 9' from *The White Album* is the work of Ono, Lennon and George Harrison, and rejects standard PRD forms in favour of an electronic collage of tape techniques, with fragments playing backwards and layered motifs. The excerpts processed are of a length which lets their individual 'flavours' pervade the mood of the piece; the collages of Cage or Earle Brown, dating from the 1950s, are of much shorter, more fragmented elements, leading to a quite different effect. But the diversity of ideas on *The White Album* seems at first Ono-influenced.

Lennon came into contact with John Cage, who recounts how he sought Lennon and Ono's advice on following a macro-biotic diet.³⁶ The idea that Lennon would be inspired by Ono and Cage's ideas makes sense, taking into account the atmosphere of discovery and experimentation of the late Sixties, yet Lennon was producing experimental music long before he even met Ono, recording "sound collages that were as outlandish as

³⁴ Eno (1975)

³⁵ Various (1994)

³⁶ Kostelanetz (1988) p. 29

anything rock has produced".³⁷ It has also been suggested that 'Revolution 9' is one of Lennon's more accessible collages.³⁸ It seems that, in Ono, Lennon found the inspiration to express his creativity in a more public forum. His experimentalism appears to have alienated admirers: 'Radio Play', a Lennon/Ono collaboration featuring 12 minutes of a radio being switched on and off in the foreground while a couple make phone calls in the background, provoked the aside that the piece was "no doubt of enormous artistic significance, though it escapes me for the moment".³⁹

The methods adopted by Lennon may seem somewhat extreme, particularly for a musician extolled for writing what are considered by many to be very direct songs demonstrating the pinnacle of PRD artistic ideals. Yet it should be remembered that more extreme aesthetics tend to influence subsequent material through being adopted in more dilute forms. It is not necessarily the case that Lennon universally alienated listeners by adopting a more experimental approach. Wilfred Mellers points out that:

the public for late Beatles and progressive pop [sic] overlaps with that for Stockhausen, Cage, Partch, Berio, even perhaps Tippett's ritual operas and Britten's 'parables for church performance'.⁴⁰

This reinforces perceptions of the atmosphere of the late Sixties; not only were performers and composers from different backgrounds interacting with each other, but their audiences were also listening to music resulting from a wide variety of aesthetics. The ideas of the era have been absorbed by PRD and classical music, and as the traditions are inherited, the ideas are passed on in a diluted form. For example, the experimental group Mahavishnu Orchestra, formed in 1971 and influenced by the Eastern spiritualism so eagerly drawn on in the Sixties, is noted as an inspiration recently by

³⁷ Robertson (1990) p. X

³⁸ Ibid. p. 90

³⁹ Ibid. p. 97

⁴⁰ Mellers (1973) p. 195

Massive Attack, a somewhat more mainstream PRD band.⁴¹ While the Sixties may have been particularly productive in terms of cross-influenced compositions, the influences have nevertheless permeated subsequent genres.

In the late 1990s, there is something of a Renaissance for experimentation and exploration of styles. The music of Beck, noted for its eclecticism, is a case in point, and it is perhaps no coincidence that Beck's grandfather was involved with Fluxus, the experimental/minimalist group. From the early seventies until recently, eclecticism and experimentation were less of a focus and the musical atmosphere in which Fitkin, Talk Talk and Oldfield produced most of their work perhaps makes their approaches more isolated. Musicians in the late 1990s, including Beck and other eclectics such as Massive Attack and Divine Comedy are relatively high profile and widely held in esteem.

2.1.4 Complex interaction: electronics

The use of non-idiomatic compositional technique is perhaps most rife among artists working in electronic music. Today's music shows far greater use within PRD than classical, and amplification is one electronic process that is fundamental to PRD. The progression to a deeper involvement in the quest for new sounds has resulted in a maintained focus on technology.

However, early electronic instruments were made with the intention that they be used as an orchestral force. The first devices were so huge as to be completely impractical, but the 1920 Theremin and perhaps especially the 1928 Ondes Martenot created interest among various composers, notably Messiaen, Varèse, Honegger and Milhaud. Although these instruments were intended for use within an orchestra, their appearances have been rare outside avant-garde circles; it is also worth noting that Led Zeppelin used a Theremin in the Seventies. The development of synthesisers by Moog and Buchla in the Sixties, and subsequent technological advances (notably MIDI in the

⁴¹ Massive Attack (1991)

early Eighties) have been utilised extensively in PRD styles, while classical music, other than the minority of cases where the composer works mainly using electro-acoustic techniques, has shown relatively little interest. The processes used in these circumstances differ anyhow from the conventional approach since the emphasis is on the composer producing a recording rather than a score. It is sometimes the case that a score is produced, although methods of notation may differ greatly from conventional classical systems.

Cage is credited with composing the first notated electronic piece (other than music written for specially created machines such as the martenot); *Imaginary Landscape #1* was written in 1939 and included two gramophones. Much of the notation is based on conventional classical usage, with additional symbols devised where traditional symbols will not cater for Cage's intentions; for example, small crosses mark where the gramophone turntable speed should increase from 33 to 78 rpm.

From 1943, Pierre Schaeffer was experimenting with *musique concrète*, recording natural sounds and processing them electronically. In the Cologne studios in the early 50s, Stockhausen worked with electronically-generated sound sources. The invention of the transistor made a significant impact on music technology; by 1953, RCA were working on a prototype synthesiser, with the first commercially available synthesiser appearing in 1964. Further advances were made during the Sixties by Bob Moog and Donald Buchla, and by the end of the decade synthesisers were being used in PRD, perhaps most notably on the Beatles' *Abbey Road*. Buchla, along with Morton Subotnik, worked at the San Francisco Tape Center with the objective of bringing the synthesiser out of the confines of the avant-garde. Subotnik's *Silver Apples of the Moon* was recorded using a Buchla synthesiser, and achieved considerable commercial success. Moog's technology, meanwhile, was publicised by Walter Carlos's *Switched On Bach* of 1968, a recording on which he played various classical orchestral and keyboard works on a Moog synthesiser. The purpose of this was not to 'update' Bach, but rather to demonstrate the capabilities of the new instrument. It is also an early example of the use of multitrack recording.

The potential of new keyboard instruments may well have been partly responsible for the apparent increase in classical influence; keyboard players such as Rick Wakeman had conservatoire backgrounds and were proficient pianists.

Experimental classical composers often preferred to take a more abstract approach. Tristram Cary received his training in electronics in the Navy, and began experimenting with electronic sound in the late Forties; his first electronic pieces date from the early Fifties, and he is perhaps best known for his scores for 'Dr. Who'. In an article in *The Musical Times* in 1968, Cary describes his techniques and predicts the future of electronic music.⁴² He opens with the observation that "infanticide has been attempted many times in the history of art, and electronic music has been roundly condemned by all the leading authorities, I am happy to say",⁴³ closing with the request that readers "do not judge the potential of the man from the undisciplined cries of the infant".⁴⁴ In retrospect, this reflection on an approach very much in its early stages seems to pinpoint accurately its position at this time within the historical context of electronic music.

However, Cary's predictions have not yet been fulfilled: he believes that "the range of noises which can be made . . . will certainly one day include (if needed) such exact imitation of instrumental sound that every delicate 'nuance' (or conversely every defect) of bowing or blowing can be precisely reproduced".⁴⁵ Thirty years later, despite such innovations as sampling and MIDI, it is often time-consuming and complex to emulate instruments convincingly, and Cary's bracketed 'if needed' is perhaps telling; why should a composer wish to produce a studio piece with a synthesised oboe when performance is much more exciting (and simpler to produce) with a live presence? The studio-created oboe cannot match the real instrument; Steve Reich's example of comparing the oscilloscope's "dancing irregularities" when a violin is played with the

⁴² Cary (1968) pp. 31-2

⁴³ Ibid. p. 31

⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 32

⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 31

“absolutely steady state wave form” of an electronic oscillator goes some way to explaining this.⁴⁶ Reich uses the example to explain his preference for natural sound sources within electronic composition, but it also isolates the drawback of samplers. Every note ever played on an oboe or violin is unique in its exact waveform, and this slight variation cannot be matched by sampling equipment.

While Reich may prefer natural sound sources, the much greater range of sound that can be produced by electronic devices maintains their attraction as a creative option. Perhaps composition using such resources should ideally utilise the electronic context rather than make the compromise necessary to incorporate electronics into an environment never intended to support them — ELP's *Pictures At An Exhibition*, previously discussed, exemplifies the potential problems this causes.

The interaction between classical and PRD with regard to music technology shares similarities with the crossing over of philosophical ideas outlined in the previous section, since the development of electronic music is shared between genres. Tape techniques were pioneered in the early studios in Paris and Cologne, but subsequently explored by PRD artists. Theoretical segregation of classical and PRD musicians does not, however, reflect the interaction of different practices. The group Can, for example, who were influential on the use of electronic forces in PRD styles, had two members who had studied with Stockhausen. Pink Floyd were also influenced by Stockhausen, and while other experimenting progressive rock bands drew on the inspiration of the nineteenth century, quoting Brahms and Mussorgsky, and opting for rich, heavy sonorities, Pink Floyd were perhaps a little more restrained than some of their contemporaries. They preferred to concentrate on tape techniques such as the looping of a rhythmic motif of cash registers as a percussive backing on ‘Money’ from *Dark Side of the Moon*.

Terry Riley and Steve Reich explored the electronic layering of sounds. Riley invented the time-lag accumulator which used feedback and delays to develop pieces,

⁴⁶ Gagne and Caras (1982) p. 307

while Reich developed a phase shifting pulse gate, simplifying the processes for moving fragments in and out of phase with each other – this device is common in Reich's early electronic and acoustic composition, and Reich's phasing techniques have been used by Graham Fitkin (see Chapter 6). Minimalism's interaction with PRD was considered in the previous section. Robert Fripp (formerly of King Crimson) has an approach to guitar effects that is Minimalist-influenced, not merely in its repetition and use of tape techniques, but also in the reluctance to use excessive studio effects, preferring a more basic, raw, sparse texture.

It is probably fair to say that electronic possibilities have a far greater influence within PRD than in classical. While studio composition remains a strand within classical practice, significant developments of PRD style have often been heavily dependent on technology; imagine, for example, the influence of Jimi Hendrix had he played an acoustic guitar. The developments within dance music over the last ten years, from Chicago House styles (which relied heavily on Roland drum machines) onwards, are inextricably linked with sampling technology. This is now increasingly influencing rock, and the importance of the available electronic resources in shaping these movements is clear.

Talk Talk and Oldfield's use of technology is fundamental to their music. For Oldfield, developments in studio techniques provide an ever-increasing palette of possibilities: the complex collage of *Amarok* demonstrates the versatility offered (see Chapter 5). For Talk Talk (see Chapter 4), the studio offers the chance to record ensembles playing in an improvisatory manner, cutting and pasting after recording in order to assemble material within a musical structure. The relationship with technology appears at first to be a rejection, but is perhaps better described as a shift in the way in which technology controls the music, moving from a focus on timbre using electronic instruments to technology being deployed to emphasise structure. In both cases, electronic manipulation is a resource rather than something which has specific stylistic connotations.

The use of electronic resources is widespread among artists whose style is particularly ambiguous in terms of genre, such as Brian Eno, Laurie Anderson or Future Sound of London. Electronics do not have a particular allegiance with a particular genre, perhaps partly because of being relatively recent. Early electronic music explorations were undertaken by composers more associated with classical, but at a time when classical music was diversifying and hence obscuring any established stylistic identity. Since electronic music is still at an early stage, a forum is provided through which musicians operating in various different genres can learn from and develop the inspiration of others without automatically incorporating non-idiomatic identities. The versatility of music technology also makes it an attractive option for a variety of artists and musical approaches.

2.2 Reacting and subverting

The influence of a style on a composer does not necessarily result in a direct representation of its elements in the individual's music, but may instead result in a subversion or reaction against traits. This section will examine the rejection of classical; subversion of PRD traits is seen in the music of Talk Talk (see Chapter 4).

The Velvet Underground, with their connections with minimalism and Cage, came from a background that might be described as classical avant-garde, and their approach to PRD showed traits of this. Tim Souster compares the band's seventeen-minute 'Sister Ray' with one of the "latest pieces" of La Monte Young in a 1967 article demonstrating how traditional recapitulatory forms can be abandoned.⁴⁷ Young's piece involved setting off an amplified sound and "leaving it to its own devices for a number of hours",⁴⁸ whereas in 'Sister Ray' the band "seemingly guided by the sound itself . . . pare down"⁴⁹ the music to a single chord, then a single note, while dividing the beat into regular quavers.

⁴⁷ Souster (1967)

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Cream's 'Spoonful' is contrasted against this, and it is argued that it jeopardises a similar progressive effect through a slow recapitulation creating an anticlimax, interrupting a structure that otherwise develops smoothly from slow start to tense, fast close.

The composers generally described as Minimalist are perceived as operating within an classical domain, yet much of their music shows few traits in common with certain of their contemporaries. How does Philip Glass's classical-allied rejection of a post-Webern aesthetic differ from John Cale's decision to operate in a PRD environment, where his proficiency as an classical 'cellist is replaced by a subversion of virtuosic performance? Although the end result is a clear contrast with the music of the Schoenberg and Stravinsky classical tradition, Glass operates within an classical framework. He uses traditional classical notation, adapting the format slightly (in *Music in Fifths*, there is a note that each bar is to be repeated until at an agreed sign the performers move to the next one, but each bar is notated conventionally) and it is his training and study that enables him, and provokes him, to expand the techniques he uses as a composer. In contrast to Glass, Cale rejects more vehemently, opting not to expand the genre of his extensive training, but to explore compositional ideas through working in another. Much the Velvet Underground's material was written by Lou Reed, although Cale was heavily involved with arranging, particularly for the viola:

I always found myself caught between playing viola and playing bass. I never thought we made enough of the viola, which is a very powerful instrument".⁵⁰

Whether any classical-trained musician can truly be free of the often intense scholarship of a classical background is another issue. Although Reed wrote 'Venus in Furs', the arrangement, with Cale playing electric viola, hints strongly at the influence of La Monte Young with drone background and static harmony, the tambourine adding to the 'exotic' flavour this creates. While the album in question, *The Velvet Underground and Nico*,

⁴⁹ Ibid.

dates from 1967, by which time exotic influences were being enthusiastically embraced by a number of PRD artists, the drone is very much typical of Young's composition. This is perhaps not surprising since Cale and Angus McLise, who formed the Velvet Underground, had both worked in La Monte Young's performance group, The Theatre of Eternal Music. The use of the viola in 'The Black Angel's Death Song' reflects the rejection of virtuosity, with uneven rhythm, harsh tone and frantic, uncontrolled-sounding bowing over open strings suggesting a novice is performing. Repetitive patterns based around fifths again suggest the influence of Minimalism.

Cale had met with hostility from the classical fraternity, and recalls how "They would never let me perform my pieces at Tanglewood because they were so violent".⁵¹ He was critical of the established figures:

When I got to Tanglewood the master class in composition was conducted by Yannis Xenakis who is a draftsman by training . . . 'Metastasis' was based on the plans for the Paris Pavilion and the angles of the building were used as a slide of the glissando. Which is a load of codswallop.⁵²

PRD styles offered an alternative, and Cale has suggested that he was a failure with regard to classical training, claiming to have been unsuccessful in all his exams, securing a place at college in London by discussing philosophy.⁵³ If this is true, his success in gaining a scholarship for further study in America seems a little hard to understand; Cale's claims appear to suggest a preference for describing classical as an outside interest, of relatively little consequence to his aesthetic.

Glass's response to reactions against his aesthetic is markedly different from Cale's: he recalls an early receipt of criticism:

⁵⁰ In Thompson (1989) p. 23

⁵¹ Ibid. p 12. One such piece involved bringing an axe down on a table, suddenly, during a piano passage.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

In Paris in '65, a young conductor asked me to write a piece and I wrote him one of these repetitive pieces and he actually became quite nasty about it. That was when I first realised what kind of reaction I was going to get with this music.⁵⁴

There is the implication that Glass had no intention of operating in a non-classical genre, and this event alerted him to the response he could expect rather than gave him cause to rethink his approach. It seems that Glass and Cale suffer the same disillusion with the classical establishment, but remedy this in different ways; Glass wishes to revolutionise, Cale to escape.

Nevertheless, both musicians have the training required of an classical musician which leads to acceptance within the genre even when subversion is practised. The contrast between a composer such as Glass and, for example, Mike Oldfield, who does not have a conventional classical background but nevertheless appears to strive for acceptance within classical culture, is significant, and Oldfield's position will be explored further in Chapter 5.

2.3 Acceptability of cross-influences: comparison with jazz

Patterns of cross-influence between classical and PRD echo those between classical and jazz, which have been taking place for considerably longer. Jazz today, it could be argued, has been granted a higher position within the hierarchy of musical style than PRD has generally been accorded:

Pop music is popular . . . Jazz is not for the masses: it is a minority interest – just like 'classical' music.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Gagne and Caras (1982) p. 213

⁵⁵ Dankworth (1968) p. vii

This comment, despite its rather superficial definitions, represents perceptions operating among audiences. Written in 1968, it demonstrates that any 'breaking down of barriers' perceived at the time was not universal.

The inspiration of jazz within an classical composer's work tends to be considered in terms of rhythmic vitality or an improvisatory-style, freeing the music from the constraints of more traditional classical approaches. PRD influences, however, appear still to invite accusations of simplicity and accessibility, neither of which is generally considered desirable by those at the centre of contemporary classical practice.

It is interesting to note the response in *The Musical Times* to a concert version of Weill's *Die Dreigroschenoper* in 1935; the reaction to jazz influences is hostile, perhaps since the (anonymous) author is an admirer of *The Beggar's Opera*, on which Weill's work is based. *The Beggar's Opera*, interestingly enough, reflects certain elements of popular-classical cross-influence, but it is the 'depurifying' of the original which seems to present particular problems, echoed later in the century in response to PRD-classical cross-influences:

Bert Brecht the librettist, and Kurt Weill the composer, have done a queer thing. The one has lifted and altered Gay's plot, the other has thrown away the well-loved tunes and substituted his own post-war jazzy inanities. It is all very crude and painful.⁵⁶

Criticism of re-interpretations, which seem to display similarities to versions of nineteenth century classical works in the early Seventies, appear in writings of the late Twenties and early Thirties. One reporter describes how:

Dr. Hans Joachim Moser declared that art stood in need of some kind of protection. He protested . . . against the parodies of great music that occur in jazz.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Anon. (1935) p. 260

⁵⁷ Anon. (1929) p. 422

Moser was not alone in his criticism; two years later the following appeared on the letters page of the *Musical Times*:

I am not myself madly fond of Beethoven's setting of Schiller's 'Ode to Joy', but even if I loathed it . . . I should still want to pulverise the nitwit who has degraded himself and it by introducing it before a jazz tune called 'I'm so Happy Today' . . . what a tribute it will be to Broadcasting when, on hearing the Ninth for the first time, John exclaims: 'Why, Dad, they're playing "I'm So Happy Today"!' ⁵⁸

It is surely not insignificant that a process such as 'swinging' a well-regarded work from the classical repertoire (syncopating the rhythms, for example) does not so much integrate different practices as draw attention to the disparity between them. Much the same could be said for ELP's approach, and various similar pieces, where the concept of otherness provides a focus, whether or not the piece intends to integrate. Pieces such as Jon Lord's *Concerto for Group and Orchestra* contrast aesthetics; Lord's work is based heavily around dialogue between rock band and orchestral forces that relies on differences between PRD and classical rather than engaging their influences in complementary roles.

To some extent the criticism aimed at these pieces may stem from the fact that they are regarded as occupying different cultural niches; for PRD audiences, classical may be perceived as lacking in excitement, whereas classical audiences may dismiss PRD as inferior. Of course there are many who enjoy music from various genres, and the growing legitimisation of PRD seems set to follow that of jazz.

Around the early 1930s, jazz began to enjoy a wider appreciation among classical audiences and artists. The *Musical Times* featured a series of articles on the history of jazz in 1931, yet at this stage the genre was being subjected to the criteria applied to classical. Classical music was still held as an ideal art form, and jazz was appreciated because it was perceived to be emulating desirable elements of classical. Sargeant and

⁵⁸ Lorenz (1931) p. 1024

Sargeant, the authors of *The Musical Times*' jazz articles which appeared in the early 1930s, observed that Gershwin and Constant Lambert were starting to use jazz within classical contexts, with Lambert's *Rio Grande* described as "one of the great successes of last season's promenade concerts".⁵⁹ However, there is a clear bias towards a certain style of delivery which seems to stem from the Sargeants' classical background, leading them to suggest that Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong's bands were "lacking in refinement",⁶⁰ claiming that "the Negro seems to lack something".⁶¹ The "best white band" is considered superior to any Negro band, although no specific example is given.

The inspiration of jazz has become an increasingly common ingredient of modern technique across a range of classical composers. Stockhausen played in a jazz band at boarding school, and he and a group of friends used to listen to the English Army broadcasting American music. Despite his own often complex, experimental aesthetic, he expresses enthusiasm for the relatively accessible big band sound yet has reservations about later, more experimental jazz styles, finding that they

encouraged strident competition and demagoguery particularly among classically trained musicians who had never learned to mediate, listen, articulate ideas and generally make musical conversation in a critical way.⁶²

Although his preference seems based on a generalisation rather than specific elements, Stockhausen's use of jazz influences in his music tends to rely on introducing particular components of the jazz sound. In *Mikrophonie II* (1965) the bass voices are instructed to sing "a la jazz, cool, fast — like plucked string basses",⁶³ while in *Elektronische Studie II* (1954) "short, crisply articulated sounds in rapid succession create

⁵⁹ Sargeant and Sargeant (1931) p. 751

⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 847

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Maconie (1990) p. 171

⁶³ Ibid. p. 146

a jazz-like mood".⁶⁴ Stockhausen also uses parodies of jazz; the 1951 *Sonatine* has a second movement "based on a grotesquely slowed-down boogie-woogie",⁶⁵ suggesting parallels with Peter Maxwell Davies's subsequent use of fox-trots (particularly in the 1960s).

The trend for an appreciation of jazz was increasingly reflected among classical-trained composers in the Sixties: Riley and Young had a strong interest in jazz, and the music of Bernstein, Reginald Smith Brindle, Milton Babbitt and Louis Andriessen (among countless others) shows the influence of jazz ideas. A mirroring movement within jazz is noted in the 1964 edition of the Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music which describes how

of late years, younger Negroes have rejected the more popular side of jazz as contributing to the 'Negro as entertainer' stereotype: hence a school of aloof, solemn players, many of them with a conservatory background.⁶⁶

From a fashion in the Twenties (when jazz was incorporated by composers such as Les Six, Hindemith, Krenek and Weill), jazz developed to inspire even the least radical composers; Gottfried von Einem, labelled as a conservative, included jazz elements in his 1960 *Philadelphia Symphony*.⁶⁷ Among works intended for performance by school-children was Michael Hurd's *Jonah-Man Jazz* which predated Lloyd Webber's *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat* by two years.

There was also an interest in combining jazz with other relatively new ideas in classical music. Lejaren Hiller produced *Amplification* for jazz group and tape in 1962, and a few years later jazz was combined with the Indian music that was generating particular interest at the time, for example on *Indo-Jazz Fusions*, released in 1967 and greeted enthusiastically by Wilfrid Mellers:

⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 56

⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 12

⁶⁶ Scholes (1964) p. 297

⁶⁷ Kronos in Morton and Collins (1992) p. 264

Jazz, being an improvised music . . . always had something in common with Indian musical techniques; an attempted fusion of the two was inevitable as modern jazz (along with concert music and pop) has grown less harmonic, more linear in concept.⁶⁸

This is particularly interesting since it considers Indian influence not simply as a philosophical interest or a basis for exploring timbres (for example, using sitars on PRD records), but as something that shared certain characteristics with the changing aesthetics in classical, jazz and PRD. Mellers's suggestion that "whether we like it or not, there is going to be much comparable music, affecting the shape of things to come"⁶⁹ has perhaps only really been reflected in relatively recent music – the use of various Asian vocal and instrumental sounds in techno and ambient music is perhaps particularly widespread.

Mellers' claim that "pop music has only the slenderest connection with jazz"⁷⁰ is not borne out by the large numbers of PRD musicians in the Sixties who had played in jazz groups, such as members of Cream and the Rolling Stones – bands which have been particularly influential on later PRD styles. By the Sixties, jazz was much more widely accepted by the musical establishment, yet in the Nineties, PRD is still subjected to preconceptions suffered by early jazz; Weir, for example, referring to David Bedford, expresses surprise that "playing in pop groups seems to have done him no harm at all".⁷¹

2.4 Summary

In 1999, cross-genre projects are very much in evidence, ranging from Coolio's use of Pachelbel's Canon to the recent reported collaboration between Michael Nyman and the Divine Comedy and Kennedy's Hendrix Concerto. There is plenty of scope for further

⁶⁸ Mellers (1967) p. 338

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ James Weir in Morton and Collins (1992) p. 67

work which integrates the influences of different genres, and the reflection of diversity in listening is particularly evident in Graham Fitkin's approach, which perhaps encapsulates the concept of composer fluent in several musical languages. The pattern generally seems to be movement away from a focus on joining together genres previously separate in some kind of 'bridging' process. This is rejected in favour of a more relaxed integration which rather than emphasising contrasts, recognises the diversity of musical culture with which composers and audiences are now familiar.

3 POSTMODERNISM

This extended chapter firstly introduces postmodernism, secondly considers how music relates to it and thirdly looks at how cross-influenced music and postmodernism might connect. This is done over several sections: the first, 3.1, gives a historical background to the use of the term. 3.2 uses Hassan's theories as a starting point and explores ideas of 'indeterminance' through Deleuze and Guattari and deconstruction through Derrida. The work of John Cage will provide a musical focus for considering the concepts.

Section 3.3 explores the metanarrative and 3.4 postmodernism's relationship with modernism respectively, using Lyotard's theories as a springboard to explore musical examples from works by composers such as Berio, Schnittke, Stravinsky, Debussy and Peter Maxwell Davies.

Finally eclecticism, considered a symptom of postmodern expression, will be considered, looking at the development of classical and popular as segregated areas of music and the other arts, and relating this to the work of artists including Branca, Fitkin and Aphex Twin.

The purpose of this chapter is to pave the way for a more detailed look at a small number of specific works by Talk Talk, Oldfield and Fitkin in the following chapters and for these works to be related to postmodernism.

3.1 Background

What is postmodernism? Definitions and ideas put forward have been varied and often contradictory. Spanning many disciplines, consistency proves elusive.

As Jencks put it:

Most people have heard of postmodernism and don't have a very clear idea of what it means. They can be forgiven this confusion because Post-Modernists don't always know and, even when they think they do, often find themselves disagreeing.¹

The crux of the definition dilemma is the postmodern itself. It can be argued that only an immanent critique is possible (that is, one from within a postmodern context) since we cannot but be conditioned by the postmodernism around us. Since this postmodernism is frequently associated with fragmentation, ambiguity, irony and lack of any grand, unifying concepts, the position of anyone wishing to theorise about it becomes still more problematic.

Another reason for the difficulties in defining postmodernism can be found in the way the concept has developed over the past few decades. Although the term 'postmodern' was used much earlier (at least from 1926),² it first gained a more widespread currency in the 1950s in American literary criticism, where it was applied to new, non-anthropocentric styles of poetry, particularly the anti-modernisms of Charles Olson (see figure 3.1).³

¹ Jencks (1987) p. 7

² Bertens (1995) p. 20

³ Bertens(1995) pp. 20-22.

On All Sides

the cave / wall the cave lion's
 SHOULDERS
 are rubbing (off

Figure 3.1: Olson's 'On All Sides' (1960)⁴

The poem is brief, and almost pointillistic in its presentation of the ideas of cave, wall, lion, and shoulders. Punctuation is minimal, and the unclosed bracket particularly seems to suggest a fragmentation. This is a new way of presenting something unrepresentable; a single concept within the poem is elusive, although there is, perhaps a sense of claustrophobia. This is particularly interesting when taken in conjunction with Lyotard's ideas of the sublime, which will be considered at the beginning of section 3.4.

The idea of postmodernism as a reaction against modernism has subsequently been a focus of questioning. From literary criticism, the term has spread to other disciplines. Since critique in these cases is directed at specific areas of concern, such as fine art, architecture, music and society, application has inevitably changed to suit the application. Musicology has become acquainted with postmodernist theory relatively recently, with concepts of postmodernism 'borrowed' from various other disciplines often contradicting each other.

Music is not detached from the other arts, or indeed from a broader cultural context. A greater comprehension of issues concerning music's environment can only aid the development of a less insular understanding of music. For example, while literary criticism questions the role of the author,⁵ much of musicology is still very much

⁴ Olson (1987) p. 498

⁵ Barthes (1977)

composer-focused (this is less the case in ethnomusicology and the study of popular music). If this is to remain the case, the contradiction demands that the musicologist address it or risk creating an ever greater schism between musical texts and musicological critique, and between musicology and disciplines such as literary criticism.

A definition of postmodernism which can then be applied to music would be an oversimplification. Instead, certain themes will emerge from postmodern theory which will behave as markers of a 'postmodern spirit' which can then be related to the music under consideration.

3.1.1 The use of the term 'postmodernism'

'Postmodernism' is a description which seems to be used with ever increasing frequency to refer to contemporary culture but, as previously mentioned, it is not a new term.

Although not established until the 1950s, the word 'postmodern' was used considerably earlier than this. Bernard Iddings Bell's *Postmodernism and Other Essays*, for example, was published in 1926.⁶ In the mid-1930s Federico de Onis used the term 'postmodernismo' in his book *Ontologica de la poesia española e hispanoamericano* (Madrid, 1934) to refer to a reaction in Spanish and Latin-American poetry of around 1905-1914 against modernist excesses. He argued that a *subsequent* movement, 'ultramodernismo', occurring between 1914 and 1932, extended the modernist search for poetic innovation and freedom.⁷ Toynbee's *A Study of History Volume VIII* (1939) proposed the idea of a "post-Modern Age marked by the rise of an industrial urban working class".⁸ There are themes in both the latter uses which relate to the way the term has subsequently been employed; elements of anti-modernism in the application of 'postmodernism' in the case of Olson's poetry are similar to those recognised by de Onis

⁶ Bertens (1995) p. 20

⁷ Rose (1991) p. 13

in poetry of some forty or fifty years previously. The rise of mass culture in the latter part of the twentieth century has often been associated with both postmodernism and the nineteenth-century urbanisation of previously rural working classes. There are, however, substantial differences between these early uses and the more widespread applications of the term since the 1950s, and there is, in addition, an assortment of contemporary uses.

Today postmodernism's proliferation (and that of its sociological variant, postmodernity) across cultural commentary provides a connection between music and a broad range of disciplines. Since meaning varies not only from one discipline to another, but also between commentators, some kind of starting point is required to look at what postmodernism might entail.

Ihab Hassan's table (figure 3.2) outlines trends in ideas of different theorists on what postmodernism might entail. It also provides a convenient point at which to bring modernism into the picture – how does *postmodernism* relate to modernism? The answer is not a simple case of postmodernism coming after modernism and has formed a basis for much discussion.

3.2 Indeterminance and deconstruction

Before looking at Hassan's table, it should be pointed out that a more in-depth discussion of the modernism/postmodernism relationship is featured in section 3.4. In the next section, Hassan's consideration of postmodernism and modernism will be considered, leading on to the work of Cage and, in section 3.2.2, Derrida's theories of deconstruction.

⁸ See Rose (1991) p. 10

3.2.1 *Hassan and indeterminance*

In figure 3.2, Hassan's comparison of postmodern and modern tendencies,⁹ which collates the ideas of a number of theorists, is reproduced. The table is not an attempt to offer characteristics or definitions of either aesthetic, but rather summarises themes which emerge from the large quantity of writing on postmodernism. The 'traits' listed are not presented as pertaining to modernism or postmodernism; they supposedly suggest *theories* regarding these aesthetics. However, to try and reduce postmodern theory to a duality is a step back to the methods of critique that this theory has exploded. In addition, the modernism-postmodernism relationship is not one of A versus B, but far more complex, as suggested by Derrida, whose theories of deconstruction will be considered in section 3.2.2, and Lyotard (see 3.4). Nevertheless, there are certain themes in the table which will enter into discussions later in the chapter, and since Hassan has been a prominent spokesperson in the postmodernist debate, it is justifiable that his approach to postmodern theory be considered.

The table, however contradictory or problematic, is a starting point for a discussion of postmodernism because in summarising themes put forward by various commentators in various fields, it draws attention to the problems concerning these as well as outlining strands of discussion. Hassan is determined that the table should present a generalised view, and that distinctions are not necessarily clear-cut:

The dichotomies this table represents remain insecure, equivocal. For differences shift, defer, even collapse, concepts in any one vertical column are not all equivalent and inversions and exceptions, in both modernism and postmodernism, abound.¹⁰

⁹ Hassan (1987) pp. 91-2

¹⁰ Hassan (1987) p. 92

Hassan believes in the potential of the table as a tool for developing theories of postmodernism (this is perhaps optimistic given the problems that emerge with a more detailed consideration of the implications).

I would submit that rubrics in the right column point to the postmodern tendency, the tendency of indeterminance, and so may bring us closer to its historical and theoretical definition.¹¹

↕	↔
Modernism	Postmodernism
Romanticism/Symbolism	Pataphysics/Dadaism
Form (Conjunctive, Closed)	Antiform (Disjunctive, Open)
Purpose	Play
Design	Chance
Hierarchy	Anarchy
Mastery/Logos	Exhaustion/Silence
Art Object/Finished Work	Process/Performance/Happening
Distance	Participation
Creation/Totalisation	Decreation/Deconstruction
Synthesis	Antithesis
Presence	Absence
Centreing	Dispersal
Genre/Boundary	Text/Intertext
Semantics	Rhetoric
Paradigm	Syntagm
Hypotaxis	Parataxis
Metaphor	Metonymy
Selection	Combination
Root/Depth	Rhizome/Surface
Interpretation/Reading	Against Interpretation/Misreading
Signified	Signifier
Lisible (Readerly)	Scriptible (Writerly)
Narrative/Grande Histoire	Anti-Narrative/Petite Histoire
Master Code	Idiolect
Symptom	Desire
Type	Mutant
Genital/Phallic	Polymorphous/Androgynous
Paranoia	Schizophrenia
Origin/Cause	Difference-Differance/Trace
God The Father	The Holy Ghost
Metaphysics	Irony
Determinacy	Indeterminacy
Transcendence	Immanence

Fig. 3.2 : Hassan's table

¹¹ Hassan (1987) p. 92

The 'indetermanence' Hassan mentions is a hybrid term derived from 'immanence' and 'indeterminacy', and by looking at what he envisages the two ingredient terms suggesting, the connotations of their combination are clarified. For 'indeterminacy', Hassan puts forward an array of complexities: "ambiguity, discontinuity, heterodoxy, pluralism, randomness, revolt, perversion, deformation".¹² This description of the term suggests an instability where nothing is definite or determinable any longer:

In literature alone our ideas of author, audience, reading, writing, book, genre, critical theory, and of literature itself, have all suddenly become questionable.¹³

Immanence is linked to our interaction as language-using beings in a world where our sense of reality is increasingly distorted by ambiguity and the way in which, for example, the media presents history. Hassan defines it as "the capacity of the mind to generalise itself in symbols";¹⁴ this relates to concepts in philosophy put forward by thinkers such as Kant, who argued in his *Critique of Pure Reason* that the transcendental self determines the appearance of the world and the way in which it is experienced.¹⁵ However, the transcendental opposes the immanent: transcendence involves the ability to be independent of something (for example, a transcendent critique is a critique generated from an external standpoint from that to which it is being applied), while immanence concerns being within something. Kant argued that the structures experienced by the mind are external to it, whereas Hassan argues that humans imposing symbols on themselves and their environment gradually *become* that environment.

In music, indeterminacy has obvious connotations with the work of John Cage, suggesting those pieces where the composer seems to surrender control and choice to

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid. pp. 92-3

¹⁴ Ibid. p. 93

¹⁵ Kant (1890). See Solomon (1988) pp. 25-43: Kant will be considered in more detail in section 3.3.

the performer, hence Hassan's remarks with regard to literature have parallels with music. However, this is a somewhat over-simplistic view of Cage. He often maintained a tight control over his compositions, though not in the traditional sense. Instead, the generative aspect of the aleatory composition was meticulously detailed and organised, so that the composer had control over the *concept* of a piece, even if the content and its organisation *within* that piece varied considerably with each performance.

Deleuze and Guattari's book *A Thousand Plateaus*¹⁶ takes the discussion of Cage further. The book is an exercise in breaking down the hierarchical structure expected within a book – one chapter does not build on another, and chapters can be read in any order. This itself pertains to the root-rhizome opposition in Hassan's table:¹⁷ roots imply a basis which is built upon in some way, whether it be in terms of tree roots, or personal background and ancestry, and there is the suggestion of a stable element from which a construct can be developed. A rhizome is part of a plant that contains both roots and shoots, allowing the plant to spread in a manner so that, once established, it has no central part, but consists of many parts, all of which can survive independently although linked to the same network of rhizome stems. Thus, if the roots and trunk of a tree are removed, the branches and leaves are unable to survive. If a rhizomic plant is almost destroyed, whichever small sub-plant is left can flourish alone and re-establish a network. *A Thousand Plateaus* presents a relationship between chapters which is rhizomic – that is, each chapter can stand alone – rather than rooted (which would demand a conventional reading, progressing from the first to the last page in printed order). The manner of reading advised by Deleuze and Guattari is compared by them to the way in which one would listen to a record. One suspects a team of music psychologists might be able to offer appropriately specific advice, since Deleuze and

¹⁶ Deleuze & Guattari (1980)

¹⁷ The original French version of Deleuze and Guattari's book was published in 1980 while Hassan's article dates from 1982. Hassan does not list the text in his bibliography, and any association is purely speculative. Nevertheless, Deleuze and Guattari's book does contain a chapter discussing the rhizome concept.

Guattari do not designate the more active or passive manners of listening to music, perhaps intentionally.

Deleuze and Guattari discuss concepts of transcendence and immanence with regard to musical structure. The transcendent plane, evident in much of “Western classical music”,¹⁸ concerns organisational methods such as sonata form. Sonata form can only be heard through the content of a piece, but is not a part of that content since content concerns sound audible by itself; sonata form is therefore external in relation to content, or transcendent. Opposed to this is the immanent ‘fixed’ plane, where “nothing develops, but things arrive late or early, and form this or that assemblage depending on their compositions of speed”.¹⁹ This relates to postmodern conflict of temporality,²⁰ and the idea that continuous time has “fragmented into a series of perpetual presents”.²¹ Again Cage provides an example:

It is undoubtedly John Cage who first and most perfectly deployed the fixed sound plane, which affirms a process against all structure and genesis, a floating time against pulsed time or tempo, experimentation against any kind of interpretation, and in which silence as sonorous rest also marks the absolute state of movement.²²

There is still typically a structure in Cage's works because of the method of performance-composition, but this is generative rather than an element of a stable text.

However, although Cage is used as an example, and therefore seems to correlate with various concepts of postmodernism, in other ways he seems to ally himself with modernism. The meticulous instructions for assembling the foreign objects

¹⁸ Deleuze and Guattari (1988) p. 267

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 266

²⁰ Bertens (1995) pp. 48-9

²¹ Jameson (1985) p. 125

²² Deleuze and Guattari (1988) p. 267. Note that “fixed does not mean immobile: it is the absolute state of movement as well as of rest, from which all relative speeds and slownesses spring, and nothing but them” (Ibid).

inside a prepared piano and the collection of pieces for the instrument form an autonomous compositional package, suggesting a modernist aesthetic. Works for prepared piano, which appeared throughout the 1940s, present an integration of 'new' instrument and score composed in a musical style developed specifically with this instrument in mind.

The indeterminacy so often related to postmodernism, or anti-modernism (or, to confuse the issue further, anti-modernist postmodernism)²³ was not a major concern of Cage until the 1950s, and prior to this many works feature fixed structures. *Imaginary Landscape no. 1*, for example, although using unconventional instrumentation (muted piano, cymbal, and 2 gramophones playing frequency recordings) is notated in a largely traditional manner, adding symbols in order to convey instructions such as adjustment of the revolutions per minute of the gramophone turntables.

Cage is perhaps most associated with works in which the composer appears to surrender control to the performer, suggesting connections with Barthes' 1967 essay, 'The Death of the Author',²⁴ which puts forward the idea that texts are open to various interpretations, and therefore the importance of the author, who cannot present a stable concept, diminishes. In the situation of a piece being aleatory, this becomes even more the case, since the performer has many options on how to perform the score, and the audience can then deduce different readings from this. It could be argued that this is the case with any performance, and that even in the realisation of a relatively conventional score the performer has many options, but there is a significant difference in that traditionally in classical performance there is a particularly heavy emphasis on trying to achieve what the composer intended, and this central pillar of art is the target of Barthes' theory. This demonstrates how theory applied generally to one area (Barthes uses a literary example to open his essay) may be applicable to some extent in another (for example, music), but cannot simply be transferred because the relationship

²³ See, for example, Bertens (1995) 20-21

²⁴ Barthes (1977)

between classical composer and listener is more distant than that between author and reader; reading a book is like performing a score rather than interpreting a performance of a score. Popular music is closer, with the artist's recording being the primary text, passing to the listener without a mediator interpreting. For Cage, some control is maintained by the composer because he takes responsibility for deciding, for example, to produce an aleatory work, and chooses the way in which, in Cage's case, something such as the *I Ching* is applied to the compositional procedure. There is a difference between surrendering control and creating something which is specifically designed to vary.

The discrepancies between composer's intent and audience's interpretation will be apparent at various points in this study, and will be discussed on a number of occasions, with particular reference to Nattiez (see section 4.1). It is still relevant to consider a composition in conjunction with the intentions of its creator, as long as this is treated as another dimension to musicology and not as its primary aim. As part of a fuller picture, taking into account content and context, including social, cultural and psychological aspects, the author is *not* dead, but operates as a cog within a machine rather than as the machine's operator. It is also relevant to consider the concept of intertextuality here, it being based on the idea that any text is constructed from other texts, being "a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash".²⁵ Yet the space and what is articulated within it are controlled by the author, wherever these articulations are taken from, and whatever manner they are received in.

For Cage the question of the composer's control perhaps presented its own dilemmas, suggested by an informal anecdote of Richard Steinitz.²⁶ Cage was in Huddersfield for performances of his works at the Contemporary Music Festival in 1989.

²⁵ Barthes (1977) p. 146

²⁶ Related by Professor Steinitz in a lecture at Huddersfield University in the early 1990s

Steinitz, the Director of the Festival, was driving Cage around the town and chatting to him about one of the performances of an aleatory piece of music requiring a soloist not only to play, but also to move around the performing area. The soloist concerned had presented a performance which Cage began to say was not what he had envisaged; it was too regular, and he had intended a more random effect. Steinitz recalled that Cage stopped himself, realising that he was out of kilter with the compositional approach he had taken with the piece; the rest of the journey passed in relative silence.

Relating Cage's work to postmodernism and modernism outlines the complexities of considering music in conjunction with these broader themes. It appears that the issues involved do not simply concern the expression of a particular aesthetic by an artist, but go beyond that to look at how an expression is taken away from the composer's control. Derrida's theories of deconstruction now become highly relevant to the discussion. These require exploring, and subsequently relating to Cage's work.

3.2.2 Deconstruction

Deconstruction, put forward by Jacques Derrida in the late 1960s, is a method of revealing texts as unstable, subverting concepts of author communicating meaning through a text. Oppositions are deconstructed; it is frequently claimed that postmodernism and modernism are not oppositional, and this is where concepts of deconstruction rather than postmodernism begin to be suggested.

Deconstruction is not postmodernism. Postmodernism is often described as a 'spirit', in the sense of an attitude, and can perhaps be thought of as a cultural mood, whereas deconstruction is a method of critique. The connection between the two arises through the common suggestion of ambiguity, instability and fragmentation. In both, the stance towards philosophical Reason is transformed: postmodernism questions the metanarrative, the unifying goal of Reason, while deconstruction questions Reason, not

rejecting it in itself, but disputing whether any conclusion reached through it can be stable. This is covered in section 3.3.1.

The method used in deconstruction relies on the concept that since meanings shift, oppositions – which are traditionally a fundamental discursive element – cannot be stable. If the oppositions put forward in a text can be shown to be unstable, then the text which has been relying on them collapses. This is outlined by Sweeney-Turner,²⁷ who uses Derrida's own deconstruction of Rousseau's opposition of melody and harmony as an example, subsequently developing it. Sweeney-Turner's model of engaging, reversing and displacing is in accordance with ideas put forward by Derrida:

What is announced here, as I tried to indicate in "*La double séance*" (double science, double sense, double scene), is again the operation of the double mark or the re-mark. The concept of matter must be marked twice (the others too): in the deconstructed field – this is the phase of overturning – and in the deconstructing text, outside the oppositions in which it has been caught (matter/spirit, matter/ideality, matter/form, etc.) . By means of the play of this interval between the two marks, one can operate both an overturning deconstruction and a positively displacing, transgressive, deconstruction.²⁸

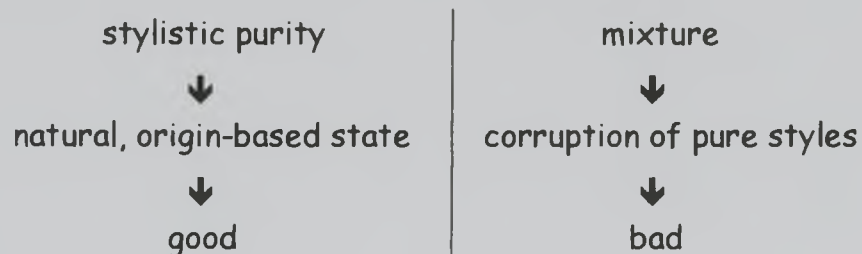
It is perhaps appropriate that the possibilities of deconstruction for this particular study (fig. 3.3) should be outlined, so the method has been applied to the argument that PRD and classical styles produce better music for being concentratedly themselves and retaining close connection with the origins of a single style, rather than being brought together, and that this is a more natural approach for a composer to take.²⁹

²⁷ Sweeney-Turner (1994b), (1995a)

²⁸ Derrida (1987) pp. 65-6. This book, originally published in 1982, features interviews with Derrida in which he clarifies some of his theories.

²⁹ This argument is representative of ideas presented by a variety of theorists and composers: examples include Smith Brindle (1987) pp. 137-8, Souster in Griffiths (1985) p. 137 and Landesman (1997) (refer to Chapter 2).

1. Identify the opposition:



2. Reverse the polarity

Mixture is a natural process and is good.

3. Displace the statement

Mixture subverts concepts of the natural state being closest to the style's origins.

Mixture cannot be so close to origins as a pure style, according to the initial argument.

'Natural' does not necessarily equate with maintaining connection with origins

Figure 3.3: Deconstruction of cross-influence argument

First, the opposition within the argument is established, which in this case is the implication that it is not natural to bring PRD-classical influences together, and that a 'purer' style, concentrating on either pop *or* classical, is aesthetically superior. Next, having established the opposition, the polarity of that opposition is reversed, here suggesting that it is natural that influences pass between styles, therefore the connection with what is 'good' is made for cross-influence instead of 'pure' styles. Finally, this reversed opposition is displaced, and the original claim is, in the process, destabilised. The 'natural' occurrence of cross-influence goes against concepts remaining close to a single origin; mixing styles means concepts alien to at least one of the sources are introduced. 'Natural' and 'of origin', initially on the same side of the opposition, become separated, and the opposition is hence destabilised.

This is clearly a different approach to that typically used when discussing a text. A musicologist arguing against Landesman (1997) might take his examples of

“crossover”, which include the Moody Blues *Days of Future Passed* and Jon Lord’s *Concerto for Group and Orchestra*, and argue that the self-conscious contrasting of genres in these examples does not constitute crossover, setting musics in opposition rather than integrating them and thus preserving perceived differences rather than bridging any gap. But deconstruction collapses arguments on the basis of taking the dialectic (that is, conflicting, oppositional) content of the text itself rather than considering details requiring specialist knowledge: the deconstruction in figure 3.3 needs no knowledge of the music concerned.

Cage’s aleatory aesthetic can be seen as relating to deconstruction. The elements traditionally constituting a piece of music, and forming oppositions within it, are made more equal, and the hierarchy of parameters rejected (in classical music, harmony is traditionally more important than rhythm, for example). The roles of silence and duration are thus elevated from their previously often secondary position. The various components are then placed in a generative structure, and since each performance is individual and fleeting, not allowing the audience to dwell and dissect, so the relationships of the constituent elements are metamorphic. Although Cage is controlling, he is divorcing the composer from the concept of a stable score and ideal interpretation. This is, in a sense, music for an post-deconstruction environment; there are no rigid oppositions to deconstruct and the text cannot be subjected to a collapse. Such pieces actually pre-date Derrida’s deconstruction theories, underlining how innovatory Cage’s work is.

Deconstruction has been associated with postmodernism since the 1970s. Bertens dismisses as too evaluative Norris’s contrasting of the two, in which Norris suggests deconstruction has an agenda of reconstruction, postmodernism one of destruction,³⁰ although he does not present an alternative. Norris criticises “postmodern

³⁰ Bertens (1995) pp. 8-9

adepts like Baudrillard – purveyors of the shallowest, most enervating brands of present-day cultural junk theory”,³¹ and is a strong supporter of deconstruction’s approach:

There is no language so vigilant or self-aware that it can effectively escape the conditions placed upon thought by its own prehistory and ruling metaphysic.³²

His view of Derridean and Barthesian deconstruction is that if the text cannot represent the world, and the author is no longer relevant, then all texts must be political in that they are products of their contexts, in which case we are led back to the issues of whom the context concerns and why.³³

Jameson, like Norris, focuses on a destructive postmodernism, featuring:

absolute and absolutely random pluralism . . . a co-existence not even of multiple and alternate worlds so much as of unrelated fuzzy sets and semi-autonomous sub-systems whose overlap is perceptually maintained like hallucinogenic depth-planes in a space of many dimensions.³⁴

This suggests a situation where not only is the relationship between concepts confused and random, but the very concepts themselves are elusive, their lack of definition evoked by the words ‘fuzzy’ and ‘hallucinogenic’.

Returning once again to Hassan’s table, the dualities implied by the arrangement seem increasingly problematic now that deconstruction (Derrida) and poststructuralism (Barthes) have been considered.

Although Hassan’s table seems predominantly suggestive of oppositions, it is not entirely so. Creation, for example, is contrasted with deconstruction rather than

³¹ Norris (1993) p. 63

³² Norris (1991) p. 22

³³ Bertens (1995) pp. 8-9

destruction, and God the Father with the Holy Spirit – according to Christian teaching, two elements of a three-part whole. The “dichotomies” Hassan refers to (see section 3.2.1) are not necessarily dichotomies at all; antithesis is an oppositional concept in itself, for example. Metaphysics and irony do not suggest any comparative association, since metaphysics concerns the philosophy of being and knowing, and is associated with ‘unanswerable’ questions regarding the self and perception of the world – the immaterial. Materiality would be an opposition. Similarly hierarchy and anarchy are problematic if viewed as oppositional, since hierarchy concerns a system of different levels and anarchy an absence of any system (though not necessarily chaos, as is often implied: chaos may be the *consequence* of anarchy but is not a necessary condition of it).

Depth and surface are not opposites: the surface is the most easily visible layer of the whole, while depth relates to the totality. Jameson describes postmodernism as “the emergence of a new kind of flatness or depthlessness, a new kind of superficiality in the most literal sense”³⁵ Such an argument questions modernist hierarchies with their different levels and the relationships between these levels, and there is a move to alternative concepts such as a network of equalities (hence the “thousand plateaus” as an alternative to the gradual ascendance of a single philosophical mountain).

These examples support a more open reading of the table, considering horizontally adjacent concepts not necessarily as oppositional but as planes which may or may not intersect depending on how or whether concepts within a pair relate to each other. However, this does not apply to all the items: some pairs are dichotomous, and the problem persists that Hassan refers to the entire list as one of dichotomies. The crux of the contradictions appears to be that the list represents postmodernist and modernist theories from a variety of sources: postmodernism has been put forward as an anti-

³⁴ Jameson (1991) p. 372

³⁵ Jameson (1991) p. 9

modernism (particularly in literary theory of the 1950s),³⁶ but the relationship between modernism and postmodernism has been seen in many different, often non-oppositional ways since. The table presents an interesting model as far as deconstruction is concerned, since scrutiny reveals it to be unstable, and elements of the text seem to invite the reader to pull apart the relationships between them and recognise that their interaction is not governable by the table structure – that is, they need not be opposed to each other.

Hassan's attempt to bring some semblance of control to postmodernist theory results in exposure of his text as immanent critique, subject to the conditions of its environment. By trying to control elements of postmodernism, Hassan's text collapses, exploded by that which it is attempting to critique; this instability gives a far greater clue as to what postmodernism might be than does a traditional method of explanation.

3.3 The Metanarrative

A key strand of postmodern theory concerns the idea of the metanarrative, and a theorist who has particularly explored this area is Lyotard. In this section, an examination of how philosophy set up and then collapsed the metanarrative, or 'grand plan', demonstrates the significance of a sudden absence of perceived unification.

3.3.1 *Philosophy and Background*

Lyotard brought the issue of the metanarrative into postmodern theory with his infamous statement:

³⁶ See Bertens (1995) Chapter 2

Simplifying to the extreme, I define *postmodern* as incredulity toward metanarratives.³⁷

The metanarrative is, in effect, a grand plan, and the history of modern philosophy catalogues the setting up and knocking down of all-embracing theories of mind and world. An appropriate starting point is Rousseau's 'discovery' of the universal self, which can perhaps be described as human nature. It is something more than a singular self, pertaining to all individuals. This he termed the transcendental pretence.³⁸ The attraction of Rousseau's philosophy stems partly from its emphasis on the self as basically good, made evil only by society, with the goodness of the self rather than the individual's actions defining that person; the happiness of the individual is considered paramount. It is, in effect, an aid to what Solomon describes as "cosmic self-righteousness".³⁹

Kant was an admirer of Rousseau, and expanded the concept of the transcendental pretence. In Kantian philosophy the self is the entire focus and subject matter, creating the world, and in knowing itself knowing all selves, since the self is universal. Kant's most influential work is his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781, revised version 1787), which argues that knowledge of the world is possible because the transcendental⁴⁰ self or ego determines the structure of every experience, hence the world is the world of our experience. Kant puts forward the concept of *a priori* principles, basic universal principles which control this experience in the first place; they are presupposed, not learnt.

That in which our sensations are merely arranged, and by which they are susceptible of assuming a certain form, cannot be itself sensation. It is

³⁷ Lyotard (1984b) p. xxiv

³⁸ Solomon (1988) pp. 16-21

³⁹ *Ibid.* p. 4

⁴⁰ Note the use of the term transcendental, not transcendent: Kant assigned 'transcendent' to refer to God and the soul, thought to be outside human experience and therefore unknowable.

then, the matter of all phænomena that is given to us *a posteriori*; the form must lie ready *a priori* for them in the mind and consequently can be regarded separately from all sensation.⁴¹

He then argues that the world must have the structure we impose on it, and that there is one correct structure which must therefore be universal.⁴² This theory forms a metanarrative.

Kant left his philosophy split into three separate entities, concerning firstly knowledge, secondly action and thirdly feeling and aesthetic judgement. Since Kant had been very much concerned with synthesis and unity, his followers decided to 'complete' his work by merging its three areas (Kant was indignant at the suggestion that his work was incomplete). This was taken to extremes by Schelling, who developed a vision of the Absolute as One – the whole cosmos with its many aspects – claiming that no part of the universe can be comprehended without comprehending the whole of it.⁴³ Schelling argued in his *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800) that:

The successive series is, as we know, nothing else but the evolution of the original and absolute synthesis; so what emerges in this series is already determined in advance thereby. With the first limitation, all the determinations of the universe are posited; with the second, by virtue of which I am *this* intelligence, all the determinations under which this object enters my consciousness.⁴⁴

Hegel's project was similarly one of unification: he argued that the individual was an abstraction, with the larger picture more important. Whereas philosophy had, up to this point, generally upheld the autonomy of the individual, able to make decisions

⁴¹ Kant (1890) p. 21. Kant defines *a priori* knowledge as "independent of experience, and even of all sensuous impressions", and *a posteriori* knowledge as that which "has its sources . . . in experience" (Kant 1890: 1)

⁴² Kant (1890)

⁴³ Solomon (1988) pp. 52-55

⁴⁴ Schelling (1993) p. 118

without concern for social pressures, Hegel argued that our decisions relate to our relationships with others. He de-emphasised the individual in favour of a universal, 'good' Spirit,⁴⁵ and this is reflected in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807). The concept of the contrite consciousness is developed, referring to the awareness of the self as divided into true (the changeless self) and false halves, battling with each other. As the contrite consciousness develops to recognise itself as an individual dwelling within the changeless self, it "reaches the grade of the Spirit, rejoices to find itself in the Spirit, and becomes aware that its individuality is reconciled with the Universal".⁴⁶

Metanarrativical concerns hence shifted round from universality of basic human nature, before it is corrupted by society, to universality of humanity within society. However, the binding together of thought by the application of some kind of grand plan remained fundamental.

With Schopenhauer the vision began to fracture; he believed in an equivalent to the Spirit that was brutal and indifferent.⁴⁷ Nietzsche also had reservations regarding Hegel; he refuted that the 'herd' (consisting of those in society who 'follow regardless') could be considered on the level of Hegel's Spirit.⁴⁸

The influence on current thinking of Nietzsche's reading of Hegel is significant. Hegel's focus is on extreme universality, the individual being merely a small element of a much larger, much more important totality. Nietzsche's emphasis on individual intuition and instinct is at odds with this, and his consideration of Hegel forms the starting point for many postmodern, poststructuralist and deconstructive critiques. Derrida, like Nietzsche, finds fault with Hegel's non-consideration of the way in which language influences thought.⁴⁹ Nietzsche had reservations regarding Reason's claims to

⁴⁵ Solomon (1988) pp. 56-71

⁴⁶ Hegel in ed. Loewenberg (1929) p. 67

⁴⁷ Solomon (1988) pp. 75-85

⁴⁸ Ibid. pp. 111-126

⁴⁹ Solomon (1988) pp. 200-202

truth, and it is this scepticism which seems to anticipate Derrida. Deconstruction, which links to poststructuralist theories (those of Barthes, for example) regarding the possibility of texts being interpreted in many different ways, correlates with this individual-based stance. The concept that a text has an author who is the source of its meaning is challenged since meanings are many and shifting, so that there is no way of representing a universal truth, and the importance of the individual thus increases as many interpretations are possible: hence, argued Derrida, "there is nothing outside of the text".⁵⁰

This recalls the ideas concerning Cage in the previous section; it was argued that his compositional technique seemed to reflect the environment of deconstruction, and we were left with texts that were not without author, but with an author whose role was thoroughly transformed. As mentioned before, this could be said to reflect the emergence of a post-deconstruction aesthetic before Derrida published his theories on deconstruction, since aleatoric works do not provide the oppositions to deconstruct. This is not to dispute the relevance of Derrida, but rather to recognise deconstruction as part of the process of continual change rather than as some kind of conclusion.

Meanwhile, the transcendental pretence had certain defenders. Heidegger argued for the possibility of universal harmony, although he remained conscious of social and practical factors distorting this.⁵¹ Sartre retained elements of the transcendental pretence in his philosophy with regard to the universal freedom to choose, showing the influence of Rousseau and Kant.⁵² Simone de Beauvoir, however, disputed concepts of universality, maintaining that, since there were clear differences between the sexes, any possibility of universality was greatly compromised, and that

⁵⁰ Derrida (1976) p. 158

⁵¹ Solomon (1988) pp. 152-172

⁵² Solomon (1988) pp. 173-193

other differences might threaten it still further.⁵³ This suggests further disquiet over the concept of Reason, seen particularly in Derrida, and discussed shortly.

The anthropologist Lévi-Strauss investigated the notion of universal structures in brain and language, producing theoretical knowledge that the ethnocentric concepts of traditional transcendentalism were bound to overlook. This stems from Lévi-Strauss's appreciation of cultural differences and refusal to elevate one situation as the norm. Many philosophies assumed the superiority of European academic culture – that is, the cultural environment of (or at least familiar to) most philosophers (Hegel, for example, in his discussion of history, dismissed the Orient and over-emphasised the role of the Greeks). Lévi-Strauss, focusing on cultural differences, retained ideas of universality with a less abstract approach than seen previously. He came to the conclusion that there was, however, a universality to humanity, deriving from language and the brain.⁵⁴ This theory of universal structures is termed structuralism.

The conflicts surrounding the concept of the metanarrative are encapsulated within the work of a single philosopher: Wittgenstein. His *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921-2) promoted metanarratives, suggesting a common pattern within reality that was universally experienced, and claiming that "Die Welt ist alles, was der Fall ist" ("the world is everything which is the case").⁵⁵ His *Philosophical Investigations*, however, published posthumously in 1953, took the opposite approach. It consisted of improvised essays, behaving like elements of a philosophy that kept rearranging themselves within it, and they failed to hold true if they came too close to each other, suggesting the shifting instabilities of postmodernism, and possibilities for deconstruction. Wittgenstein outlined the problems he faced in the preface:

The best that I could write would never be more than philosophical remarks; my thoughts were soon crippled if I tried to force them on in any

⁵³ Ibid. Pp. 192-193

⁵⁴ Ibid pp. 195-198

⁵⁵ Wittgenstein (1961) pp. 6-7

single direction against their natural inclination. – And this was, of course, connected with the very nature of the investigation. For this compels us to travel over a wide field of thought criss-cross in every direction. – The philosophical remarks in this book are, as it were, a number of sketches of landscapes which were made in the course of these long and involved journeys.⁵⁶

With this, Wittgenstein knocks down his previous concept of a neat, universal pattern and instead deduces that philosophy rejects any attempt to impose such constrictions on it, placing controls on the philosopher who tries to do this rather than the philosopher being able to mould ideas into stable patterns.

The main metanarratives to collapse in recent philosophy are those of Reason and logocentricism. Philosophy was traditionally logocentric – that is, focused on language used to express the thought. Reason was considered to fill the role of the language required, with the supposed result that by clear, certain expression, everything in the world could be presented to the observer.

Deconstruction and poststructuralism are the results of a stance against Reason – Derrida argued that Reason's success historically as a unifying theory was due to suppressing or ignoring anything which failed to fit in with it.⁵⁷ Although this goes against structuralism's ideas of universality, timelessness and stability, other structuralist theories correspond, particularly the concept that meanings are not contained within signs but arise through relationships between signs. This is developed into the (poststructuralist) theory that structures of meaning include any observers, and, since observers interact and cannot be detached from what they observe, only immanent critique is possible. These ideas further demonstrate the connections between different strands of theory: (Post)structuralism and Rationalism (which upholds Reason) have been considered, while deconstruction consists of 'knocking down' arguments with ironic

⁵⁶ Wittgenstein (1967) p. ix

⁵⁷ Solomon (1988) 200-202

verbal play, and this sort of fragmentation and ambiguity signifies the demise of the metanarrative.

The attitude to our historical context is one of nostalgia for both the past (or our distorted view of it) and metanarratives. We were until recently driven by a sense of development equating to progress,⁵⁸ and the shift means we search for a new purpose, or a way to return to such progress. Because the tonal metanarrative on which the development of classical music (and hence, supposedly, progress) was based is now deemed to have collapsed, use of it cannot be seen as continuing a concept because of the fracture along the supposed line of development. It is possible to see tonality as a collection of phases, evolving initially from simple major-minor harmony to increasingly complex and ambiguous harmony, with a tonal centre disappearing, but then with the atonal being reconstructed and a new metanarrative evolving from it, although the constitution and direction of this metanarrative are not yet clear. On the other hand, the whole functional harmony metanarrative is a characteristic of such a narrow musical practice that if classical culture expands, its role and influence on subsequent harmonic practice might eventually be viewed very differently.

As far as cross-influences are concerned, it can be argued that metanarratives are present in both modern and postmodern aesthetics. The concept of universality is reflected in approaches to eclecticism, with some speculation that increasing cross-influence will make music the product of a 'global village', where all cultures interact, moving towards a musical 'greyout', or single style. Malm's work on Western (US) PRD influences on the popular music styles of a variety of countries worldwide suggests that, while this might have been the case initially as popular styles spread globally, it has subsequently become less evident.⁵⁹ A study involving a sample of countries as diverse as Sweden and Tanzania concluded that very similar patterns of appropriation and

⁵⁸ Lyotard points out that "it is no longer possible to call development progress" (1993) p. 49

⁵⁹ See Malm in Myers (1992) Chapter XV 'The Music Industry'

cross-influence are displayed, beginning with straight imitation, but subsequently working indigenous devices into the style, making it more localised.

Taste in popular music is used by individuals as a cultural tool for displaying identity, and style differentiation is integral to that application. While this remains the case, increased fragmentation is the path one would expect music to take, rather than that of a 'greyout' which would compromise differentiation. Given the choices available to the individual, music experienced will vary from person to person, hence differentiation is a more natural situation within the cultural context.

While it is recognised that increasing numbers of ever narrower subgenres are reflected in contemporary popular music, there is simultaneously a reconciliatory aesthetic. Splitting apart and joining together may appear to be oppositional concepts, but their presence within the same culture at the same time suggests a more complex relationship, and perhaps reflects concepts which deconstruction attempts to expose. The continual splintering of styles not only reflects postmodern fragmentation, but an ever-changing musical culture which is not composed of simple oppositions. The substyle, after all, reflects a facet of a larger entity, and substyles are not oppositional to each other, since they are representative variants of the same superstyle. Yet at the same time the idea of the substyle serves to differentiate. With new texts (music tracks) put forward, the labelling must shift slightly to accommodate it, but labelling is contradictory to postmodernism since it strives to pin down and apply a stable identification, and the current crisis of stylistic terminology (evident when one trails round several sections of a record shop trying to locate recordings by a particular artist) may well be an example of this in practice.

Reconciliation is evident in various PRD styles which have cultivated some kind of opposition in the past. The post-punk, indie music of eighties Britain and American house and techno styles were representative of relatively autonomous cultures ten years ago, but styles derived from them interacted. The Happy Mondays, forming in the early eighties, were influential in early cross-influences between 'indie' guitar styles and dance

music, particularly when the Manchester scene of which they were part gained wide recognition at the end of the decade. This was de-emphasised in subsequent developments: various Manchester bands split up or became dormant, and rock-dance cross-influences diminished, only to increase again in the mid-nineties, simultaneously with Manchester bands enjoying a renaissance.

Dance-rock cross-influences are, if anything, more widespread and varied today; Prodigy, who derive their style largely from techno, used a sample from the Breeders' 'S.O.S.' (a track off the album *Last Splash*) on their 1996 single 'Firestarter': the Breeders are an alternative American guitar band, linking through members to The Pixies, who were highly influential on alternative guitar music of the eighties (and nineties) - including British 'indie' styles. The dance remix is now a standard for 'indie' bands; note the Chemical Brothers' work on the Charlatan's 'Nine Acre Dust', bearing in mind that the Chemical Brothers are themselves developing techno styles using guitar influences. It may be stating the obvious to point out that musical styles change constantly, but these examples demonstrate how certain developments lead to shifts not only within but in relationships between styles.

The diversity of results from using combinations of PRD and classical is evident from considering the work of Talk Talk and Future Sound of London. Both groups have produced albums with these influences, but their approaches and the resulting music are very different. Talk Talk's album *Spirit of Eden* (EMI 1988) focuses on acoustic instruments, often emphasising soloistic qualities, whereas Future Sound of London on *Lifeforms* use hi-tech digital methods to layer processed effects.

The two approaches are eclectic, but the results contrast so greatly that 'eclecticism' behaves almost as a metanarrative term for a fragmented practice - that is, an umbrella term is attempting to mould diversity into a more specific aesthetic concept. When a trend is observed, it is given a name: Baroque, Classical, Punk. When a trend is harder to discern, the label is still an attractive concept: fragmented, eclectic, ambiguous. Yet postmodernism, with its focus on the sublime, cannot be

represented by linguistically restricted terminology. Postmodernism is thus destabilised from within:

How can a theory which refuses to accept the concept of truth convince us that it is correct? . . . If postmodernism as a theory manages to convince us that it is indeed correct, then it has denied its own position.⁶⁰

The interplay between concepts of 'truth' and 'correctness' here is problematic in itself: it may be correct that something is ambiguous rather than truthful. While the Concise Oxford Dictionary defines 'correct' as "true, right, accurate",⁶¹ thus implying a correlation with 'truth', 'true' is defined as "in accordance with fact or reality", and both fact and reality are concepts which postmodernism problematises.

Postmodernism emphasises the actual process of composition rather than focusing purely on the end product of this, with, for example, collage-like structures bringing together separate elements in an audible 'pasting' of sources. A focus on process is also a characteristic of 'chance' operations and indeterminacy. This obviously takes us back to Cage. His role is interpreted in different ways: for Bertens he is part of "the anti-modern revolt",⁶² whereas for Morgan indeterminacy is, like serialism, relatively 'pure' and untainted by the past, *replaced* by "a more inclusive mix that juxtaposed traditional and non-traditional elements with little concern for stylistic consistency or historical fidelity"⁶³ – that is, indeterminacy is linked more to modernism, and contrasted with new movements displaying characteristics of postmodernism. Of course, Cage's composition has many aspects, some perhaps more postmodern, others more modern. This kind of contradiction is a typical feature of critiques when postmodernism and modernism come under scrutiny, and is surely symptomatic of the position of the metanarrative.

⁶⁰ Laski (1993) p. 27

⁶¹ Allen (1991) p. 258

⁶² Bertens (1995) p. 17

3.4 Postmodernism and modernism

Beyond metanarratives, Lyotard also explored the relationship between postmodernism and modernism. Beginning with the idea of the sublime, this section explores the connection in the context of a variety of music. Lyotard, while questioning the role of metanarratives, nevertheless upholds the Kantian sublime as a key concept of postmodernism: it is, he says, "when the imagination fails to present an object which might, if only in principle, come to match a concept".⁶⁴ This concerns Kant's theories regarding experiencing the world by imposing principles already in the mind (either *a priori* or acquired through earlier experience) upon it; the sublime would be something in the world on which the mind was unable to impose a concept, and thus the experiential process would not be properly realised. Thus the concept of the sublime is closely related to the imposition by the mind of structure on the world; the sublime is concerned with the *unrepresentable*:

We have the Idea of the world (the totality of what it is) but we do not have the capacity to show an example of it. We have the Idea of the simple (that which cannot be broken down, decomposed), but we cannot illustrate it with a sensible object which would be a 'case' of it.⁶⁵

Modern painting tries to represent such ideas of which examples cannot be made visible. This seems a contradiction; perhaps it would be better described as an attempt to allude to what cannot be represented. Emotions, for example, are not in themselves visible, but can be alluded to visually; a simple example is that anger cannot be seen, but symptoms of it can and an artist could paint a face with an angry expression.

⁶³ Morgan (1993) p. 28

⁶⁴ Lyotard (1984a) p. 78

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

The postmodern, meanwhile, is

that which searches for new presentations, not in order to enjoy them, but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unrepresentable . . . It must be clear that it is our business not to supply reality but to invent allusions to the conceivable which cannot be presented.⁶⁶

Lyotard develops these ideas on the relative positioning of modernism and postmodernism. Modernism has been described as

A movement that rejected the legacy of the past, that was caught up in the early enthusiasm for technological progress, and that sought to create the world anew . . . Rejecting tradition, it was the culture of innovation and change.⁶⁷

Yet strong links with past approaches are maintained; Schoenberg's traditional forms and structures with twelve-tone and atonal content are an example. Postmodernism also has a paradoxical relationship with the past, often placing familiar ideas in new forms, and it is the way in which this duality is utilised which contrasts postmodernism and modernism.

Modernism, though often very different from that preceding it in terms of content, places new ideas in familiar forms – Cubism, for example, still uses paint and canvas. This is a reversal of the postmodern relationship with the past described above. In some respects, this could accentuate the 'shock of the new', because the form asks for a traditional dissemination, but experience does not provide the means by which to do this. The approach as it was used by Schoenberg, however, drew a hostile critique from Boulez, who compared him to Stravinsky:

Stravinsky's and Schoenberg's paths to neo-classicism differ basically only in one being diatonic and the other chromatic: for all practical purposes

⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 81

⁶⁷ Gott (1986) p. 10

their itinerary is precisely the same... [Stravinsky] wanted to play with history because for the first time the riches of the past were all available. Schoenberg, on the other hand, tried to reinstate tradition ... both composers adopt dead forms and because they are so obsessed with them they allow them to transform their musical ideas until these too are dead.⁶⁸

We will return to Stravinsky shortly. Considering the music of Schoenberg, atonality seems to be the culmination of a metanarrative. As music developed, embracing increasingly exotic modulation, the tonic becoming more and more obscured, it might be expected that, ultimately, it would cease to be a focus at all. Atonality hence connects with the past as it develops a concept to the point of collapse.

Serial technique is related to atonal music, since atonal music is, generally, the result produced by its application, although serialism involves far greater prescription of pitch (and later, other) parameters than initial atonal approaches.

It could be argued that atonal composition 'prepared the stage' for serial technique by renegotiating the role of tension-resolution devices. Prior to atonality, tension was increasingly focused upon, and resolution was delayed, so that the sense of relief occasioned by resolution was heightened. It is, seemingly, only a small step from extensive delay of resolution to avoidance of resolution, but in making this move, the oppositional structure of tension versus resolution, collapses. Tension's previous role stemmed from its existence in relation to resolution, forming a contrast. With no opposition, the role of tension is inevitably transformed.

Schoenberg retained a concern with traditional forms; the first movement of the *Wind Quintet*, op. 26 (1924), for example, uses a sonata form structure (see figures 3.4 to 3.6). This appears to have been on the basis that even if the usual contrasts of different keys were no longer present, the thematic design would nevertheless maintain the tension-resolution pattern. It has been argued (by Boulez, as outlined previously, for example) that maintaining links with traditional forms is inappropriate to the new atonal

⁶⁸ Boulez in Deliège (1976) p. 31

musical language – would it not have been more in keeping to develop forms to suit atonal and serial composition, rather than attempting to mould these new concepts into the confines of traditional structures?

Although more recent theory has justifiably seen Schoenberg's approach as regressive, it is also typical of modernism. Atonal music creates a sense of alienation; a tonic is never established, so there cannot be a return 'home' to a tonic, with its accompanying sense of security after exploration of tonalities through modulation. Using a traditional form for an atonal or serial piece could be counteractive; in one sense, it is a relatively familiar construct, but simultaneously, it could aggravate a sense of alienation, since the familiar is being corrupted and questioned.

The Wind Quintet Op. 26 is an early serial piece, composed in 1924, the year after Schoenberg first deliberately used tone rows in the Five Piano Pieces op. 23. The extracts show the tone row (figure 3.4), followed by the openings of the exposition (figure 3.5) and recapitulation (figure 3.6), showing the thematic approach allied to sonata form.

Although the fragments in the recapitulation are clearly more angular and rhythmically complex than those in the exposition, bar 128 (second bar of figure 3.6) begins with the same pitches in the same instrumentation as in bar 1 (figure 3.5). However, the theme is more condensed and passed between instruments, the second fragment of the flute in the exposition appearing in the clarinet with an octave displacement, for example. Nevertheless, despite differences, the excerpts clearly demonstrate a reappearance of the opening ideas of the Quintet.

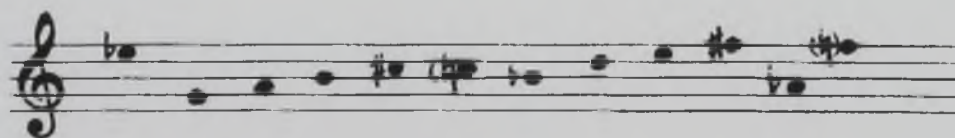


Figure 3.4: Tone row used in Schoenberg Wind Quintet op. 26

Figure 3.5: Schoenberg Wind Quintet op. 26 bars 1-4

Figure 3.6: Schoenberg Wind Quintet op. 26 bars 127-131

On a wider basis, the processes of production and reception were not altered in any radical way by Schoenberg. He founded the Society for Private Musical Performance in Vienna in 1918, with strict rules governing performance and audience. Only members were admitted, critics were not allowed entry and any audience expression of approval or disapproval was forbidden. In some respects, however, the society's rules were only a step away from usual concert practices, where entry would be

restricted by price, and where silence and stillness were (and still are) expected throughout a performance. Even applause at the end of a piece is more an element of ritual than an expression of approval; anything less or more is considered unusual, if not scandalous. Musicians still played from scores to an audience in a concert situation. The Society for Private Musical Performance nevertheless showed some awareness of the concert ritual, and tried to create a more appropriate environment for new music than the traditional options offered. Its discouragement of judgement recognised that music is subjected to certain criteria when valued, and promoted the idea that new compositions not reflecting established rules should not necessarily be dismissed immediately as bad or wrong.

Contemporary thought focuses on some kind of breakdown of traditional approaches, and culture has generally reflected rather than dealt with this. Any idea that has been in circulation for a great length of time tends to be taken for granted, and so when something so familiar and accepted is disputed, the insecurity resulting is particularly great. Modernism perpetuates this; firstly it questions what has been accepted, and secondly, in its continuing reactions against reactions it fails to provide a stable alternative – leading, argues Lyotard, to a state of postmodernism.

All that has been received, if only yesterday (*modo, modo* ^[69] Petronius used to say), must be suspected. What space does Cézanne challenge? The Impressionists'. What objects do Picasso and Braque attack? Cézanne's. What presupposition does Duchamp break with in 1912? That which says one must make a painting, be it cubist. And Buren questions that other presupposition which he believes had survived untouched by the work of Duchamp; the place of presentation of the work. In an amazing acceleration, the generations precipitate themselves. A work can become modern only if it is first postmodern. Postmodernism thus understood is

⁶⁹ Latin, meaning "just now"

not modernism at its end but in the nascent state, and this state is constant.⁷⁰

Lyotard's chain of reactions – Cézanne, Picasso, Duchamp, Buren – reflects the constant innovation of modernism, this renewal being the focus of postmodernism. “Avant-garde” in its literal sense invokes a sense of ‘before’, leading opinion, tying in with the idea of generations precipitating themselves (see earlier in this section). Lyotard's rejection of Enlightenment metanarratives – “Let us wage a war on totality”⁷¹ – similarly holds echoes of Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, in which it is claimed that “Enlightenment is totalitarian”.⁷² The work expresses grave concern over the way that “for the Enlightenment, whatever does not conform to the role of computation and utility is suspect”.⁷³ For Adorno and Horkheimer, the emphasis on the scientific and mathematical excluded concepts that could not be manipulated by these methods, and hence disregarded them. The ability to use methods in order to present what would be put forward as a ‘Reality’ led to power, misleadingly seen as power over nature, but actually more aptly described as a power over those less able to use the necessary scientific processes.

For Adorno, ‘new music’ involves the continual production of new forms which refuse to make concessions to the listener, thus honouring him or her:

It is not actual sensory listening but only the conceptually mediated perception of the elements and their configuration which assures the social substance of great music.⁷⁴

Lyotard links the sublime to avant-garde art, and his postmodernism is in some respects a development of Adorno's avant-garde.

⁷⁰ Lyotard (1984a) p. 79

⁷¹ Ibid. p. 82

⁷² Horkheimer and Adorno (1986) p. 6

⁷³ Ibid.

to make visible that there is something which can be conceived and which can neither be seen nor made visible . . . as painting, it will of course 'present' something, though negatively; it will therefore avoid figuration or representation.⁷⁵

This is referred to as the 'sublime':

Modern aesthetics is an aesthetic of the sublime, though a nostalgic one. It allows the unrepresentable to be put forward only as the missing contents, but the form, because of its recognisable consistency, continues to offer the reader or viewer matter for solace and pleasure ... The postmodern would be that which, in the modern, puts forward the unrepresentable in presentation itself; that which denies itself the solace of good forms.⁷⁶

The seemingly impossible suggestion of the unrepresentable being presented can perhaps be explained with an example. Lyotard provides this; take, for instance, the "Idea of the world (the totality of what it is)".⁷⁷ The phrase 'the whole world' is quite common, but asked to define the phrase, or to offer some example of it, we are at a loss.

While contrasting the representations given in postmodern and modern art, postmodernism is nevertheless, says Lyotard, "undoubtedly part of the modern".⁷⁸ He suggests that:

the 'post' of 'postmodernism' does not signify a movement of *comeback*, *flashback*, or *feedback* – that is, not a movement of repetition but a procedure in 'ana': a procedure of analysis, anamnesis, anagogy and anamorphosis that elaborates an 'initial forgetting'.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ Adorno (1973) p. 130

⁷⁵ Lyotard (1984a) p. 78

⁷⁶ Lyotard (1984a) p. 81

⁷⁷ Lyotard (1984a) p. 78

⁷⁸ Lyotard (1984a) p. 79

⁷⁹ Lyotard (1993) p. 50

That is, postmodernism severs itself from history then reattaches itself to create a situation where the past is separated out, selectively re-assimilated, distorted and subjected to a reinterpretation. This is how it is both part of the modern, attached to a historical chain, but simultaneously a shift from it, since its attachment is so totally different from previous 'links', no longer imbued with a sense of linear chronology.

Symptomatic of this is the nostalgia mode described by Jameson. This involves the proper history of an era being replaced by an image, so that there is no longer a 'true' history but instead a situation where "generational periods open up for aesthetic colonisation".⁸⁰ This process is difficult to apply to our own era, since we are too close to it, or to the distant past for the opposite reason, but eras in between attract us, although we are identifying with a distorted perception of history rather than history itself. Thus, says Hassan:

we have created in our mind a model of postmodernism, a particular typology of culture and imagination, and have proceeded to "rediscover" the affinities of various authors and different moments with that model. We have, that is, reinvented our ancestors⁸¹

The way in which postmodernism tackles the past demonstrates a contrast between it and modernism, with postmodernism being fragmentary and modernism alienating. Both suggest a dysfunctional human existence; postmodernism may refer to older styles which many audiences prefer to modern music, but the approach is ironic, the relationship tense; perhaps Schnittke's *Concerto Grosso No. 3* (1985) epitomises this:

It begins 'beautifully', neo-classically – but after some minutes the museum explodes and we stand with the fragments of the past (quotations) before the dangerous and uncertain present. The attempt is made not to become tragic and to escape the eternal melodrama of life. Did it perhaps succeed

⁸⁰ Jameson (1991) p. 19

⁸¹ Hassan (1987) p. 89

this time? Even if not, the great figures of the past cannot disappear . . . Their shadows are more capable of life than the pantheon scrum of today".⁸²

This sort of nostalgia is postmodern, contrasting with Lyotard's nostalgia ("Modern aesthetics is an aesthetic of the sublime, though a nostalgic one"⁸³) because it concerns content rather than form. Jameson, criticising the approach of political groups who distort history, might as easily be discussing music:

There cannot but be much that is deplorable and reprehensible in a cultural form of image addiction which, by transforming the past into visual mirages, stereotypes or texts, effectively abolishes any practical sense of the future and of the collective project.⁸⁴

Although *Concerto Grosso No. 3* was written to celebrate multi-centenaries of the births of a number of 'Great' composers, it is by no means an unusual piece for Schnittke, who has written a number of Mozart pastiches in a similarly neo-Classical vein. The form of an authentic opening which moves on into passages distorting, fragmenting and disintegrating in some way is obviously non-traditional again, alluding to postmodernism's severing with traditional structures.

In many respects, modern form reflects the past while postmodern form rejects it. Modern content, on the other hand, rejects the past while postmodern content reflects it, although very much transforming it. The Schnittke pieces based on Mozart offer "solace and pleasure" through their use of a style valued by many audiences because the diatonic melody is considered pleasant. Through distortion, the content-form opposition is questioned. Additionally, the content of modern and postmodern works is not oppositional. Modern content is new but postmodern content is not simply

⁸² Schnittke (1991)

⁸³ Lyotard (1984a) p. 81

⁸⁴ Jameson (1991) p. 46

old, it is a complex reworking of the old, which may be approached in many different ways.

It is appropriate to consider the work of Maxwell Davies at this point. As early as 1957 Davies was using plainchant as a source which was subsequently distorted; *Alma Redemptoris Mater* is an example of this, using the antiphon of the same name and distorting it by, for example, inverting intervals and/or displacing them by an octave. Works of around 1966-9 often feature easily-heard distortion: *Eight Songs for a Mad King*, for example, features a number of passages where sources such as a Tudor dance, and excerpts from Handel's *Messiah* are distorted, but still audible. Davies acknowledges this kind of process, and it is clearly comparable with the Schnittke methods described earlier:

I've never gone in for a very simple montage of unrelated objects which, for example, Berio has done. To me it's always been much more appealing to take something where you can actually sense the distortion process happening.⁸⁵

Vesalii Icones, however, features less audible transformation techniques. Taylor establishes a relationship between xylophone lines, demonstrating how one line results from the projection of another through a 'modulator' line, which he describes as a series based on a whole-tone scale.⁸⁶ It is actually based on a Good Friday plainchant, 'De Temporis Passionis Ad Vesperas In Sabbaticus et Dominicus', which is mentioned by Davies in connection with the work, and hence demonstrates that not only does Davies use plainsong as a source in many of his works, but also adapts it to act as a filter.

In works of the 1970s, such as *Ave Maris Stella*, magic squares are used as filters on plainchant excerpts, and again the distortion process cannot be sensed by listening to the music. Magic squares are tables of numbers where each row and

⁸⁵ Griffiths (1981b) p. 111.

⁸⁶ Taylor (1978) p. 64

column adds up to the same total, and have connections with medieval alchemy. They are applied, for example, by re-ordering the notes of a short phrase according to numbers derived from a magic square. The actual process has several stages and is quite complex, but has obvious parallels with serialism, and hence modernism. Forms are not traditional or new; they are a mixture of the two, since they rely on something ancient used in a new way. It is also significant that numbers played a major role in music in medieval times, and research has shown how duration and structure reveal arithmetical concerns of medieval composers. This suggests connections with modernist serialism and demonstrates perhaps that not only 'postmodern spirit', but modernist 'spirit' too is not confined to the late nineteenth century onwards. In Davies's work there is an application and use of very old material in terms of form and content, but there is a contemporary approach to this in the way it is so systematically distorted, although this in itself suggests both serialism and medieval devices through its arithmetical logic.

Looking at *Vesalii Icones* from another angle, Sweeney-Turner argues against the usual reading of Davies's music, which focuses on dialectics – that is, the oppositions within his works:

The insistent lack of closure, and the vast array of technical devices which are brought to bear on source materials to ensure an ever-present reversal and displacement of any teleological end, force the piece well out of dialectical territories, and towards the deconstructive field.⁸⁷

The established approach to Davies's music promotes the importance of the composer, the 'closure' in *Vesalii Icones* being provided by the composer's notes accompanying the piece rather than within the piece itself.⁸⁸ The composer's intent is thus elevated and is vital to the usual reading, which is not consistent with the 'death of the author' argument

⁸⁷ Sweeney-Turner (1994b) p. 20

⁸⁸ Ibid p. 16

of Barthes (which, incidentally, preceded the initial connection of Davies with dialectics⁸⁹ by two years). There arises a paradox by which the classical establishment approaches Davies from a modernist standpoint, while the content of the musical material correlates far more with deconstruction because of its instabilities. In addition, Davies's notes on *Vesalii Icones* and the various critiques in circulation often recognise distortion, ambiguity, dissolution, fragmentation, and the concept of images corrupted from within – all which suggest links with deconstruction and postmodernism.⁹⁰

This encapsulates elements of the modernist-postmodernist dilemma; the two are interconnected, and *Vesalii* clearly demonstrates the relevance of both modernist and postmodernist critiques. Furthermore, the application of deconstruction exposes problems arising through traditional classical approaches which focus on the composer's intention and points to the instabilities which compromise such methods. This is not to say that one approach is correct and the other wrong, but outlines the importance of the current cultural climate. The purpose of striving for a stable interpretation of *Vesalii* must be questioned since current thought disputes the possibility of achieving this, and, in addition, the content of the piece aids this scepticism.

The postmodern aesthetic defies attempts to place it in a historical context. Obviously theory concerning it is relatively recent, becoming widespread only from the fifties onwards. Although used earlier, pre-fifties application is very isolated and varied in meaning, often bearing little relation to subsequent deployment, and relatively non-influential. The meaning has changed since the fifties, and varies between disciplines, but developments tend to relate to each other, rather than there being a selection of seemingly unconnected usages. Postmodern theory can be dated, but it can also be argued that the 'postmodern spirit' (which can perhaps be described as a prevailing attitude or mood) is connected to approach rather than historical era.

⁸⁹ Chanan M. (1969)

⁹⁰ Sweeney-Turner (1994b) p. 20

Relating postmodernism to the past seems to demand that we date it, just as we pinpoint other eras with years: *A History of Western Music*, for example, uses the term Baroque to refer to a period from 1600-1750, but because the period contains too much diversity stylistically, the authors announce that "*Baroque* will rarely be employed as a style designation".⁹¹ Postmodernism is quite the opposite; it designates style (or perhaps anti-style, but that too is surely a style in itself), but as an approach, spirit or aesthetic cannot be dated. There is no seminal work which suddenly turns culture upside-down marking the start of a new era; instead, we see works alluding to postmodernism long before the rise of postmodern theory.

For Jameson, Stravinsky is of particular relevance:

Stravinsky is the true precursor of the postmodern cultural production. For with the collapse of the high-modernist ideology of style . . . the producers of culture have nowhere to turn but to the past: the imitation of dead styles, speech through all the masks and voices stored up in the imaginary museum of a now global culture.⁹²

Boulez made similar observations to those of Jameson:

Stravinsky went about it [neo-Classicism] like a dilettante going into a museum to look for material which he then took apart and reassembled in a different way. It was not a feeling for tradition that might have led him to reclaim this heritage. It was above all the need for what I call play . . . [Schoenberg and Stravinsky's] musical invention has been virtually reshaped by old forms to the point where it suffers and dries up.⁹³

The concern with play is generally perceived as postmodern, as recognised in Hassan's table. Boulez is emphasising an almost frivolous approach; although some of Stravinsky's neo-Classicism is lighter in mood, it cannot necessarily be described as

⁹¹ Grout and Palisca (1987) p. 346

⁹² Jameson (1991) pp. 17-18

⁹³ Deliège (1976) p. 31

frivolous because there is innovation and originality; the way in which he explores ideas based around a tonic chord, expanding its function by adding and subtracting not only dominant, mediant and tonic, but notes not associated with the triad, such as the supertonic and submediant, is an example.

Despite the negative tones of Boulez and Jameson, Stravinsky was a remarkable composer in many ways, and a number of late twentieth-century composers have been exposed to the unwritten rule that one should either follow Stravinsky or Schoenberg. What is so striking about Stravinsky in the postmodernist/modernist debate is his shift from 'postmodernist' neo-Classicism to 'modernist' serialism, although as Whittall asks:

Was he just conscious that the death of Schoenberg gave serialism a historical perspective which made adoption of it just another kind of neo-Classicism?⁹⁴

Before his neo-Classical period, Stravinsky wrote works, such as *The Rite of Spring*, in which he alluded to the raw energy of ancient Russian folk tradition – a link with the vernacular, rather than a more abstract expressionism associated with modernism. Nevertheless, *The Rite of Spring* has been interpreted as a modernist work:

For some, it marks a parting of the ways in modern music . . . and is often cited as a classic example of confrontational Modernism, largely because of the reaction of its very first auditors.⁹⁵

It has already been suggested that Stravinsky's neo-Classicism reflected a postmodern aesthetic, but there are also hints of this in *The Rite*. His approach to structure through a variable-length cell hints at deconstruction, since it does not offer a stable element that can be opposed but suggests something shifting. Walsh suggests that these cells

⁹⁴ Whittall (1988) p. 66

⁹⁵ Butler (1994) pp. 115-116

were treated as “flexible musical objects which could take a number of related forms”.⁹⁶

Griffiths recognises a less specific trend in *The Rite*, which corresponds to this:

the melodic motifs are almost never more than a few beats long, or else they are very obviously chains of such motifs, as if the melodies are analysing themselves as they go along.⁹⁷

Stravinsky’s treatment of folk tunes, which provided a substantial amount of *The Rite*’s material, incorporates not only quotation but distortion and manipulation,⁹⁸ significant in that it removes the original traits and suggests that they are reinterpreted. These features all contribute to a sense of ‘postmodern spirit’ in *The Rite*.

Lambert’s recognition of the rhythmic significance of *The Rite of Spring* presents an interesting comparison:

There are rhythms suspended in space, arbitrary patterns in time, forming a parallel to Debussy’s impressionistic use of harmonies detached from melodic reasoning.⁹⁹

In his book on early modernism, Butler presents Debussy as a composer allied with the movement:

Works like this [*Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune*] by Debussy helped to recast the hierarchy of genres for the Modernist period as he and his successors evolved mixed, impressionistic forms which broke down the by then merely ‘academic’ procedures of accepted art.¹⁰⁰

However, serialism, the most usually referred-to example of modernism in music (containing culmination of the tonal metanarrative, alienation and strong links with

⁹⁶ Walsh (1988) p. 47

⁹⁷ Griffiths (1992) p. 29

⁹⁸ Walsh (1988) p. 45

⁹⁹ Butler (1994) p.117

modernist artists) has been largely academic (that is, using rules which are, or become, institutionalised). More revealing is the Christopher Palmer quote that Butler chooses to underline his discussion of Debussy as modernist: in *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* there is:

for the first time in music . . . no thematic development, no thread of a logical discourse, but instead a purely sensuous flow of harmony and a new illusive poetry of instrumental timbre, a continuous process of transformation, fragmentation and regeneration of harmonic and melodic particles.¹⁰¹

These concepts allude so strongly to characteristics repeatedly represented as *postmodernist* – fragmentation, transformation, regeneration, lack of development, lack of structural 'logic' – that the suggestion that Debussy is modernist is questioned by Butler's choice of description of *Prélude* rather than substantiated.

Indeed, the more one considers the characteristics of Debussy's music, the less one is inclined to perceive him simply as a modernist composer. There is a degree of eclecticism, and the influence of the gamelan on his music, particularly rippling piano textures, is well-documented. The static nature of certain parameters within gamelan music is a quality which has been explored particularly by the Minimalists, and reflects a curiosity with regard to geographical as well as historical musical concepts; it has become much easier in terms of practicality to discover the music of non-Western cultures, and this has contributed towards eclectic approaches. The 'outwards' exploration is linked with the postmodern: a search for something new through that which already exists. In fact, Debussy could in many respects be seen as demonstrating elements of a progressive fusion, that is, an approach that by combining ideas from different idioms produces something innovative, 'totalling more than the sum of its parts', as it were. It can be argued that this kind of cross-influence is symptomatic of the

¹⁰⁰ Butler (1994) p. 11

¹⁰¹ In *ibid.*

general cultural climate of the twentieth century, of which postmodernism is only one aspect.

Going back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it is interesting to contrast Debussy's and Puccini's approaches to 'exotic' music. Debussy's gamelan textures are not widespread in his music, but in those areas in which they appear, they empathise with their environment. His piano writing particularly was often very untraditional in form, texture, tonality and rhythm, and there is no sense of a gamelan effect being forced into its surroundings, but more the effect of a symbiosis. This suggests that the music of the Ammanite orchestra (the performers of gamelan music Debussy heard at the Paris Exposition) appealed to Debussy through closeness to his own aesthetic rather than as a novelty (although this might also have attracted him). In some works, on the other hand, we see forays into precursors of jazz (the ragtime influences in 'Golliwog's Cakewalk' from *Children's Corner*, for example) or the adoption of Spanish influences (*Iberia*). The gamelan and jazz/Spanish influences relate to two contrasting Debussian expressions, introvert and extrovert respectively, and perhaps correlate to a particular mood the composer wishes to evoke.

Puccini chose the *Madam Butterfly* story as a plot for an opera (produced in Milan, 1904), then set about investigating Japanese culture and music in order to authenticate his subject. There is no obvious sympathy between Puccini's style and Japanese styles, more a bringing together demanded by the situation. Puccini made an effort to acquaint himself with Japanese culture, language and music. He met with a Japanese actress touring Italy, and listened to her speaking Japanese so he could get an impression of the timbre, and he also spent time with the wife of the Japanese ambassador to Italy, who sang him Japanese songs and taught him about the culture. In addition he consulted collections, played recordings and read books on the customs, cultures and religious ceremonies of Japan. *Madam Butterfly* incorporates a number of

Japanese themes, identified by Mosco Carner as, for example, folksongs and the Japanese national anthem.¹⁰²

It is not the intention here to suggest that Puccini's approach is inferior to Debussy's, more to underline differences between them. The proliferation of styles, and the opportunities to hear them (a composer is increasingly likely to 'stumble' on non-Western music) are reflected in the eclecticism perceived to be a contemporary phenomenon which has links with postmodernism. Superficial, eclectic composition could be seen as a reflection of abundant resources controlling a composer fascinated by their diversity, or as a comment on this environment rather than a surrender to it.

Eclecticism, far from being a recent development, has always existed. What is described as classical has elements of popular, sacred and secular music from various parts of the world that have been absorbed and have subsequently evolved over hundreds of years. This is not only the case with classical music – Celtic music, it has been suggested, retains Arabic features absorbed in medieval times, whereas chord changes in Senegambian lute music have been cited as a fundamental influence on the blues.¹⁰³ This kind of cross-influence is a relatively slow process, linked with the gradual development of musical styles and migration of practitioners.

While the lack of feeling of gravitation towards a central focus could be compared with serialism, the methods are very different. Serial music still relies on contrast, using motifs to deliver this in a cohesive form, while postmodernist art is typically more based on fragmentation. In serial music coherence and continuity are maintained by the consistent presence of the tone row. Debussy's music, on the other hand, reflects a more postmodern fragmentation: sections which change character in a much more arbitrary and sudden, disconnected manner than traditional structures allowed suggest postmodernist anti-narrativism. Debussy, although seeming 'way out' to his contemporaries, is now perceived as relatively accessible compared with

¹⁰² Carner (1992) p. 248

¹⁰³ Van der Merwe (1989)

Schoenberg, whose music still provokes extreme reactions. This is not to say that anything 'accessible' is postmodern, or that modernism is by definition inaccessible. However, modernism accentuated the concept of 'art for art's sake', seeing any focus on audience preference as a compromise, whereas postmodernism is less concerned with maintaining that aesthetic. It deals with an environment where audiences are already alienated, and rather than placing greatest value on the text and its 'correct' interpretation, recognises the instability of the text and the varied readings it allows.

Debussy also puts forward the idea of sound as sensuous, focusing on texture; this can perhaps be compared to the sparkling surface of Warhol's *Diamond Dust Shoes*, described by Jameson as having a "depthlessness".¹⁰⁴ The content of *Prélude*, without the traditional cohesiveness, is de-emphasised and the 'colour' of the sound promoted. The overall approach of Debussy seems to have something of a 'postmodern spirit', most notably departure from musical metanarratives. While it can be argued that traits within his music are both postmodern and modern, it is the governing aesthetic and rejection of 'rules' that seems to hold the key to Debussy the postmodernist.

There are clearly suggestions of postmodernism and modernism in music where one might not expect, were one to consider modernism to be primarily of the late nineteenth century onwards, and postmodernism as pertaining to post-Second World War art. The ideas in this section suggest that implications are far more widespread. Focusing on the different methods of cross-influence, it becomes apparent, however, that applying theory to music using these techniques presents its own problems, further complicating the issues surrounding application of postmodernist theory to music.

According to Potter, more recent composers reflect mixed aesthetics. The problems of analysis are clearly demonstrated by Potter's ascription of postmodern and modern characteristics to two important works of the late 1960s: Berio's *Sinfonia* (completed 1969) and Stockhausen's *Stimmung* (1968). Both these works, says Potter,

¹⁰⁴ Jameson (1991) p. 9

have traits which allude to modernism alongside those which correlate with postmodernism. The approach of applying lists of concepts (using Hassan's table as a checklist, for example) has already been outlined as problematic, and a more detailed examination of Potter's ideas demonstrates this, promoting further the concept of a 'postmodern spirit', an attitude embracing many traits.

Potter depicts *Sinfonia*'s resistance to simple interpretation as a modernist trait, but it would be fairer to say that interpretation has more to do with the concept of the critique of text than of the text itself. We know to some extent that the content of *Sinfonia* was the result of chance. Berio wrote the third movement, which incorporates many quotations from other composers' works, while on holiday in Sicily, and was therefore restricted to using the scores he had with him, those available from Catania Public Library, and his memory. While these sources allowed representation of a variety of influential composers and works, the material appearing is nevertheless out of Berio's control to some degree. The structure of the movement is clear; a Mahler scherzo equates to a backbone with other works complementing it. A Lévi-Strauss text further unifies the movement: the work was relatively recent (rather than some well-known text which would suggest certain associations to the many who knew it), and also relates to music in that Lévi-Strauss used classical musical forms and procedures as metaphors to demonstrate analogies between the myths of native South American tribes.¹⁰⁵ It should be noted, however, that Lévi-Strauss's structuralist approach places him in the modernist camp; his work on myths, for example, drew connections between different cultures, producing a myth metanarrative.

Berio insisted that *Sinfonia* was not a collage but "a skeleton that often re-emerges fully fleshed out then disappears, then comes back again".¹⁰⁶ But while collage has been put forward as a form particularly appropriate to postmodernist expression,¹⁰⁷ it

¹⁰⁵ Osmond-Smith (1991) p. 73

¹⁰⁶ Berio in Morgan (1993) p. 364

¹⁰⁷ See, for example, Manuel (1995)

is by no means exclusive to postmodernism. Picasso is usually considered to be an artist working in the modernist tradition, and *Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J.)* (1907) is described as "the first truly modernist painting"¹⁰⁸ because of its anti-representational approach. Picasso's collages such as *Bottle of Suze* (1912) and *Guitar* (1913) create images from materials such as newspaper, and are representational in that the guitar shape, for example, is recognisable as such. However, there are other levels to the works, with the texts on the newspaper pieces containing puns. Picasso describes his intent:

If a piece of newspaper can become a bottle, that gives us something to think about in connection with both newspaper and bottles too. This displaced object has entered a universe for which it was not made and where it retains, in a measure, its strangeness. And this strangeness was what we wanted to make people think about because we were quite aware that our world was becoming very strange and not exactly reassuring.¹⁰⁹

This reflects modernism in its intent to present the unrepresentable, the unrepresentable being the idea of the world being strange. The concept of artist communicating meaning and the autonomy of the artwork is also present here.

The approach of Torke in *Rust* (outlined on page 49), which he describes below, contrasts with Picasso's methods. For Torke, the inherent elements of the source are the focus rather than the 'meanings' arising from using them:

I wrote a piece called *Rust* which was done here in New York and I talked about the fact that I had listened to some rap music . . . There was a rhythm used in the vocals against a very simple drumtrack that I transcribed, assigned new pitches, and did all these canons. In the programme notes I said, 'I disassembled this rap rhythm, etc.' Then when the reviews came out, everybody was up in arms saying, 'This had nothing to do with rap music. How can he say this? The piece fails because he's

¹⁰⁸ Appignanesi and Garratt (1995) p. 12

¹⁰⁹ Picasso in Butler (1994) pp. 248-9

trying to be of the street and he's not'. I felt that was missing the whole point. But I realise I should have just shut up and not even mentioned it. You see, rap has this political component and my music is very apolitical, so I supposedly 'failed' because of that irresponsibility".¹¹⁰

Apart from underlining the de-emphasis of the composer's role in interpretations of his own works (as put forward by Barthes), this quote also raises questions regarding whether certain elements of style might have distinct connotations for the listener. Here it is implied that the source is so disguised its presence could only be known if the listener has the necessary background information. If the source *is* recognisable, however, can it be without connotation? Manuel argues that the Arab-style singing in M/A/R/R/S's 'Pump Up the Volume' is not referential and does not conjure up images of deserts and camels, rather floating over the piece as something 'other', since it has little connection with its dance context or the concept of using a P.A. system. The piece is, he says, "a characteristically postmodern exhilaration of surfaces".¹¹¹ However, to assume that the sample will not be associated with some extra-musical phenomenon is questionable. The 'exotic' vocals of Ofra Haza on the Sisters of Mercy's 'Temple of Love' seem to be used precisely *because* they are evocative: they clearly relate to a 'temple' idea, with its connotations of non-Christian (and therefore exotic) religion, and also suggest the increased level of sexual fulfilment associated by Westerners with Eastern techniques. To suggest that any element of a piece of music, content or background information, will not be associated with something by the listener, is probably an unsubstantiated claim. What is more significant is whether these associations will be perceived to be in some way unified, or whether they will appear to send conflicting messages.

Returning to *Sinfonia*, pinpointing the work as postmodern merely because of its collage-like (whatever Berio intended) structure is too simplistic. The way in which

¹¹⁰ Torke in Smith and Walker Smith(1994) pp. 248-9

¹¹¹ Manuel (1995) p. 233

disparate elements are united is also important, with, for example, different excerpts arranged to interlock through common pitches. Also, Berio is using music from classical sources: had he included more diversity, the issues would be complicated. Torke drew inspiration from a source which had a cultural identity far removed from his own classical background, and also one perceived as having less immanent meaning, and more external connotations. Of course, classical culture is not without ritual itself, but those sources from which Berio appropriates are of the same tradition as regards this ritual. One of the aspects of *Rust* that could be questioned is the switch from rap as a focus for external meaning to rap as a series of musical devices, with inherent, abstract signification (as classical music is often *believed* to have). Perhaps the problems described by Torke relate not only to the removal of rap from its cultural context, but also the failure to consider the cultural context of classical music.

This leads to questions of imitation, and how its intentions are interpreted. Parody as ironic comment correlates with ideas of postmodernism – irony featured in Hassan's table. However, Jameson (as seen in Chapter 1) differentiates parody from pastiche on the grounds that parody has a sense of irony or comment, and is modernist, whereas pastiche is postmodern, *neutral* imitation (that is, displaying a *lack* of irony),¹¹² so interpreting imitation as postmodernist on the basis of irony is not a straightforward process. If there is no emphasis on irony, then what sort of music is more 'superficial'? – that which has its sources so integrated that they no longer behave as separate elements, referring and commenting, thus *reducing* the number of levels inherent in the approach,¹¹³ or techniques such as sampling, which *add* layers of texture to those already in the piece? And is one more postmodern than the other?

The entries of the various musical quotations in *Sinfonia* are carefully planned to avoid them 'floating in and out'; Berio insists on a disciplined approach to eclecticism,¹¹⁴

¹¹² Jameson (1991) p. 17

¹¹³ I would consider fusion as tending towards this description.

¹¹⁴ See section 3.3.1

and intends the excerpts to have some kind of purpose reflected in the way in which they appear. Links are achieved by either (a) finding lines that have pitches in common when arranged contrapuntally; (b) by using a common harmonic basis (although some melodic lines are manipulated slightly, losing original harmonic characteristics in order to combine); or (c) using common melodic shapes. These are all devices which use inherent rather than referential characteristics, although excerpts are linked by the external theme of water.

Potter uses some questionable grounds for interpreting aspects of *Sinfonia* as postmodern: the concern for expression, use of tonal material, and links with the 1960s Milan intelligentsia (who included Umberto Eco, subsequently one of the leading commentators in the postmodernism debate, with whom Berio has collaborated). Concern for expression could be seen as being more modernist than postmodernist; superficiality was avoided by the modernists in preference for deeper meaning, existing on several different levels and often complex, with an accompanying sense of alienation clearly evoked in many works.

Gavin Thomas recently commented that

It is a measure of Berio's postmodern orientation that he has never felt impelled to invest such found objects with either the irony or nostalgia which they commonly evoke in the classic modernist works of Berg, Mahler et al.¹¹⁵

This has echoes of Jameson's comments on pastiche (superficial, postmodern) and parody (ironic, modern), and also assumes that the listener will not make connections, and is clearly focusing on the author as the source of a text's meaning. The problem with applying this to music is its promotion, particularly by modernists, as autonomous, and the focus of analysis on its inherent qualities – key structure, development of

¹¹⁵ Thomas (1996) p. 13

thematic material, and so on. However, the rise in status of the composer is mirrored by increasing focus on intention regarding composition.

Potter presents similar postmodern/modern contradictions in his discussion of *Stimmung* to those applied to *Sinfonia*. He claims the work is modernist in its use of serialism and extended vocal techniques, and postmodernist in its consonance and use of an ancient overtone method of Tibetan monks. This postmodernist framework is supplied by Jencks, whom Potter quotes:

To this day I would define postmodernism as I did in 1978 as double coding: the combination of Modern techniques with something else (usually traditional building) in order for architecture to communicate with the public and a concerned minority, usually other architects.¹¹⁶

The main disadvantage in focusing on an architect's ideas when examining music is that the way buildings are 'consumed' is completely different from how music is treated. Contemporary architecture is unavoidable in ordinary, day-to-day existence, and some modern buildings are criticised for not only their appearance but their social effect: architecture is of great consequence to us, whereas modern music (at least classical music) does not have the same scale of exposure. Architectural content is far more dependent on the commissioner of a project than musical content is, a building being much more functional than a piece of music, as well as being both occupied and on view for ideally a lengthy period of time. Possibly the best way to consider postmodernism in architecture is to see it as a response to certain social conditions, but one suited to the way in which buildings operate in culture. Music may, therefore, be subjected to similar conditions, but as its utilisation by society is so different from that of architecture, its method of dealing with changes in that society will also be very different.

¹¹⁶ Jencks in Potter (1993) p. 361

Potter's approach to *Stimmung* demonstrates a list of supposedly modern and postmodern criteria being applied to pitch. The six notes used derive from the harmonic series – 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 7th and 9th partials of a low B flat. This is the ancient Tibetan overtone method which is linked to postmodernism because of old content in new form and eclecticism through the use of non-idiomatic techniques. Yet other aspects need to be taken into account. Firstly, the use of overtones in this way can also suggest a very arithmetical, abstract approach, borne out further by the serial organisation of the piece and the use of proportions to link tempi and overtones. Secondly, *Stimmung* represents a reduction and separation of the constituents of certain sounds. Language is represented by phonemes, small constituent fragments of vowels and consonants, while timbre is broken down into partials; timbre in music generally is determined by overtones and the balance between those pitches, but Stockhausen uses these constituent elements rather than the product.

Whether or not architecture can appeal to the 'public' and the 'concerned minority' simultaneously, there is much to suggest that music fails to do this, and the comments of Lumsdaine in the next section on accessibility are an example. However, the broad interpretation of postmodernism is that it applies to contemporary culture in general, so why should ideas concerning architecture not be reflected in music?

In a sense there is a double-coding in *Sinfonia* and *Stimmung* – not as something for the layman and something for the expert, but as something relating to modernism and something relating to postmodernism, emphasising a bond between them. These are not isolated cases: Potter's opinion of Rzewski's *The People United Will Never Be Defeated* (1975) is that the "combination of familiar tune and extended treatment, of 'popular' energy and 'avant-garde' sophistication, makes it a powerful piece of postmodernism".¹¹⁷ The double coding here ('avant-garde' sophistication would perhaps more usually be associated with modernism) is clearly not dissimilar from that in *Sinfonia* and *Stimmung*.

This analysis contrasts with that applied to Stravinsky and Debussy and shows the importance of a 'spirit' rather than certain traits appearing which can be compared against some kind of postmodernism benchmark.

To summarise Lyotard's ideas on postmodernism and modernism, the content of modern, avant-garde art, rejects the past in that it no longer tries to represent it but turns to quite different concepts to provide content. Regarding form, however, modernism preserves some continuity with the past, its use of old forms providing, claims Lyotard "solace and pleasure".¹¹⁸ Postmodernism is that which in contrast "searches for new presentations . . . in order to impart a stronger sense of the unrepresentable".¹¹⁹ This focuses on a relative consistency of content between modernism and postmodernism, and also fails to acknowledge that the unfamiliar content in a familiar form can be more shocking than unfamiliar content in an unfamiliar form, since it is more obviously subverting something which is established.

It is clear that the relationship with the past that both characterises and contrasts modernism and postmodernism is complex, represented by an increasing rift with history rather than a reclamation. It is therefore logical that cross-influences should occur between contemporary styles, and perhaps relevant that the more distant past of classical music, such as Gregorian plainchant, should be of increasing interest: all this suggests a move forward away from the nostalgic periodisation towards a more objective relationship between different styles. Rather than being perceived as an aesthetic of historical tourism and pilfering, perhaps postmodernism could be something of a transition, beginning by rediscovering the past rejected by modernism, questioning the relationship with it as it begins to appear unhealthy, and ultimately transcending the nostalgia mode practices to discover its position in today's environment rather than in a chronological hierarchy.

¹¹⁷ Potter (1993) p. 371

¹¹⁸ Ibid. p. 81

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

3.5 Eclecticism

In the previous section, issues of eclecticism began to emerge, especially with regard to Stravinsky and Debussy and also contemporary popular music such as M/A/R/R/S. In this section, cross-influence is examined more thoroughly with regard to postmodernism.

Morgan gives a more generalised comparison of modernism and postmodernism in the context of music. Modernism "is largely committed to preserving at least the appearance of stylistic coherence and thus to the projection of a consistent voice",¹²⁰ whereas postmodernism "not only gives up the attempt to create coherence and consistency but, as often as not, makes fun of the very pretence of doing so".¹²¹ This is a way of phrasing ideals already examined by discussion of concepts such as irony, fragmentation and metanarratives.

Postmodernism in music is linked by Morgan particularly to collage as practised by composers such as Schnittke and Holloway:

They selected from an immense stockpile of items and recombined what was chosen in an eclectic amalgamation, more often than not emphasising the fragmented nature of the individual components and the contradictions and ambiguities arising from their juxtaposition.¹²²

Schnittke's pastiches have been mentioned already: equally interesting are the works of Holloway, who in the second movement of the *Serenade in E* combines thematic material from Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, Brahms' *Horn Trio*, Wagner's *The Ring*, and Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique Symphony*, in which shared rhythmic and melodic features are the focus. Holloway outlines his aesthetic as follows:

¹²⁰ Ibid. p. 30

¹²¹ Morgan (1993) p. 30

¹²² Ibid. p. 29

I am trying to write music which, though conversant with most of the revolutionary technical innovations of the last 80 years or so, and by no means turning its back on them, nonetheless keeps a continuity of language and expressive intention with the classics and romantics of the past.¹²³

This does not really seem a particularly fragmented approach, nor one that necessarily highlights contradiction, rather emphasising any affinity between different styles. Nevertheless, Morgan very much stresses the more 'superficial' approach to cross-influence, although the idea of a more thoroughly integrated practice is implied by reference to differences between styles becoming less clear-cut as a result of PRD and jazz influences on classical music in the 1970s. The importance of this 'blurring' of boundaries as a return to the pre-schism situation rather than an innovation should be accented. Although the 'great divide' is still very much present in culture consumption, there are pockets of activity where it is of less relevance. It is perhaps as a result of the focus on certain artists by either PRD or classical commentators and consequent questioning of cross-influence that it remains an issue.

For the artist whose music resists categorisation there may be problems reaching an audience outside that specifically interested in experimentation, as Glenn Branca observes:

I just do what I want to do, it's as simple as that. And there happens to be no place for that. People in the rock world think that my place is in the 'serious' music world. And people over there think that I belong in the rock world – progressive or experimental rock or whatever you want to call it. Neither of them really wants to have anything to do with me. Of course, this is an absurd generalisation. I wouldn't exist if people weren't interested in my work – but if you're going to try to make music that no-one's ever heard before, how can you fit into anything?¹²⁴

¹²³ Holloway in Morton and Collins [Eds.] (1992) p. 400

¹²⁴ Branca in Smith and Walker Smith (1994) p. 56

Branca is particularly difficult to ally more with one style than another – this is similar to the situation with Graham Fitkin's music (considered in Chapter 6). The application of the term 'symphony' immediately suggests links with classical music. A typical example is Branca's Symphony No. 6, subtitled 'Devil Chorus at the Gates of Heaven'. The content of the work is far removed from the traditional symphony; instrumentation consists of banks of electric guitars, electric basses and drum kit, suggesting PRD influences, which are further emphasised through the use of copious amounts of feedback and extreme volume. However, the sheer number of guitars does not correlate with PRD styles. The structure of the piece consists of motifs repeated over and over, linking with Minimalism – which itself arose partly through reactions to classical serialism – and the overtones and illusion of voices resulting from the layering, repetition and feedback again perhaps link with some Minimalist works. Reich's tape piece 'Come Out', for example, repeats a tape-loop of a voice, duplicating it and moving one track out of phase with the other, and the process is so gradual and repetitive that eventually the listener stops listening to what is being said and instead begins to hear relationships arising between the pitches of the doubled voice. The approach of Branca is not so much a cross-influence as an original concept which uses as its resources ideas associated with several idioms. It could even be said that his choice of resources influences categorisation negatively; the instrumentation and structure *prevent* the listener assuming the piece is in an classical style despite its title. The way the guitars are used in terms of their numbers and avoidance of the traditional PRD 'rhythm' or 'lead' roles point categorisation attempts away from PRD.

It is notable that many artists are perceived as either classical composers influenced by PRD or vice versa. Although it can be argued that some musicians (and even more so their works) display both PRD and classical music traits to the extent that categorisation is highly subjective, marketing in particular will result in that artist being labelled as one side of the PRD-classical boundary or the other, however close to the 'line' he or she may be – or, more notably, even when subsequent activities ally the

music being produced with the 'other side'. Aphex Twin is ambient, PRD despite performing with a food mixer instead of conventional instruments, collaborating with Philip Glass and building instruments with an almost Partch-like approach. Fitkin's music, although mistaken for Sting's, is placed in the classical section perhaps reflecting a preference for the chamber ensemble rather than electric guitars (although there is a proliferation of saxophones in his work), a degree from a University music department, studies with Andriessen in Holland, or appearing on a record label (Argo) that, despite an interest in the more PRD-influenced composers, appears to concentrate its efforts on appealing to the classical fan (Fitkin's early recordings were, however, released on Factory, a label more associated with alternative PRD music). It is also interesting that the new cross-over chart has its stand alongside the classical music in the glass cocoons of high-street stores; although not meeting the requisite criteria, it is still connected with classical by the industry (possibly on the grounds that the potential consumer, no doubt baffled by how outlets categorise music, is considered more likely to stumble on the cross-over products there).

Perhaps this categorisation reflects postmodernism itself, since establishing the 'identity' of a piece of music, or its audience, is important to its commodity value:

Transformations of style and means, emphasis on the surface at the expense of structure, on packaging as opposed to substance: these all speak of a society that treats its goods – cultural artefacts included – as so many exchangeable commodities.¹²⁵

An example of this is the packaging of *This is . . . Jungle* from a series of CD trios where the focus is clearly on value for money:

This is . . . Jungle is the 7th release in this massively successful [sic] and totally genuine value for money series. All original artists, all 12" versions,

¹²⁵ Morgan (1993) p. 32

named DJs in the mix. Upfront tunes chosen by experts, across 3 CDs all for the price of one!!¹²⁶

Also notable is the focus on product value through perceived authenticity, reassuring the buyer that this is 'real' jungle. The sleeve-notes tellingly conclude with the claim "Compiled with the buyer in mind". Nowhere is it suggested that the actual musical content has any value, despite many suggestions that jungle (now generally referred to as drum and bass) is one of the most innovative and exciting developments in PRD music this decade. The buyer is merely consumer, not someone who appreciates music. Surely any 'authenticity' that the product may have is compromised by the focus on its role as commodity. Or maybe this is a sacrifice of artistic credibility in favour of honesty.

The importance of background information – for example, the claim for the jungle CD that the music has been validated as representative by experts (that is, those whose criteria for judging music have somehow been hegemonically legitimised) – is a significant factor in the reception of music. It is, in effect, a text in addition to the one which the listener believes he is engaging with, and has a massive effect on response.

An integrated fusion is, in some sense, not particularly postmodern since it defies the labelling so vital to a commodity, and it binds together content which should be fragmented. However, it simultaneously expresses that double coding which is so important to Jencks' definition of postmodernism; the striking feature of Fitkin's *ARACT* is not merely that a work emanating from classical culture should be mistaken for Sting, but that other respondents should assume it to be classical music. The ambiguity is clear, and ambiguity is a consequence of double-coding. The Takemitsu experiment (page 28) holds interesting parallels, demonstrating how ambiguity can be manipulated with true or false background information; *ARACT* could be a candidate for such an exploration of perception and will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

¹²⁶ Sleeve-notes, *This is . . . Jungle* (1996, Beechwood)

How music is perceived, and hence categorised, depends not only on reference to certain idioms, but on whether such references are to defining characteristics (such as a PRD-related drum pattern, which over a piece of Mozart will immediately suggest a 'Pop Go the Classics' effect) or to traits associated with a style but less likely to be those which pinpoint an identity for listeners. This broadens the kind of eclecticism possible.

In an exploration of the relationship between 'high' and 'low' art, Lhamon describes a 'poplore' cycle forming a kind of metanarrative. In his book *Deliberate Speed*,¹²⁷ Lhamon identifies a cycle emerging in 1950s America in which culture was passed on via the media, or bought ready-made, rather than there being a creative, participatory emphasis. Popular culture, he suggests, succeeded 'high' art, which had effectively boxed itself into a corner.

Rather than heeding wide social needs, a cultural strain may develop autonomous values that lock into its own traditions as did modern painting. Rather than heeding the human needs of its current context, it may follow the seductive money of its caretakers, as did modern architecture. Rather than using the medium's force to clarify the condition of its audience, a few pied pipers whose charisma at first seems liberating may eventually march the medium over a far cliff, as happened in modern poetry and music. When as in these cases the art does not return sustenance to the culture that originally set it up, then the larger audience, too, withdraws its attention and pockets its support . . . Sooner than later, new arts connecting congenially with a public will replace them. The cycle is natural.¹²⁸

Lhamon, therefore, sees culture as consisting of two cycles: a 'high' art cycle, old and waning, and a 'pop' art cycle, new and becoming increasingly strong. These cycles are kept separate. The critical year for Lhamon is 1955, around which time increasing numbers of people had access to cars and to TV, and political issues such as black rights were focused on in a battle for change.

¹²⁷ Lhamon (1990)

Lhamon's poplore cycle has a relatively narrow application, and serves to segregate. He refers to postmodernism, but his cycles correspond far more to the pro-modernist ideas of Habermas than those of, say, Lyotard, or Bertens' recent overview of how postmodernism has developed into the 1990s:

It seems to me . . . that Giddens is right to speak of a 'radicalised' or 'high' modernity, although I would not strenuously object to 'postmodernity' as long as we acknowledge the important continuities with (the earlier stages of) modernity.¹²⁹

The artistic climate of reappraisal and reconciliation and a desire for change are reflected in art and politics in Britain. Certainly there are changes in culture that have arisen this century and have transformed living, and these are continuing: consumerism, for example, is expanding with the increased use of out-of-town shopping centres, and a focus on shopping as a leisure activity for both individuals and families. Sunday trading is berated on the one hand since Sunday is a time to be with the family, but it also provides an opportunity for the family to participate together in a shared interest. Although Lhamon's reflections on changes are detailed and supported by a wide variety of examples, to separate different areas of culture, and suggest that 'high' art is dying out is an oversimplification. It assumes that 'high' art is somehow exempt from consumerism, and that 'low', or popular styles are exempt from creativity.

The increased interest in DJ equipment, creating mixes from material already assembled by playing two or more records simultaneously, perhaps reflects less originality and imagination, but this development is concurrent with the application of electronics – synthesisers, sequencers and samplers, for example – to create new musical styles such as drum and bass. The relationship between drum and bass and commerce is, according to Collin, reflective of a symbiosis of creativity and economics:

¹²⁸ Ibid. p. 101

¹²⁹ Bertens (1995) pp. 246-7

Creative independence was considered far more significant than commercial independence, as evidenced by the fact that some producers negotiated contracts with not one but many different labels, while still running their own independent operations and doing remixes for those of their colleagues.¹³⁰

Suggesting that postmodernism is a transition between old and new is problematic because of the strong meta-narrativical overtones. The concept of a unifying concept displays connections with Reason, which has itself been questioned and problematised by many contemporary theorists.

If Mozart produced 'high' and 'low' works, and works combining elements of these, using similar harmonic bases throughout, then maybe the gradual removal of classical practice from 'low' connections, with it becoming increasingly an 'ivory tower' practice as far as contemporary works are concerned, will result in a lack of cultural consequence for classical music. Classical could then be seen, in the future, as something that turned out to be a dead end, while a harmonic metanarrative is continually traceable through more popular styles, developing as various influences are absorbed to become a hybrid found all over the world. This is all speculation, since it depends on future developments and future priorities regarding what is considered acceptable music practice from genre to genre.

Eclecticism is perhaps symptomatic of a generation who believe something new has to be set in motion, but have no idea where to start, combing through many sources to gain inspiration. Originality in the past has rarely been total innovation, but has retained at least some sort of connection with what went before, and in this sense postmodernism is no different. Electronic music may be the new metanarrative – perhaps in the next century classical will be completely transformed by it, and it is already highly influential on the development of pop styles. Were it not for drum machines, for example, the distinctive sound of Chicago House would not have

¹³⁰ Collin and Godfrey (1997) p. 262

developed, and the intricate, fast-tempo Jungle rhythms – themselves part of the House legacy – could not be played.

Flexibility is enabled by detachment from the historical metanarrative, but although it could be interpreted as freedom, it is often not treated as such, but rather as a reason to reinforce some sort of discipline, this becoming the responsibility of the individuals rather than inherent in some more widespread artistic consensus. This relates to anarchy, one of the traits on Hassan's list of postmodern tendencies. Although the popular interpretation of anarchy is chaos, it is more accurately described as a lack of government, or in art, a lack of governing rules. Some might argue that this has resulted in chaos, but the true emphasis is on liberty through transfer of control to the individual, rather than the individual conforming to a larger system. Whether the freedom is approached constructively or destructively is a personal choice.

In some respects, this could be seen as a culmination of the release of the composer from the constraints of patronage and the corresponding increase in focus on individual expression, and thus corresponding to the modernist aesthetic. Simultaneously, this is an idealistic view: the composer is still part of a commercial situation although lack of compromise to this is still favoured – Lumsdaine, for example, claims that "a person who has to make their music accessible has got no music to make accessible".¹³¹ This too reflects a continuation of the modernist aesthetic, although obviously one has to distinguish between music that *is* accessible and music that is *made* accessible. There is no reason why 'anything-goes' eclecticism need be attractive to an audience. Juxtaposition may emphasise contrast, and possibly even alienate as a consequence. Alienation is often perceived as a modernist trait, but should not be dismissed as non-postmodern. Although postmodernism is often considered to display themes of fragmentation and ambiguity, the results of both of these are difficulties for the individual to connect with something stable and hence secure, which could lead to alienation.

Some attitudes to eclecticism suggest modernism: Berio said of his *Sinfonia* that “If you want to unite lots of disparate things, you have to have a very strong technique”,¹³² while Lumsdaine prefers to term his references ‘resonances’, “because all my music is very tightly controlled in its material”.¹³³ So although eclecticism is one of the most recurrent themes when postmodernism is described, it nevertheless can be, and often is, used in a way that is reminiscent of modernism’s concern for carefully controlled structures – postmodernism as part of modernism.

These ideas further emphasise an understanding of postmodernism as an aesthetic, or ‘spirit’, rather than dependent on a historical ‘period’ in the sense of Romanticism or Classicism, for example. Simultaneously, this could merely be seen as a postmodernist interpretation of postmodernism: rather than proposing it as the latest development of a grand narrative, postmodernism is purposely detached from a linear chronology and given a free-floating identity which future theorists may question (with the advantage of hindsight to help them contextualise postmodernism). Although contemporary culture may exhibit postmodernist traits particularly strongly, and postmodernist theory arose partly as a response to that pattern (which is reinforced by mass media and communications specific to our own century), it is not exclusive nor does it exist in isolation, but displays identities perceived as evident elsewhere in history.

The relationship between high and low has been examined by other theorists and is highly relevant to concepts surrounding postmodernism and modernism. This can be outlined by considering trends over the past two centuries.

In the nineteenth century, as popular culture expanded to cater for the increasing urbanisation of the population, artists strove to differentiate their style from ‘parlour’, music hall and folk styles. Parlour music progressively adopted the

¹³¹ Lumsdaine in Ford (1993) p. 76

¹³² Berio in Hewett (1995) p. 46

¹³³ Lumsdaine in Ford (1993) p. 75

innovations of concert music, which responded by drawing further and further away stylistically, trying to find characteristics that would distinguish it from the parlour style. This increasing desire to justify oneself artistically by escaping from 'mass' culture led, it could be argued, to the development of what Andreas Huyssen, referring to art in a more general sense, terms the "Great Divide".¹³⁴

The degree of division increased greatly from the mid-19th century onwards, and it is generally recognised that the belief in artistic purity and transcendence is a characteristic of modernism that impedes – intentionally or not – its accessibility to a mass audience. Huyssen describes how:

modernists such as T.S. Eliot and Ortega Y Gasset emphasised time and time again that it was their mission to salvage the purity of high art from the encroachments of urbanisation, massification, technological modernisation, in short, of modern mass culture.¹³⁵

The channelling of artistic innovation towards a musical elite is demonstrated by the regulations of Schoenberg's Society for Private Musical Performance (see section 3.4). New music retreated further into the confines of the *élite* audience, who were often professionally trained (the situation today is perhaps in some respects little different).

Commenting more generally on modernist arts, Huyssen suggests that:

Modernism constituted itself through a conscious strategy of exclusion, an anxiety of contamination by its other: an increasingly consuming and engulfing mass culture.¹³⁶

Of course, the 'Great Divide' was not purely the result of a distaste for parlour music: this is merely one symptom of more widespread social changes, such as the decline in

¹³⁴ Huyssen (1988)

¹³⁵ Huyssen (1988) p. 163

¹³⁶ *Ibid.* p. vii

patronage, the urbanisation of the rural working classes, and the growth of a middle class keen to pursue the interests of their social betters.

As the 'schism' developed, it seems to have been determined worthy of comment when it was bridged in some way – for example, the actual use of folk tunes is found in works by both Haydn and Mahler, but comment proliferates on the latter as being something novel. This could be because the schism was more developed at the time, or perhaps because the composer's intention and sense of expression were growing in importance, or for a combination of such reasons. As for Haydn:

He possesses the great art of seeming familiar in his pieces. Thereby, in spite of all the contrapuntal means that are found therein, he has become popular and accepted by every amateur.¹³⁷

This suggests that accessibility was not controversial for at least some musicians of the time (although Wheelock suggests some of Haydn's contemporaries found it more problematic), and the familiarity may well have been due to the use of folk themes. For whatever reason, the effect is that the interpretation of similar techniques is judged according to cultural context, that is, outside influences affect the way in which inherent elements are interpreted.

The implications of modernism for the 'great divide' were considerable. Autonomy of the work of art became increasingly its focus, and content, however strongly connected to the past, reached the point at which a hierarchy of tonic, dominant and so on collapsed and thus the resulting works seemed detached from those in which the hierarchy, however distorted, had remained present. The differentiation between 'high' and 'low' was increased, taking composers further from an environment in which the 'Greats' such as Beethoven and Mozart had composed both 'popular' and 'serious' works. In the words of Lhamon, art "drifted . . . from the values of its originating

¹³⁷ Wheelock (1992) p. 68, quoting Gerber's *Historisch-bibliographisches Lexikon* of 1790

public".¹³⁸ This is perhaps epitomised by skyscrapers or tower blocks, now recognised as being, in many cases, detrimental to human interaction and sense of community. Serialism's retreat into élitism represents this too; by demanding membership in order to attend, the Society for Musical Performance, although committed to providing a sympathetic forum for the nurturing of new music, was hardly concerning itself with accessibility. Modernism's attempt to transcend, and to go beyond the previous restrictions of representational art or functional harmony, resulted in alienation. Perhaps this reflects the 'age of anxiety' in which modernist art was created: much of modernist architecture, for example, came about as the world was coming to terms with horrific conflict, and suggests a desire to escape from the past, but no longer with the solace of, for example, religion, which philosophy (particularly Nietzsche) and other areas of thought were questioning. Whatever the causes, postmodernism has retained an interest in reflecting the past, drawing on it, quoting, distorting and manipulating, and hence confirming its instability.

Music has perhaps been more greatly affected by the 'schism' than other arts. While Kandinsky prints are mass-produced and can be bought in non-specialist outlets, Schoenberg, probably the closest musical equivalent, can often only be found in specialist retailers and libraries. While Pop Art has existed primarily as a movement within fine art, not unlike, say, Cubism or Dadaism, pop music maintains a distance from classical music. Although there is a symbiosis between them, as there has been between 'high' and 'low' music for centuries, they are still most often consumed as totally separate cultures: note the symbolically separated, glass-doored rooms of high street record retailers hoping to appeal to the 'connoisseurs' by cossetting them away from those opting to buy 'mass' pop recordings. While this allows recordings to be promoted by playing them in the background, tailoring the choice to the area of the shop, questions arise as to why other styles and genres do not have their own separate areas, particularly bearing in mind the problems of using listener facilities in 'pop/rock'

¹³⁸ Lhamon (1990) p. 119

areas when loud music is playing over the shop's PA system. The very different rituals of classical and PRD concerts, with their contrasting audience behaviour, underline this segregation which is still maintained despite continued efforts to 'bridge the chasm'. These kinds of reconciliations are the ones Landesman finds problematic¹³⁹ – the rock band and orchestra on Jon Lord's *Concerto for Group and Orchestra* are kept in opposition, with passages alternating them as separate forces, and Nigel Kennedy's Hendrixisms seem to be used as a novelty 'reward' for an audience who has sat through 'difficult' Bartók and Bach.

This brings us to the issue of accessibility, and the question of whether PRD and classical really have become desegregated. The proliferation of debate and comment on mixing PRD and classical, both from those who practise fusion and those who prefer to keep the two separate, suggests that many composers who 'mix' their sources of inspiration are very much aware of what they are doing and the issues involved. The intuitive integration of eclectic elements, resulting from years of exposure, is perhaps not as widespread as sometimes suggested. Maybe the myth that this is a usual approach is responsible for the dilemma of composers who feel they should be using non-classical devices, as encapsulated by the comments of David Matthews (Chapter 2, reference 10).

It is this attempt to straddle 'high' and 'low' that is of obvious relevance to pop-classical cross-influences. Whatever the arguments against such pigeonholing, classical is perceived as servicing a 'high' function and PRD a 'low'. On this basis, the most frequent suggestions regarding the purpose of mixing the two are accessibility, legitimisation, reflection of background and segregation. Each of these will be considered separately.

1. **accessibility**, for example, the assumption that the presence of a drum machine in an arrangement of Bach will convert pop fans to 'superior' classical music by it being linked to their own 'inferior' choices of music (the 'sugaring the pill' effect);

¹³⁹ Landesman (1997)

2. **legitimisation**, for example, the assumption that incorporating elements of 'superior' classical into PRD music causes the resulting music to be taken more seriously by dominant legitimising social groups who value classical music more highly than PRD.

Differentiating between PRD and classical on grounds of value judgements, which are conditional on arbitrary criteria, has been discussed in previous chapters and will be covered again. However, subjecting non-classical music to classical criteria continues, as does subsequently finding it fails to meet these criteria to the extent that classical music does, and thus designating it inferior. This reflects the concept of a musical hierarchy generated by the ethnocentricity of traditional musicological attitudes. Academic institutions are legitimised by a dominant social group. Classical music, previously a product of church or court – again legitimised by a dominant social group – is an art form that today is perhaps most strongly linked with academia. An exception is Classic FM, considered inferior by some because of its reluctance to broadcast what are perceived as more 'challenging' works. With classical composition being concentrated in universities, this situation is intensified, and the core focus becomes a symbiosis between theorist and composer. Academia is not an external body capable of transcendent critique: it is as much a specific culture as that of classical music. The ethnocentricity inherent in classical theory is to some extent self-perpetuating as long as there is a perceived 'central canon' of works. Composers are made aware of the historical context in which they are working, produce music in accordance with its conventions. Even if their work is highly innovative, it will still, for example, probably be produced in score form, and performed by musicians trained according to classical conscripts in realisation of what is written. Admittance to such level of involvement with classical culture is regulated by the demands made of its members, and attitudes hence more easily preserved.

Yet the presumed superiority of classical music is not limited to traditional musicologists; rather, it seems to permeate wider audiences – note Emma Forrest's

reaction to the thought that the cross-influences on Vanessa-Mae's album were supposed to convert her to a supposedly superior style:

like most of Vanessa-Mae's target audience, I'm not that interested in classical music. When a piece of classical music comes my way, I listen to it stoically. It seems ridiculous to try and take the classical 'sting' out of it .

. . .¹⁴⁰

Forrest draws a comparison to a child being forced to eat vegetables:

Vegetables are supposed to be harder work than marshmallows . . . Your parents force you to eat courgettes. You hold your breath as you chew, and then you shoot your mum a defiant look, brave little soldier that you are, and tell her that it tasted okay.¹⁴¹

– which itself reflects the perception of some dominant force. If it were the case that PRD was the legitimate music, one could expect Forrest's article to be very much less defensive.

There is an assumption that by borrowing musical devices, the cultural identity of a source might be transplanted into a new context. An interesting comparison can be drawn with Jencks' description of postmodern architecture, which uses the influence of 'accessible' Classical¹⁴² structures:

Modern architecture suffered from elitism. Post-Modernism is trying to get over elitism not by dropping it, but rather by extending the language of architecture in many different ways – into the vernacular, towards tradition and the commercial slang of the street. Hence the double-coding, the architecture which speaks to the elite and the man on the street . . . Both

¹⁴⁰ Forrest (1995) p. 10

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Note the use of capitalisation here to denote reference to Classical in the sense of era (c. 1750-1820 is a commonly suggested chronological definition of the modern Classical era, influenced by Ancient Greek Classicism, as opposed to Ancient Greek Classicism itself), rather than classical in the sense of classical art forms.

groups, often opposed and often using different codes of perception, have to be satisfied.¹⁴³

It should be noted that modernists did not always intend to appeal only to the elite: Bauhaus designs, for example, which included living spaces, were often envisaged as potentially widely used, and in the case of the angle-poise lamp, this purpose has been realised. The obvious difference between this and music is that in music classical is still the music of the elite, and a supposedly inaccessible element, but the high-low double coding concept is still applicable.

Continuing the list begun previously of perceived intentions behind PRD-classical cross-influences:

3. **reflection of background**, that is the belief that for some musicians, a number of influences are 'first languages', and composition reflects a background of exposure to diverse styles rather than a more conscious bringing together.

This might mean, for example, that someone composing PRD music displays a tendency to raise the seventh of a minor mode to shift the music into a minor *key* instead and thus transferring practices of functional harmony into a PRD context without being conscious of doing so. The problem with this kind of speculation is that musicians and audiences alike tend to have a keen perception of what constitutes, for them, a particular musical style, and if working in a particular sphere, one is unlikely to transfer non-idiomatic traits by accident. For example, a firm grounding in functional harmony does not necessarily induce a musician to raise sevenths in minor modes when composing PRD music. Research has generally suggested that a musical style can be encapsulated in a set of rules, often very complex, but nonetheless defining that style. In this way Sundberg and Lindblom were able to generate idiomatic melodies in the style

¹⁴³ Jencks (1978) p.8. Note the perceived necessity of appealing to as wide a diversity of people as possible, and compare this with the comments of Forrest (1995) and Landesman (1997)

of Alice Tégner,¹⁴⁴ while Baroni and Jacoboni managed to write a computer programme to produce what sound like authentic Bach chorale harmonisations.¹⁴⁵ Yet generally there is a recognition of musical styles among audiences in general that is subconscious and instinctive. A listener will usually come up with a style label for a piece in a reasonably familiar style almost immediately. An explanation of reasons for choosing the label will require thought, implying that the label has been chosen through subconscious application of rule knowledge, while providing a reason requires that the subconscious knowledge is shifted into the conscious.

With this in mind, consider Mahler's comments on Haydn:

The music which the masters have assimilated in their childhood forms the texture of their mature musical development . . . The music is absorbed and goes through a process of mental digestion until it becomes a part of the person . . . It is stored away in their brain cells and will come forth again in the minds of creative musicians, not in the same or even similar form, but often in entirely new and wonderful conceptions . . . When he [Haydn] came to produce his great works, he was so thoroughly imbued with the musical language of the people that the folksong character and influence keeps cropping up all the time.¹⁴⁶

It has been observed that a number of Haydn's themes bear a resemblance to Austrian Ländler styles.¹⁴⁷ It is interesting to note that there is an implication of the popular in the word 'childhood', and classical in the word 'mature', but Ländler are not nursery rhymes; rather they are dances, aspects of 'low' culture rather than the 'high' culture works for which Haydn is known. This demonstrates that equating popular with simple or childish is not a recent idea.

¹⁴⁴ Monelle (1992) 5.7

¹⁴⁵ Monelle (1992) 5.8

¹⁴⁶ Quoted in Schroeder (1990) p. 146. Originally in *Etude* 29 (1911).

¹⁴⁷ See, for example, Wheelock (1992) p. 73

The main problem with Mahler's critique of Haydn is the assumption that the use of popular influences is subconscious. It may be that Haydn's familiarity with the style meant he could recreate it without reference to rules and stylistic examples in order to isolate idiomatic traits. But it does not necessarily follow that evocation of a Ländler style was accidental. The paragraph prior to the quote outlines arguments for a conscious cross-influence use, but it is impossible to verify one way or the other. It is perfectly possible that some cross-influence is subconscious but to imply this is the case with any specific example is unsatisfactory. It is much simpler to identify cross-influence that is obviously conscious. The sleeve-notes to the Moody Blues *Days of Future Passed*, for example, make it clear that the project of the band working with a composer was very much seen as unusual, and as a conscious effort to fuse elements of classical and PRD music. Similarly, a work like Jon Lord's *Concerto for Group and Orchestra*, contrasting the two forces and hence drawing attention to differences between them rather than fusing them, is clearly a conscious attempt to combine the influences of two genres in a single work. This brings us to the final item on the list:

4. **segregation**, or the idea that eclecticism does not necessarily diminish differences, or bridge the 'schism', but rather draws attention to the differences between disparate elements by contrasting them within a single context.

What do the four points on the list (accessibility, legitimisation, reflection of background and segregation) have to do with postmodernism? Firstly, the concept of ambiguity is reinforced, since a blending can be perceived to result from one or several of a number different approaches. Secondly, issues of non-universality are suggested; rather than a global unification of styles with all influences interacting harmoniously, fusions can be perceived as displays of fragmentation, of many non-unified styles contrasting with each other, bringing their own varied connotations to whatever context they are placed together in. The focus here on perception is itself significant: it is often suggested that eclecticism is postmodern (although it can be argued that this is an oversimplification, and the methods and types of combination may not suggest a

postmodern aesthetic – this argument will be very much at the forefront of discussions in subsequent chapters), and the ambiguities regarding the way it is perceived may suggest postmodernism within audience responses.

3.6 Summary

It can be seen that postmodernism has been defined in a number of ways. For Hassan, the most significant characteristic of postmodernism is indeterminance, the combination of indeterminacy and immanence. Lyotard characterises it at its most basic as “incredulity toward metanarratives”,¹⁴⁸ which links to indeterminacy in its refusal to correspond to a universal ‘plan’. For Jencks, the double-coding of Classical styles mixed with modern ideas is the focus of postmodernism (in architecture at least), combining recognised and new elements. This could apply to the music of Schnittke, Stravinsky and Peter Maxwell Davies. Jameson, however, refers to

the complacent eclecticism of postmodern architecture, which randomly and without principle but with gusto cannibalises all the architectural styles of the past and combines them in overstimulating ensembles.¹⁴⁹

Habermas is not so much a postmodern theorist as a contributor to the debate by way of his opposition to it (Lyotard is seen as his main ‘target’). For him, postmodernism is anti-modernist, following the example of Nietzsche’s break with the Enlightenment and renewal of ties with ancient philosophies. He advocates a return to modernity:

I think that instead of giving up modernity and its project as a lost cause, we should learn from the mistakes of those extravagant programs which have tried to negate modernity.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Lyotard (1984b) p. xxiv

¹⁴⁹ Jameson (1991) pp. 18-19

Bertens, meanwhile, is resigned to postmodernism, suggesting that conflicting ideas may have to exist side by side:

Postmodernism or radicalised modern – this is our fate: to reconcile the demands of rationality and those of the sublime, to negotiate a permanent crisis in the name of precarious stabilities.¹⁵¹

There seems here to be some nostalgia for stability to be maintained in some sort of transformed state. 'Precarious' suggests instability (its dictionary definition describes it as 'uncertain', 'dependent on chance' and 'insecure'), so the suggestion of an unstable stability is evident; opposition becomes ambiguity.

Despite the contradictions littering postmodern theory, which are partly due to its application in so many different disciplines, there is a 'postmodern spirit' which emerges through the discussions in this chapter. Like concepts such as 'classical' or 'PRD', it is problematic to try and reduce it to a set of criteria. I would argue that there are elements of intuition in recognising the postmodern in art: these equate to a subconscious cognitive process resulting from experiences constantly added to, and justifiable with argument when considered by the conscious, as is recognition of musical style (if one is familiar with it) or speech in a mother tongue. While there are relevant criteria for recognising postmodernism or, say, rock music, they are not universal and exclusive. This chapter has hopefully served to develop both a concept of possible criteria and a sense of 'postmodern spirit' that can now be used together in a more detailed examination of selected musical works.

¹⁵⁰ Habermas (1993) p. 106

¹⁵¹ Bertens (1995) p. 248

4 TALK TALK

Talk Talk's relatively complex integration of popular and classical provides useful examples of music that is thoroughly 'fused'. This chapter examines a number of pieces in the context of five albums spanning ten years, and considers whether the material represents a postmodern aesthetic. Because there are gradual changes in the group's music during this period, it can clearly be seen how their approach shifts, and how what were merely brief suggestions of non-idiomatic styles in their early work become developed, integrated and manipulated in later works.

Talk Talk initially employed what might be described as a 'synth pop' style typical of the era (their first album appeared in 1982). By the early 1990s, this had evolved into a far more eclectic and stylistically ambiguous approach. Certain traits which strongly suggest classical influences appear in their later music in a quite concentrated manner; in many cases allusions to these traits can be found in earlier songs. In an overall view of Talk Talk's work, this gives the impression that certain devices are used initially within a PRD context, not prominently and hence not questioning PRD identity. As the band's style tends towards a more fused aesthetic, these devices are more thoroughly explored, made more central to songs, and aspects of the conventional pop setting are discarded.

4.1 Analysis methods

Before embarking on a discussion of Talk Talk and their music, it is appropriate to consider the analysis methods used to study their composition. The three main artists examined in chapters 4 to 6 demanded different approaches to analysis because of their formats and the focus on different elements of style.

Traditional classical analysis focuses very much on the score, perhaps using recordings as an additional aid. Nattiez promotes a multi-dimensional approach, considering the musical text, the compositional process and the reception of the end product:

The musical work is not merely what we used to call the 'text'; it is not merely a whole composed of 'structures' . . . Rather, the work is also constituted by the procedures that have engendered it (acts of composition), and the procedures to which it gives rise: acts of integration and perception.¹

Hence analysis has three levels: the process of composition, referred to as the poietic level, the immanent level of the text itself, referred to as the neutral level, and the reception and construction of meaning, referred to as the esthetic level. The way in which the esthetic level may differ from the poietic level is exemplified by Boulez, who in a conversation with Nattiez described how

There is an analysis of Stockhausen's that is a joy to me: he is interested in a passage in Webern's quartet, not in terms of counterpoint, but in relation to *density*. From Webern's point of view, that's nonsense, obviously.²

Nattiez's observation that "composers draw past works towards the future in reading them in terms of their present"³ correlates with the idea that reception is based on individual experience.

Stefani's theories, discussed in Chapter 1, largely concern the esthetic level and are not without problems although they provide useful models with regard to the musicological metalanguage and method of describing perception. However, Nattiez observes that metamusical discourses (i.e. people discussing music, which applies to

¹ Nattiez (1990) p. ix

² Boulez in *ibid.* p. 185

³ *Ibid.* p. 185

the esthetic level) can be flawed – people will chat in a relaxed way with friends but may respond quite differently when interviewed by an ethnomusicologist.⁴


The following chapters focus particularly on the neutral level which is then related to the poietic and esthetic levels insofar as this is possible. Together the three levels may or may not reveal a suggestion of the 'postmodern spirit' which emerged from the discussion in the previous chapter.

As far as the neutral level is concerned, in classical music the score is the primary source – that is, the source closest to the composer's thought processes. The performance is a secondary source, since it is an interpretation of the primary source. To enhance analysis, original manuscripts are sought, and these may offer further clues to the composer's intention. The purpose is to gain further insight into a piece of music as the expression of the composer. The aim of interpretation, and the benefit performance gains from the analysis, concern trying to interpret the score in the way the composer intended.

Analysing works such as those by Talk Talk and Mike Oldfield demands a very different approach, since the primary source is a recording. While published scores may be available, they are an approximation using classical notation, which is often a poor compromise for non-classical music. PRD styles are often highly individualised in terms of timbre and technique, which traditional notation is unable to represent. While the classical composer records thoughts in the form of a score, the PRD artist is more likely to use magnetic tape or a floppy disc.

Musicology is a culture dependent on writing and reading, and classical music provides the musicologist with sources already in this form. For PRD styles, some form of compromise has to be made. In this thesis, conventional classical notation is employed to some extent, but it is augmented with various other methods of visual representation. None of these really represents the music heard as an entirety, but outlines the point to be made.

⁴ Ibid. p. 193

There is much argument against the use of conventional notation. This has been addressed by ethnomusicologists, and other methods of visually representing sound (using, for example, electronic measures of pitch and timbre) are used to some degree in this context. However, despite the limitations of classical notation, it has a number of advantages: it is, for example, relatively simple for the musicologist to understand and compare excerpts written in this way, and there is no need for specialised equipment. It can be used effectively if developed by the analyst in order to demonstrate specific characteristics, as a graphic aid to text. This is demonstrated by, for example, Sheila Whiteley's use of classical notation to outline points regarding, among other works, Hendrix's 'Purple Haze'.⁵ While Hendrix's music is often used as an example of the limitations of classical notation in analysis of PRD music, by using it to create an outline of a passage, developing it by using description (for example, "electronic manipulation and bending of notes") and symbols: the symbol , for example, is used to show pitch bends. Whiteley outlines her use of this kind of diagram as follows:

While it is recognised that progressive rock (in common with other popular forms of music) is primarily an aural experience, that it is performed, stored and distributed in a non-written form and that musical notation is not, therefore, the only key to analysis, I have nevertheless found it helpful to use manuscript as a graphic way of leading the reader through selected areas of the text.⁶

The methods of analysis used in the next chapters of this thesis have been chosen or developed in order to provide a graphic aid to outlining events in the music. Although the methods themselves are not consistent from artist to artist, they can nevertheless still be used comparatively. The analysis of Talk Talk's music is approached using a mixture of tables showing structure, metre, hypermetre, key/mode and harmony, which can then be expanded by the use of, for example, passages notated in classical fashion,

⁵ Whiteley (1992) p. 21

or descriptions. Fitkin's music is analysed in a more conventional manner since the primary source is a score, although recordings have been used to aid analysis. Graphic representation in the chapter on Fitkin's music uses both excerpts reproduced from the score and diagrams of the structure based on certain elements of the score – a reduction based on time-signatures with annotations representing motifs and sections is a particularly suitable way of showing the arithmetical structures used by the composer.

The justification of using different methods is evidenced by the way in which parallels can easily be drawn between Fitkin and Talk Talk with regard to the way they draw on different influences, both stating and subverting, to create integrated fusions rather than the more commonly found 'floating' of non-idiomatic influence over idiomatic background. Examples of this are analysed and represented differently, yet some of the conclusions drawn are very similar. The possibility of relating different artists and pieces to each other, despite fundamental differences between the primary sources involved, is important since the study aims to relate a variety of material to the same concept – postmodernism. The analyses of Talk Talk's music use tables as a graphic aid to outline tonality and structure, and these should be explained here: figure 4.1 shows an imaginary example featuring the main symbols of these diagrams. The table is colour-coded to denote different sections, and metre is shown by vertical lines (in effect, barlines).

The reasons for what may seem to be a privileging of harmonic and structural parameters is that (1) these alter considerably over Talk Talk's career and (2) they can be easily represented in a visual form. Certainly they are not the only aspects to be developed by Talk Talk – instrumentation is also a major factor, but is far less straightforward to represent in this way and will therefore be described rather than put in diagram form. The diagrams will reveal a gradual distortion of structure in some respects, while demonstrating regularities and patterns suggesting highly organised,

⁶ Ibid. p. 5

arithmetical procedures. Both these aspects are important to consider when looking for evidence of a 'postmodern spirit'.

Tonality and hypermetre⁷ are also made clear, and each harmonic change is shown in a bar proportionately to where it occurs, so that where in a four-beat bar there are two beats of one harmony, followed by two of another, the first symbol occurs at the beginning of the bar, the second in the middle. Arrows denote where harmony continues into the next measure. Where metre changes, this is shown in the bar in question, which is reduced or increased in horizontal size proportionately. This makes the table easy to compare visually in terms of predominant colours (Talk Talk's later music relies less on conventional verse-chorus structures, and has more extended middle eights; red is a less prominent colour in diagrams of later tracks) and shape (regularity of hypermetre). It is immediately clear too if pulse is vague from the use of dotted bar-lines or no barlines, and if metre is irregular because of the 'brickwork' effect of barlines on one line not corresponding to those on the line above or below.

Key:

| denotes metre (effectively bar lines)

|| denotes end of hypermetre (grouping of bars)

| denotes where metre is vague

introduction

verse

chorus

instrumental link

'middle eight'

'coda' section

Time signatures: denoted at the beginning, or, if changing, in the bars in question

Tonality/modality: denoted at the beginning, and at the end of the bar prior to any shift

Harmony: shown using roman numerals pertaining to the modality current at that point, using Arabic numerals to denote added notes and sharp, flat and natural signs to show where these are sharpened or flattened from the note present in the mode

⁷ Hypermetre refers to the groupings of metre; the most usual hypermetre in PRD is a four-grouping.

The tables are also a useful tool in analysis because they can be annotated and used in conjunction with other visual representations as substitutes for full scores which are not only easier to prepare but provide relatively brief and simple outlines of pieces.

C aeolian, 4/4

I	IV	V	VII		
I	IV	V	VII		
I	→	IV	→	V	→ VII
I	→	IV	→	V	→ VII
I	→	→	→		
I	IV	V	VII		
I	IV	V	VII		
I	IV	V	VII		
I	IV	V	→	A aeol	
I	VI	IV	VI		
I	VI	IV	VI		
I	VI	IV	VI		
I	VI	IV	VI	C ion	
³ / ₄ I	⁴ / ₄ II	³ / ₄ Ib	⁴ / ₄ VII 7		
I	IV	V	VII		
I	IV	V	VII		
I	IV	V	VII		
I	IV	V	→		
I	IV	V	VII		
repeat to fade					

Figure 4.1: Imaginary piece to demonstrate use of tables

Since Talk Talk’s music represents a gradual development in style, it is appropriate to consider it chronologically. As will be seen, this enables consideration of traits occurring in relatively early works which are developed later in the band’s career. Some changes in style are apparent when the visual representations of ‘It’s So Serious’, from 1982’s *The Party’s Over* (figure 4.2), and ‘Myrrhman’, from 1991’s *Laughing Stock* (figure 4.3) are compared.

'It's So Serious'

C Mixolydian

I	I	VII	VII
I	I	VII	VII
I	I	VII	VII
I	I	VII	VII
I	I	VII	VII
I	I	IV	IV
VII	VII	I	I
I	I	VII	VII
I	I	VII	VII
I	I	VII	VII
I	I	VII	VII
I	I	IV	IV
VII	VII	I	I
I	I	IV	IV
VII	VII	I	I (aeol→)
VI11	VI	V11	V#3
VI11	VI	V11	V#3
VI11	VI	V11	V#3
VI11	VI	V11	V#3 (mixolyd→)
I	I	IV	IV
VII	VII	I	V
I	I	IV	IV
VII	VII	I	V

rpt to fade

Figure 4.2: Tabulation of 'It's So Serious'

'Myrrhman'

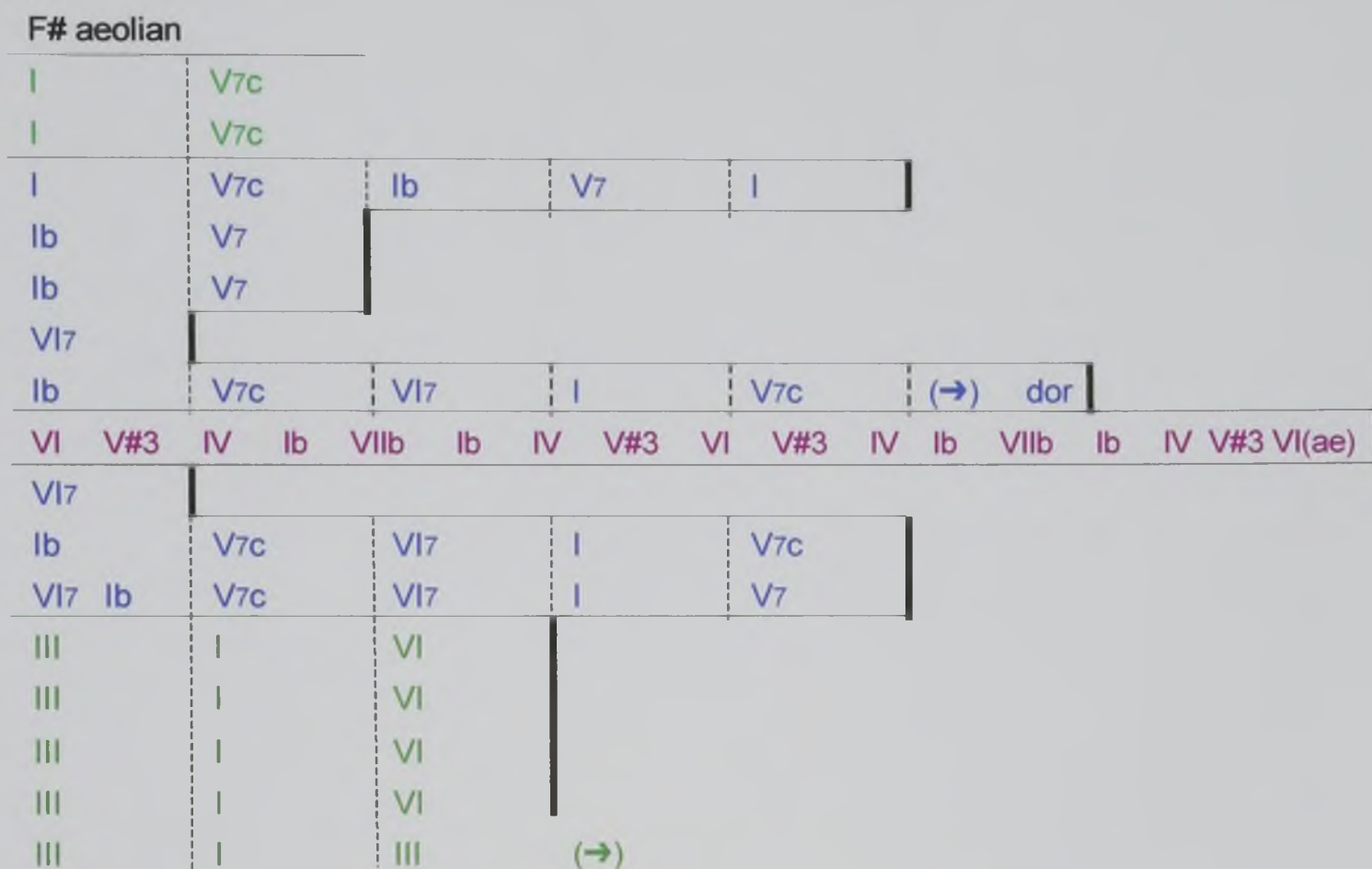


Figure 4.3: Tabulation of 'Myrrhman'

The diagram for 'It's So Serious' is relatively simple. The vertical lines denote metre, or barlines, the thicker lines the end of hypermetric groupings. Abbreviated names of modes are placed just before the barline at which they commence. Chord symbols such as V and I refer to the triad found on that step of the mode being used. #3 denotes that the third of the triad is raised (that is, V#3 in the C aeolian mode refers to a dominant chord of G where the third, B flat, has been raised to B natural). The colour coding refers to the structure of the song: green for introductions, red for choruses, blue for verses, cyan for instrumental links, dark pink for middle eights and dark green for codas. The song's simplicity is typical of the earlier songs, and the benefits of using this sort of format can be seen immediately when 'Myrrhman' is represented using the same method.

Immediately differences are apparent. Dotted barlines denote that metre is hazy and irregular. Hypermetre is extremely varied: the only grouping not used is the 4-bar hypermetre, which predominates in the earlier music, and the outline shape of the diagram is therefore very much more irregular than the previous example. The colour-scheme is more oriented towards blues and greens, without the contrasting red, denoting the lack of passages serving a chorus function. It is also straightforward to compare the two verses, and it is clear that there are differences between them (the second uses the latter half of the first, extending it by slight variation). Repetition is far less a feature of the structure than in earlier Talk Talk, and the central 'middle eight' section is, in contrast, palindromic. Arrows denote where harmony is carried into the next bar.

Regularity, repetition and a verse-chorus structure are present in much PRD music, so this song could be interpreted as questioning that identity. These are also elements that when subverted in this way might suggest classical stylistic identity. This suggests a more complex cross-influence than one which simply borrows a variety of influences: stylistic identity is questioned. There is certainly a sense of distortion, but is this a reflection of 'postmodern spirit'?

Of course, there are many aspects of the song which a table such as the one above fails to take account of, but even a comparison of what are fairly obvious characteristics of the tables uncovers details that, although audible to an extent, are far clearer and quantifiable when written down in this way. The palindromic construction of the middle eight, for example, is not easily noticed by listening, but is clearly an intentional element of the composition and raises questions concerning its intended purpose (it will be discussed in more detail later).

Having summarised developments in Talk Talk's style thus, it is now appropriate to consider their transition in more detail.

4.2 The Party's Over

The key to whether Talk Talk might be reflecting postmodernism is an understanding of the way in which different influences are brought together. This is most clearly demonstrated by considering the developments in Talk Talk's music as they take place across the various musical parameters to see how their aesthetic of fusion evolves. In many respects, 1982's *The Party's Over* is a conventional 'synth-pop' album typical of the early eighties. However, even at this early stage, certain elements hint at later developments. Although 'It's So Serious', discussed previously, displays regular hypermetre, this is not the case with all the tracks on the album. 'Hate' introduces 5-bar hypermetre in order to extend anticipation preceding the chorus with a bar of silence, and during the coda a 3-bar hypermetre separates the two sections. 'Mirrorman' also uses a 3-bar hypermetre, which extends the first chorus by the repetition of the second of two bars. However, the 4-bar hypermetre remains dominant at this stage, with a 2-grouping also used widely. Talk Talk's later music breaks increasingly from these conventional patterns so that 5- and 3-bar hypermetres become predominant on some tracks.

In classical music, 4-bar groupings, or exact multiples of 4, are not uncommon particularly in Classical era works, although in more contemporary music they are less widespread. This is also the case in many Baroque works, where the music progresses continually, linearly, and music preceding this where voices are woven across phrase breaks, or (as in plainchant) lengthy statements appear unbound by metre. Overall, the 4-bar phrase could certainly not be described as a classical hallmark, and thus to suggest the use of classical influences is misleading. The 4-bar hypermetre is widespread in PRD. If a piece of music which might be thought of as having a PRD-based identity is not using such groupings, the question arises of whether this is subversion of the expected rather than the influence of something external. Is it intentional or coincidence that subverting a 4-based hypermetre seems to suggest classical tendencies, particularly those displayed by contemporary classical styles? One

should distinguish between the 5- and 3- bar groupings, and the much longer lines of some of Talk Talk's later music which have the effect of destroying any sense of hypermetre (the palindromic section of 'Myrrhman' being an example). This similarly subverts PRD-style regular 4-groupings, and could suggest Baroque or Renaissance continuity of line, or completely different styles altogether: it was mentioned in the introduction how various Asian musics have a far more static or linear focus.

Other traits displayed on *The Party's Over* raise questions concerning stylistic identity. A contrast often drawn between PRD and classical is classical music's method of developing and varying an idea, whereas PRD tends to repeat, perhaps varying timbrally or by inflection, but not using a figure as a springboard in the way in which classical music does. This is related to the intensional and extensional tendencies recognised by Andrew Chester (see Chapter 1). Much of Talk Talk's music follows the PRD tendency: for example, introductions are frequently instrumentals using the chord progressions of the verse or chorus of the song concerned. In 'Mirror Man', this is developed, with the coda taking the link's IV-V figure, which is an open progression since it has no tonic closure, and transforming it into a closed progression by the addition of tonic chords, to form the progression IV-V-IV-V-IV-V-I-I. This can be compared to turning a question into a statement, and is a technique bearing some relation to classical devices.

The use of silence is important in that it appears relatively little in PRD, but is common in classical music. 'Hate' uses a tacet bar at the end of each chorus: at this stage the silence is carefully measured to a bar in length and the next entry is easily anticipated. In Talk Talk's later music, silences are less precise, and are utilised in a number of songs. Again, this could be a subversion of PRD traits or adoption of classical influences.

Timbrally, *The Party's Over* hints little at later developments. There is some contrasting of timbres, which are generally synthesiser effects (rather than the synthesiser imitating acoustic instruments). This is fairly typical of the 'synth-pop' genre.

There is some use of piano, a timbre which is increasingly deployed in Talk Talk's later music, and the rippling figures on 'Candy', using a wide keyboard range, appear to reflect classical influences.

There are, in 'Today', hints of the sacred influence which permeates later music, with the use of plagally-flavoured 4-3 (fa-mi) movements. That these devices seem to suggest sacred music is perhaps coincidental, although techniques reminiscent of church music are later deployed more frequently, in terms of lyrics and music. It is perhaps possible to read too much into these early plagal hints, nevertheless their presence, if unintentional, supports an affinity between Talk Talk and the influence of sacred music.

To summarise, *The Party's Over* gives relatively few clues to the path Talk Talk's music was to take subsequently, but nevertheless features certain devices that it may be possible to trace running through later music: the development of a thematic idea, manipulation of hypermetre and the use of silence. Certain instrumental figures also suggest classical influences, and these concepts recur and develop over the course of the next four albums. Already there are suggestions of appropriation and subversion which point to a fusion integrating on different levels and an aesthetic both distorting what is established and embracing otherness.

4.3 It's My Life

Released in 1984, *It's My Life* shows increased timbral and textural exploration, expansion of modulatory devices, and a growing concern with developing structure.

To some extent, the gradual move towards acoustic instruments which is evidenced on *It's My Life* may have been fashion-led (it is worth noting that subsequent to their involvement with the band, two members have gone on to produce techno and ambient works under the name Orang). There is increased use on this album of piano and acoustic guitar, instruments not necessarily connected with classical

instrumentation, and synthesiser timbres are increasingly imitative of orchestral instruments rather than abstract. This is obviously only a small step towards the acoustic approach used on later albums, but it is nonetheless significant in retrospect because it allows an album-by-album transition between electronic and acoustic instruments to be mapped out. Simultaneously, there is an allusion to hyperreality: the 'pretend' violin or flute being a postmodern 'cyber-instrument' created artificially.

On this second album, organic and synthetic sounds are used side by side, along with effects such as "elephant" sounds in the introduction to 'Such A Shame'. Timbres tend to be used in a more layered fashion: rather than a section maintaining the same timbres throughout, sounds are brought in relatively briefly, often as pointillistic highlighting effects ('Tomorrow Started', 'It's My Life'). There is increased contrast between different textures, used to dramatic effect on 'Dum Dum Girl', with the texture becoming suddenly sparse for the chorus, incorporating a distinctive flute figure which would be less audible were the texture more dense.

Structurally, ideas suggested on *The Party's Over* are taken further. Pause effects are used on 'Such A Shame', but are not complete bars as seen previously; rather, the equivalent of an extra beat is added onto the last chord of the chorus as it fades, the resulting hypermetre of the phrase thus being adjusted to a $2\frac{1}{4}$ grouping. The closing section of the song repeats a brief figure (based around chords VI and VII) regularly every eight beats, but as the final vocal line sung over these decelerates, the regularity of the pulse is distorted, and the subsequent repetitions are not necessarily perceived as being so precisely measured as being exactly two bars apart, even though that is in fact the case. 'Tomorrow Started' also uses part-bars, or changing metre, ending the introduction and each verse with a hypermetre of $1\frac{1}{2}$ bars. The first chorus is even more extreme, with 5 bars: 3 in 4 time, one in 3 time, and the last in 5/8. The effect of all these devices is very much like some kind of pause, or temporary loss of regularity which questions the usual insistence of the continual rhythm in a PRD song, but which would be quite unremarkable in a piece of twentieth-century classical music.

Is this subversion of PRD or classical influence, or a play on characteristics which transcends stylistic identity?

The use of modulation begins to show a reflection of classical influence; rather than sudden shifts, techniques such as using a chord present in two modes as a 'pivot' are employed. In 'Dum Dum Girl', for example, a Vb chord in B locrian mode has a similar function to the B aeolian VII and VII9 chords in the three previous lines, but introduces the 'foreign' F material so that the harmony functions simultaneously as IIIb in D aeolian, leading smoothly to the IV7 of the D aeolian link that follows. Figure 4.4 clarifies the progression:

Figure 4.4: use of a pivot chord in 'Dum Dum Girl'

Structural concerns are also developed; the classical technique of developing a motif appears in 'It's You', where an idea is stated fully only at the close. Initially, a progression of VI-VII in E aeolian is used to build a VI-VII-VIb-IV#3 progression. The chorus consists of a single statement of this pattern, and only at the end of the song, when it is repeated, is the effect heard of following the C# in IV#3 (effectively an A major triad) with a C natural in VI (a C major triad). This is clarified in figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5: motif developed in 'It's You'

To summarise, *It's My Life* takes timbre and structural concepts explored on the previous album and develops them further, at the same time introducing timbral effects and exploration of texture that is often associated with classical music. The lifting of classical traits hints at postmodern eclecticism while the hyperreal timbres also suggest the postmodern. Distortion and subversion again are frequently described as postmodern traits. Beyond this album, the more complex interplay of styles already hinted at is developed, and what may appear relatively superficial on *It's My Life* must be placed within the context of Talk Talk's output over the five albums.

4.4 The Colour of Spring

The Colour of Spring, released in 1986, can be seen as the key transitional point in Talk Talk's output. The over-riding style of the previous two albums, despite some hints of classical traits, is that of mainstream PRD, whereas with the two albums following, *Spirit of Eden* (1988) and *Laughing Stock* (1991), there is considerable stylistic ambiguity. The tracks on *The Colour of Spring* represent both approaches, being a mixture of relatively conventional PRD tracks and other material with a far vaguer stylistic identity. A number of techniques are experimented with for the first time, and some of the music appears to behave as preliminary sketches for subsequent writing.

The move away from 'synth pop' timbres is furthered, and a key ensemble of guitar, bass, kit/percussion, piano, organ and harmonium established. This is retained on *Spirit of Eden* and *Laughing Stock*, and augmented on all three albums with a variety of instruments, some associated more with popular styles (the dobro, for example), and others more with classical (bassoon), while some 'cross over' between genres (trumpet, clarinet), as well as a few relatively obscure additions (shozygs, variophon). This radically alters the overall sound of the band as timbres are more 'organic', and less 'clean' than synthesised sounds are used, leading to an overall 'thicker' texture. On *The Colour of Spring*, timbres are generally explored in isolation, with the key ensemble

providing most of the body of the music. Typical of this is the use of the harp in the introduction to 'I Don't Believe In You'; the arrangement is initially not particularly imaginative in that the chordal figures are perhaps more reminiscent of the guitar, although the fluttering high register harp figures at the end of the second chorus are more idiomatic. Two 'cello lines in 'Happiness is Easy' are prophetic of those used on 'Taphead' (*Laughing Stock*), and are similarly deep, slow and resonant (see figure 4.6).

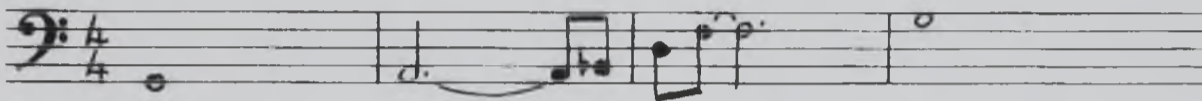


Figure 4.6: 'Cello line, 'Happiness is Easy'

Most significant, however, is the use of variophon to imitate wind instruments: the instrument can be described as a midway point between synthesiser and traditional acoustic instrument, so it is most appropriate that it should appear on an album falling midway between synthesised and acoustic styles. The variophon is an electronic wind instrument developed in the late 1970s which imitates various acoustic instruments. Cards are inserted into sockets to provide the appropriate timbre, which is controlled through a mouthpiece in the same way as a conventional wind instrument. Mouth articulations of the sound are therefore possible, and the effect is surprisingly authentic considering the artificiality of many synthesiser timbres of the time.

It could be suggested that this furthers the idea of hyperreal instruments, although the ease of use for a composer who is not able to play the variety of wind and brass instruments being incorporated should also be pointed out. It would also be more economical: the selection of musicians used on *Spirit of Eden*, the next album, was funded largely because of the success of *The Colour of Spring*.

Structurally, there is a concern with an almost Minimalist approach, using simple, short repeated figures. 'Life's What You Make It', for example, takes a two-bar bass figure (fig. 4.7) which is repeated throughout the song, with additional patterns layered to create changing textures.

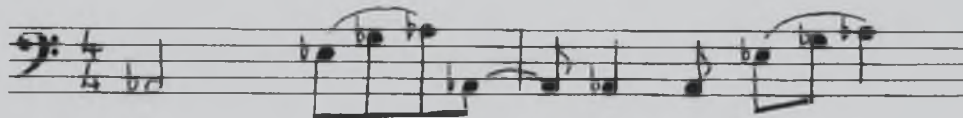


Figure 4.7: Bass figure, 'Life's What You Make It'

As will be seen in section 4.6, 'New Grass' (from *Laughing Stock*) uses similarly extensive repetition as a setting for cross-rhythms, and a contrasting section develops this with hypermetres passing in and out of phase with each other, demonstrating a development of concepts applied on *The Colour of Spring*. Cross-rhythms too are first seen on *The Colour of Spring*, with notes of $1\frac{1}{2}$ beats length in bars of 4 beats used in 'April 5th'. The 3-3-2 grouping is particularly common in PRD bar structures, but a typical PRD repeated 3-3-2 pattern only temporarily conflicts with the pulse, quickly being pulled into line by the underlying beat. In 'April 5th', in contrast, this is less the case; patterns of piano fifths are started on the first beat of a bar, only to move out of phase and be left hanging, while the pattern is started again on the beat. Between the second and third of these repetitions, the drum pattern shifts by way of a half-bar 'hiccup' ready for the next piano entry. The effect overall is as if the piano is having some success at pulling the rhythm track away from its regularity, whereas in a more rhythmically conventional song the pulse remains constant whatever might be pitted against it.

The rhythms opening the verse of 'April 5th' are represented by the diagram in figure 4.8. Such figurations are taken and developed in the following section, using 4- and 5-quaver groupings alongside the 3s (figure 4.9).



Figure 4.8: Opening rhythms, 'April 5th'

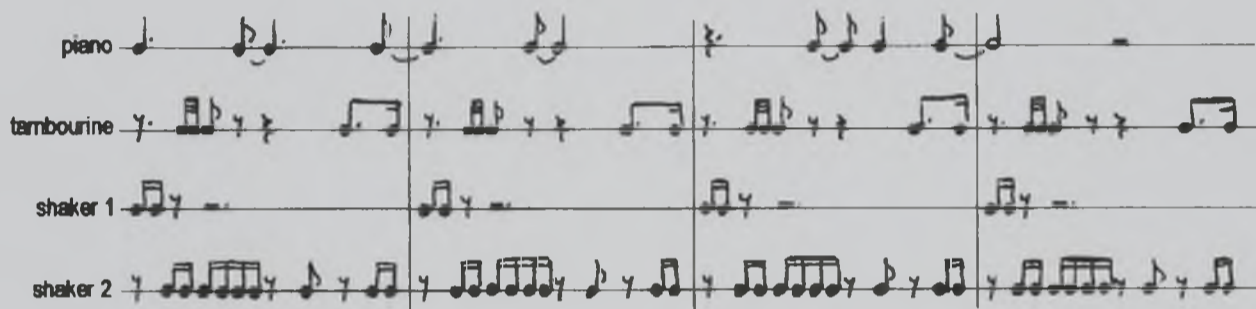


Figure 4.9: Development of opening rhythms, 'April 5th'

The way in which a fragment is used as a starting point for the creation of new material, thus granting thematic continuity to a piece of music, is very much typical of classical music. The cross-rhythms are particularly reminiscent of the techniques of Steve Reich's earlier music, although hint at the process rather than allowing it to continue.

The elements of style which seem to suggest the influence of Minimalism are not necessarily derived from it. Classical music has, until relatively recently, tended to base itself on developing tension and resolution, which early minimalism questioned. Many of the influences on composers labelled as Minimalist (Glass, Reich, Riley and Young) were African and Asian, where music aesthetics are considerably different from those of the European Cultural Institutions; similar levels of repetition and staticity are also present in the more dance-associated subgenres of PRD. Suggestions of Minimalism in Talk Talk's music could be linked with classical influences, since Minimalism is considered by many to be a type of classical music, despite the tensions

between those practising its approach and those allied to techniques such as serialism and complexity.

Dynamically, much of *The Colour of Spring* suggests classical influences: different dynamics are utilised in the form of both sudden changes and crescendos and diminuendos often – although not always – used in conjunction with textural changes. This has the effect of introducing tensional devices, opposing staticity, and dynamic awareness is a prominent feature of Talk Talk's subsequent work.

Harmonically, the album moves away from the block chord washes favoured before, and harmony is often implied by a figure rather than stated with no ambiguity by a chord. This linear approach could be considered more classical than PRD; tonality is questioned if harmony is indefinite, and this can create further tension-resolution devices through subsequent harmony pinpointing a modality.

The aspects of *The Colour of Spring* which are probably of the greatest significance to Talk Talk's later work are concentrated in one track, 'Chameleon Day'. It could be argued that on subsequent albums the band's style does not reach higher levels of ambiguity. The track is, however, a contrast with the rest of the album, whereas *Spirit of Eden* and *Laughing Stock* are more consistently removed from a conventional PRD approach.

'Chameleon Day' is a 'sandwich' ABA structure: it opens and closes with instrumental passages for variophon imitating saxophone and brass instruments to which piano, harmonium and organ are added. A number of traits in these passages suggest a strong classical influence – perhaps more significantly, there is nothing in its content to assert a PRD identity. The opening passage is reproduced in figure 4.10. There is no strong pulse: the quaver and crotchet 'anticipations' (trumpet bar 1, saxophone at the end of bar 2) do not act as syncopation against a beat but rather as a de-regulating device. The whole passage is highly reminiscent of contemporary classical styles.

'Chameleon Day' (opening section)

The image displays two systems of musical notation for the opening section of 'Chameleon Day'. The first system includes staves for saxophone, trumpet, low brass, organ 1, organ 2, and piano. The saxophone and trumpet parts feature melodic lines with dynamics such as *mp* and *poco rit*. The organ parts provide harmonic support with sustained chords and moving lines. The piano part includes a bass line and chords. The second system continues the notation for the same instruments, marked *a tempo*, and concludes with 'etc.' for each part.

System 1:

- sax:** Melodic line starting with a rest, then moving up. Dynamics: *mp*, *poco rit*.
- trpt:** Melodic line starting with a rest, then moving up. Dynamics: *mp*, *poco rit*.
- low brass:** Sustained notes. Dynamics: *mp*, *poco rit*.
- organ 1:** Sustained notes. Dynamics: *mp*, *poco rit*.
- organ 2:** Sustained notes. Dynamics: *poco rit*.
- piano:** Chords and bass line. Dynamics: *mf*, *poco rit*.

System 2:

- sax:** Melodic line. Dynamics: *mp*. Marking: *a tempo*. Ends with 'etc.'
- trpt:** Melodic line. Dynamics: *mp*, *mf*. Marking: *a tempo*. Ends with 'etc.'
- low brass:** Sustained notes. Dynamics: *mp*. Marking: *a tempo*. Ends with 'etc.'
- organ 1:** Sustained notes. Dynamics: *mp*. Marking: *a tempo*. Ends with 'etc.'
- organ 2:** Sustained notes. Dynamics: *mp*. Marking: *a tempo*. Ends with 'etc.'
- piano:** Chords and bass line. Marking: *a tempo*. Ends with 'etc.'

Figure 4.10: Opening section of 'Chameleon Day'

The sparsity of the arrangement and concentration on solo timbres suggests the *klangfarbenmelodie* techniques of Webern, and the style is compressed and suggests expressionism. It is not serial, with the F# and B acting as tonal foci, but the level of chromaticism nevertheless creates a sense of great tonal ambiguity, again something very much associated with twentieth century classical composition. Organ dissonances are reminiscent of Messiaen, and again the link with more recent classical music is suggested.

Harmony is often vaguely rather than definitively delivered, and the result of linear movement rather than the regular chord shifts found in much of Talk Talk's earlier music (particularly on *It's My Life* and *The Party's Over*). For this reason, the visual representation of the passage uses classical notation.

The central section of 'Chameleon Day' features vocal lines punctuated by piano chords and motifs, with minimal decorations from other instruments. The irregular chord changes have a meditative quality, and dynamics vary. The vocal style is in keeping with other Talk Talk material and suggests a PRD identity; were a bel canto voice to be substituted, the section would probably suggest a much more classically-influenced aesthetic. The section is not dissimilar to the opening of the second movement of Saint-Saëns' Oboe Sonata op. 166, which features a dialogue between arpeggio-based oboe figurations and accompanying piano chords, with timing only loosely specified.

In the context of the album as a whole, 'Chameleon Day' is a point of tension, being relatively abstract, non-repetitive and 'hook free', but this tension is resolved by concluding the album ('Chameleon Day' is the penultimate track) with 'Time It's Time', which is in a far more conventional PRD format – regular, repetitive and tonally specific.

'Chameleon Day' is significant in that it suggests more than simple subversion or transplantation. Rhythm, tonality, timbre and structure are all explored in a manner suggesting the interaction of appropriation and distortion on different levels. Is this a

postmodern fragmentation of characteristics, or a controlled integration? To consider this further, tracks from the two later albums need to be taken into account.

4.5 Spirit of Eden

'Chameleon Day' might be seen as a prelude to this fourth album, released in 1988. Although not so consistently ambiguous, *Spirit of Eden* features sparse, soloistic instrumental sections – this time with genuine acoustic instruments rather than the variophon imitations – punctuating vocalised song structures. Vocals are, however, sparse, and instrumental interludes lengthy, provoking the Rolling Stone Album Guide to describe the album as featuring “vocals . . . pushed aside by the band’s pointless noodling”.⁸ Although these vocalised sections are often quite regular in terms of harmonic shift and underlying percussion, the instrumental sections, and the absent PRD signifiers serve to undermine this identity. This is perhaps best demonstrated by referring to 'The Rainbow', which is represented visually in figure 4.11.

The coloration of the table suggests a quite different structure from that typical of previous albums. There is very little red – the chorus, or 'hook' element – and the most dominant colour is cyan, representing an instrumental link between vocal sections. Towards the end of the table, the cadence link motif leads to an organ passage, and then a 'break' similar to the introduction (which is based on the harmony of the verses). The introduction is lengthy, and the instrumental sections dominate the structure with vocalised passages relatively short. This does not necessarily denote the influence of a non-PRD genre, but does represent a move away from the structures common in earlier Talk Talk music, and found in many subgenres of PRD, where vocals and lyrics are prominent in the song format.

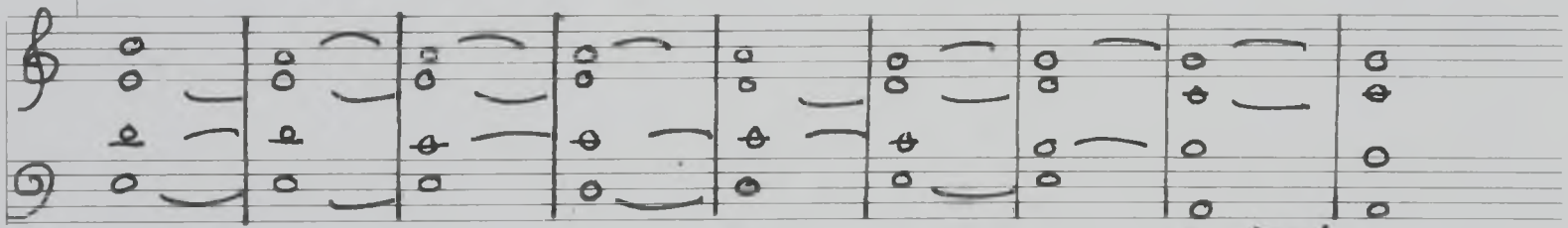
⁸ Considine (1992) p. 692

'The Rainbow'

Introduction: strings have notes D and alternating G/A
 reiterated pedal E
 hint of descending organ section notated in table
 rumble effects lead into table

A dorian

I7	→	IV	I7	→	IV		
I7	→	IV	I7	→	IV		
I7	→	IV					
I7	→	IV11	I7	→	IV11		
I7	→	IV11	I7	→	IV11		
I7	→	IV11	I7	→	IV11	V7	V7
I7	→	IV11	I7	→	IV11		
I7	→	IV11	I7	→	IV11		
I7	→	IV11	I7	→	I(ped) F#ae		
I7	Vl6	III6	IV#3,7	A ae			
I7d	(→)	V#3,7	IIIc	(→)	V#3,7		
IIIc	(→)	V#3,7	IIIc	(→)	V#3,7		
I7	→	IV11	I7	→	IV7		
I7	→	IV11	I7	→	IV7	V7	V7
I7	→	IV11	I7	→	IV7		
I7	→	IV11	I7	→	IV7		
I7	→	IV11	I7	→	I(ped) F#ae		
I7	Vl6	III6	IV7	A ae			
I7d	(→)	V#3,7	IIIc	(→)	V#3,7		
IIIc	(→)	V#3,7	IIIc	(→)	V7		



				(A ae)		
I7	→	IV	I7	→	IV	
I7	→	IV	I7	→	IV	
I7	→	IV	I7	→	IV	
I7	I(ped) F#ae					
I7	Vl6	III6	IV#3,7	A do		
IV7	Vl#5	II7d	I#3	IV7	'Eden'⊖	

Figure 4.11: Tabulation of 'The Rainbow'

Harmony in 'The Rainbow' features many added sevenths and elevenths, which contribute depth and colour. The classical interpretation of notes outside a standard triad cannot necessarily be applied, however: in classical music the seventh or second is traditionally resolved, but this is not the case with PRD harmony (nor, often, in post-Debussian classical harmony), and it would be contentious to apply an interpretation based on traditional theory. Similarly, although the organ passage suggests ecclesiastical influences in terms of timbre, and slow, chordal movement, with tension and resolution in its stately descending conjunct motion, the movement is not typical of classical functional harmony practice since the G (the seventh of the tonic chord, on which the passage finishes) of the latter part of the progression is not resolved, and the movement from the second inversion tonic triad of the third bar to an inverted eleventh in the fourth bar would be considered particularly weak.⁹ The passage is better seen as an interpretation of, or reference to, certain elements of church music, and is reminiscent of the chorale despite 'breaking rules' of chorale harmonisation.

This expands on the ecclesiastical elements on *The Colour of Spring*: even the title *Spirit of Eden* has obvious biblical connotations, and language and music both reflect sacred influences. The organ timbres are a strong presence, particularly on 'Wealth', where the organs' stately chords and the absence of percussion are particularly reminiscent of church music. The choir of Chelmsford Cathedral is featured on the album, and the dense soprano arrangement, descending gradually stepwise, invokes a church atmosphere. This kind of downwards movement of the parts recalls the organ passage; although it is not the same, it is very similarly structured.

The lyrics, though open to interpretation, use the expressions and language associated with the church, and strengthen the link. Talk Talk can thus be connected with both sacred and secular classical musics.

⁹ Although functional harmony is in many respects considered outmoded, much music used in a liturgical context is not contemporary; many hymn tunes, for example, are chorale harmonisations. Consequently, issues of functional harmony are relevant to this particular argument.

The notated section in figure 4.11 could have been represented in a table form, as with the rest of the track, but a traditionally-notated form seems more appropriate to the gradual descent which is a prominent feature of the passage. The passage actually recurs in other tracks, and is hence significant as a promoter of thematic unity. 'The Rainbow' is the first track on the album, and the organ passage reappears in the introduction to the third track, 'Desire'. It is also hinted at in the organ fragments in the introduction to the second track, 'Eden'. This is the only instance found where thematic material recurs in different Talk Talk tracks, but is nonetheless of great significance because such unity is typically found in classical music (the leitmotifs in Wagner's operas, for example) and far less in PRD. The exception is progressive rock, a PRD style noted for the influence which classical music had on it.

The dynamic contrasts appearing on *The Colour of Spring* are used extensively on *Spirit of Eden*, often underlined by textural devices such as sparser instrumentation in quieter passages. The phrasing in the central chamber ensemble passage of 'Inheritance' particularly demonstrates this, creating a climax two thirds of the way through by increasing volume and using higher ranges, and also gives the impression of temporarily increased tempo by subdividing a minim into three instead of two subdivisions. The way this brief rhythmic change is synchronised by the instruments (oboe, clarinet and cor anglais), as are the changing time-signatures, suggests a tightly controlled arrangement. The way the music develops within a short space of time raises the question of how the passage was created; the most practical way to control all these elements would perhaps be to notate the parts according to classical convention, but it seems that this was not the method used.

In a recent interview, Mark Hollis describes the recording process used on *Spirit of Eden*.¹⁰ Digital recording techniques were just beginning to be used, and the previous success of the band provided a large budget which allowed experimentation. Hollis

¹⁰ Smith (1998) p. 11.21

argues that “a musical idea will never be as good as the first time it’s expressed”,¹¹ so the creative focus was placed on improvisation. Recorded parts were then manipulated within the structure using the newly available technology without the detrimental effect on sound quality that would have been a problem with previous working methods. This is not evident from listening to the passage, but clearly has implications for a postmodern perspective on the album. Firstly, it suggests a fragmentation, cutting up recorded material and rearranging it in a manner which may remove structure present in the original passages. Secondly, it suggests that the music is not what it seems; the performance is extensively edited and the sense gained of performance is arguably misleading. Obviously this is the case with many recordings, and is not restricted to PRD music; a recording of an classical Piano Sonata, for example, may be a carefully constructed collage of many performances.

In Chapter 3, it was argued that collage is not necessarily postmodern, and the work of Picasso was considered. Picasso’s collages, it was suggested, are modernist because of the intent to present the unrepresentable, the different levels of meaning, and the integration of the various elements juxtaposed to create a single, cohesive work. These characteristics are present to some extent on *Spirit of Eden*. There are different levels within the structure, with the many parameters drawing on and subverting various influences. The regularity of PRD metre and hypermetre, for example, is questioned in loose, irregular passages (the hazy introduction to ‘Eden’, for example), while the classical orchestral instruments are placed in verse-chorus structures with regular background percussion patterns suggesting PRD influences.

Smith describes the process of creating an album structure:

The idea was to improvise, as a jazz band would, then take the elements and arrange them into an album structure afterwards.¹²

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Smith (1998) p. 11.21

This very much emphasises composer control, and suggests the imposition of some kind of (meta)narrative, again hinting towards the creation of a cohesive structure. Finally, the representation of the unrepresentable is, it could be argued, relevant to the concept of using improvisation and then imposing strict controls on it *after* performance. The implications of new technology allowing musicians to work in this way, resulting in a radical reversal of performance procedure, are surely significant. In one respect they allow modernist concern with structure to be applied, while in another the inversion of traditional procedures in art composition hints at hyperreality through the construction of an artificial performance.

However, when taking the processes used on *Spirit of Eden* into account, it is important to bear in mind that 'Chameleon Day', which is aurally far closer to tracks on *Spirit of Eden* than those on *The Colour of Spring*, was not created in the same way, and these particular arguments stemming from the construction of tracks on *Spirit of Eden* are therefore not applicable. This underlines the relevance of Nattiez's poietic and esthetic levels – similar esthetic effect may stem from dissimilar poietics..

The writing in the 'Inheritance' chamber passage is, like that of the instrumental sections of 'Chameleon Day', reminiscent of expressionism, again using sparse arrangements and solo timbres in the fashion of the *klangfarbenmelodie*. This is concentrated into a small, particularly intense passage, but such writing is prevalent throughout the album, and for the reasons outlined in the section on 'Chameleon Day' (harmony implied rather than stated, and built up linearly rather than featuring regular chord changes), tabulation is far more complicated than for the earlier works (refer to diagrams 4.2 and 4.3 earlier in this chapter). Of course, this tabulation fails to address a number of parameters, but it nevertheless provides a very convenient visual aid to comparing those it does cover, drawing attention to changes rather than covering them up with some kind of homogenisation process, as might be expected. The hazy feedback and cluster figures which often appear are quite problematic in the content of the tables: they imply some kind of harmony but are ambiguous and often quite

irregular. Bending and wavering pitches (such as those at the beginning of 'Eden') cannot be put into the visual format of the harmony table or classical notation, and in order to record them in a written discourse descriptions of the effects and approximate pitches have been presented as annotations to the tales.

The choice of musicians brought in to augment the band line up is perhaps significant. Nigel Kennedy provides violin; although he is perhaps most famously linked with Vivaldi and other classical 'masters', he is also connected with jazz and popular styles. Hugh Davies, credited with playing the shozygs, worked assisting Stockhausen at one stage, although he has also been active in other musical fields, both PRD-related and experimental. The shozygs are his own invention, consisting of receptacles such as TV sets which are agitated to produce sound. The original shozyg was made from an encyclopaedia with the reference SHO-ZYG on the spine, hence the name.

Certain elements of *Spirit of Eden* suggest a postmodern aesthetic. The recording method points at a fragmentation on the poetic level and there is the suggestion of pulling in diverse influences: church music, experimentalism, classical leitmotifs and studio manipulation of recordings to create a performance that never existed, but with the 'freshness' of improvisation – a piece that could be described as 'hyperreal'.

Yet although these traits seem to suggest postmodernism, *Spirit of Eden* as a whole entity does not convey a sense of 'postmodern spirit'. The elements are integrated and complement each other. There is no sense of fragmentation at the esthetic level, rather a highly cohesive, unified entity, a consistency of style and aesthetic, and the thorough integration of various elements – a more modernist approach. Here, as with pieces such as *Sinfonia* or *Stimmung* in Chapter 3, there seems to be an ambiguity as far as characteristics are concerned – a mixture of modern and postmodern. In terms of overriding aesthetic, there is no particular sense of the 'postmodern spirit' on *Spirit of Eden*.

4.6 Laughing Stock

Structurally, this album returns to the format of albums prior to *Spirit of Eden*, featuring separate, contrasting tracks rather than running tracks together, or maintaining the intense stylistic consistency used on *Spirit of Eden*. There are many passages not featuring a steady pulse, which continues the pattern initiated in 'Chameleon Day' (and hinted at in far earlier tracks – the 2¼ length hypermetre in 'Such a Shame', for example. In other tracks, pulse is fundamental, such as in 'New Grass' where it is used as a framework to explore cross-rhythms, resulting in an early-Minimalist 'phasing' effect (this was mentioned previously with regard to 'April 5th' on *The Colour of Spring*). Consequently there is ambiguity of identity; regularity suggests the influence of PRD, but the layering of different regular pulses results in distortion of any single over-riding pulse, and the PRD identity is hence subverted.

Again the instrumentation suggests a move away from PRD, but does not, however, clearly identify classical as its source. The flugelhorn, for example, is more frequently associated with brass bands, and the trumpet and piano are used in jazz, classical and PRD styles frequently. Even the string section is not conventionally classical, consisting of only violas, cellos and basses. The use of sounds not specifically classical increases flexibility since it does not pin the sound to a particular genre.

There is a return to a greater use of electronics – not in terms of timbres, but rather in recording techniques such as the use of delays, evident in the flugelhorn and trumpet lines on 'Taphead'. Delay is an alternative to extensive multi-tracking, and has its own distinctive sound. Such a technique has been used by PRD and classical musicians, although it was initially employed in *musique concrète*.

The instrumental writing contrasts with that on *Spirit of Eden* in that it is more focused on ensemble passages rather than solo lines, and the depth of sound is often more reminiscent of an orchestra than of a relatively small group of musicians. The use

of groups of instruments (seven violists, two cellists, two acoustic bass players) is also not seen on the previous album, and so the effect of the instrumentation though reminiscent of classical writing on both albums, is quite different on *Laughing Stock* to that on *Spirit of Eden*.

The opening track of *Laughing Stock*, 'Myrrhman', featured in the early part of this chapter, and is represented in figure 4.3. To summarise, the song features hazy, irregular metre, varied hypermetre, lack of repetition, nothing which might be identified as a chorus, and a palindromically structured middle section. Generally, these ideas are continued through much of the rest of the album. Only on the third track, 'After the Flood', is there the suggestion of a chorus, and hypermetre is often irregular and metre indefinite.

The palindromic chord sequence is not heard as such, but rather as a lengthy string of chords with no obvious pattern. When the progression was written out (this procedure used a keyboard as an aid to transcription), the pattern was clear, but it is not obvious from merely listening to the piece. This raises questions regarding intention; why is the pattern there? Is it intended to be heard? Or does it reflect a sense of planning carried through the compositional stage that grants the music a logical structure, albeit one which is not easily discernible? There is a sense of completion as the palindrome draws to a close, yet this seems to be the result of the return to the initial harmony – which need not be returned to by means of reversing down a musical path travelled.

The lack of repetition in 'Myrrhman' is not a feature of the whole album: 'After the Flood', 'Taphead', 'New Grass' and 'Runeii' all feature extensive use of repetition (statistically, this covers most of the album, there being only six tracks). The use of a short motif, repeated over and over, appeared on *The Colour of Spring* ('Life's What You Make It'), although it was not used on *Spirit of Eden*. The amount of repetition prior to change differentiates this kind of structure from the early albums, where typically a progression would be repeated four times, then another treated similarly to build a

structure of a number of sections, each with a different pattern repeated a few times. On *Laughing Stock*, one idea is repeated many times and additional figurations layered over this, which is far more akin to minimalism, or, for example, the African music which influenced Reich, than to most PRD.

This is particularly the case with 'New Grass' (figure 4.12). The track features two main sections in an ABAB format. A is a 10-bar phrase in 3/8, with guitar crotchets in bars 5-8 subverting the regularity of the 3 pulse, which is nevertheless maintained by the percussion. In some respects this is not dissimilar to the syncopation commonly found in PRD, but it is more extreme, and the 3/8 backbeat more obscured than would be usual in PRD. The pattern is repeated 17 times in the first instance and 14 in the second, varied by the selection of vocal lines placed over it, with touches of various different instruments altering the timbral colour. This level of repetition of limited material, and the variation of it, hints at contemporary dance styles and minimalism. The connection with minimalism is still more evident in section B, which retains the 3/8 percussion pattern, challenging it with chord changes spaced eight quavers apart. This produces a gentle phasing effect, typical of early Reich, and rarely found in PRD.

As with the 'Myrrhman' palindrome, the tight structure of 'New Grass' was not strongly evident until transcribed. This is perhaps particularly significant with regard to classical influences, particularly those of twentieth century music, where stochastic processes and tone rows are often easier to recognise in a visual representation than by listening to the music.

For Talk Talk, whose music is transmitted in recorded rather than score form, recognition must be aural. The structures evident in these examples raise unanswerable questions: are we supposed to hear the palindrome? Why is it used if it is not important that it is perceived? Do Talk Talk envisage an analytical listener hearing these structures? It is difficult to argue that these devices are unintentional, since they display such strong organisation, which is something very fundamental to classical

composition. That the listener is unlikely to perceive the ordering seems to ally Talk Talk to classical techniques still further.

The variety of ideas within the music on *Laughing Stock* is perhaps wider than on previous albums. Apart from the presence of techniques associated with Minimalism, there are a number of effects suggesting the influence of tape techniques (which could again be linked with Reich, but are used much more widely than just in Minimalism). In 'Taphead' a complex interplay between trumpet and flugelhorn is created using studio techniques. One instrumentalist plays both instruments, which demands some kind of multi-tracking if they are to duet. In addition to this, resonances and echoes suggest the use of a delay, into which the instrument is played and the tape looped round to re-record as it passes the play head of the machine. With sustained notes, the technique tends to make the tone more resonant as the pitch repeats and is layered over itself, and the sound is quite distinct from, say, the trumpet playing on two separate tracks, not recorded simultaneously, or two trumpet players performing simultaneously.

'New Grass' uses string sounds first recorded and then played backwards onto the master tape, so that the attack is an abruptness at the end of the note. These kinds of manipulation are associated with manual techniques of the 1950s and 1960s, used initially by composers associated with classical music (Stockhausen, for example), but subsequently employed by PRD musicians such as Pink Floyd, so to isolate them as owing more to the influence of PRD than classical or vice versa is inappropriate, although it could be argued that taking an influence such as tape techniques from, for example, Pink Floyd (which is not necessarily the case here) represents an indirect adoption of classical concepts.

significantly, often led to accusations of lack of expressive possibilities, and tape techniques such as those described above allow an acoustic instrument to provide this expression which is then manipulated, so this is more in keeping with the general direction in which Talk Talk were taking their aesthetic. While the acoustic instruments suggest disillusion with electronics on the surface, the recording techniques imply instead a renegotiated relationship with technology.

There is, at points on *Laughing Stock*, a lack of controlled synchronisation that suggests the music is improvised: this is particularly the case with 'Myrrhman'. Such freedom of timing, which is slow and almost meditative, is not something associated with PRD nor, particularly, classical; the technique serves more to subvert the stricter rhythms of PRD than to suggest classical influence. There are elements suggesting subversion – the pulse is loosened, there is a lack of a 'hook' and repetition is either avoided or increased to many restatements.

Overall, *Laughing Stock*, although more diverse, retains a sense of individual style and cohesiveness, building on ideas on *Spirit of Eden*, and developing the ensemble. Having on *Spirit of Eden* reached a distinctive aesthetic quite distant from their early material, the approach is used as a base on which to build and from which to explore further possibilities. There is therefore a strong sense of personal style: although there may be an eclectic array of influences, these are integrated and still there is a sense of unity and organisation that does not suggest a 'postmodern spirit'.

4.7 Summary

It is clear from examining the five albums of Talk Talk that the evolving stylistic approach does not simply reflect the 'pulling in' of non-idiomatic influences to a synth pop context. There is a complex process of presence, absence, adoption and subversion leading to an ambiguity. Certain developments, such as the use of instruments strongly associated with the classical orchestra (cor anglais, for example,

which is rarely found outside classical ensembles), suggest inspiration from classical music, and the manner in which instruments are employed for timbral contrast, sparse and rich textures, and colourative effect building and being stripped away, all very much with a sense of ensemble, evokes classical music in the tension and resolution carried out by many working as a tightly controlled unity – this is particularly the case with some of the ensemble passages on *Laughing Stock*. There appear to be logical, tightly controlled patterns (the palindromic chord progression on 'Myrrhman' for example) which are revealed by study of a visual representation rather than being clear in the aural experience. This is again highly indicative of approaches used in classical music.

Other changes in Talk Talk's style suggest a rejection of the relatively unambiguous PRD approach of their earlier music. Regularity, repetition, 'hook' lines and standard 4-bar hypermetre are among characteristics 'subverted', rejecting PRD identity while not necessarily suggesting an alternative influence. While the vocal style of the earlier Talk Talk music is relatively forceful, prominent and steadily melodic, the later style presents a more varied singing technique, with dynamic contrast, lyrics often much harder to discern during almost 'mumbled' passages of the performance, questioning the prominent role accorded to the vocals in much PRD music, but not suggesting the influence of an alternative aesthetic.

There is also an experimental concern and a desire to work with resources in order to expand the musical vocabulary. Subversion or absorption of classical concepts can in one sense be seen as methods of achieving this, but ideas such as the use of variophon are relatively independent of genuine identification, being allied not with a specific influence nor with a subversion. This music does not constitute Jameson's musical postmodernism – "the synthesis of classical and 'popular' styles".¹³

¹³ Jameson (1991) p. 7 One could argue that Jameson's examples – Glass and Riley – are hardly best summarised in such a manner either. Although both have had strong links with experimental rock culture, their aesthetics stem primarily from the influence of Indian music, and it is the way these concepts are displayed which evokes comparisons with popular styles.

Talk Talk's music can be related to both modern and postmodern aesthetics. Elements of eclecticism, hyperreality and fragmentation are found in much of their music. The second and third albums particularly suggest a developing approach reflecting aspects of the postmodern.

Other elements point more to modernism. The structure of the music, presenting subversion, appropriation and exploration of expressive possibilities on different levels does not pertain to Manuel's "postmodern exhilaration of surfaces"¹⁴ (see Chapter 3), yet the textural concerns and instrumental colour present a sensuous foreground which may be the focus of reception. The fragmentation involved in the later recording techniques suggests postmodernism, but is used to allow greater flexibility of material *within* the context of a carefully structured album and hence promote a narrative, suggesting a modern aesthetic. The later albums focus on process at the poetic level, and this can be related back to Deleuze and Guattari in Chapter 3 and their concern with process in the music of Cage.

Talk Talk's methods correspond to Hutcheon's argument:

Postmodernism is a contradictory phenomenon, one that uses and abuses, installs and then subverts, the very concepts it challenges.¹⁵

Yet the subversion in Talk Talk is not overt: it is an exploration which leaves behind earlier traits. The music expands rather than challenges, working towards the production of a complex but unified form of expression. The fourth and fifth albums suggest a highly unified approach which does not seem governed by a 'postmodern spirit'. In this context, the second and third albums are a progression towards a voice, and if they are a little less consistent, this can be attributed to the process of developing a stylistic identity that, once established, is consistent.

¹⁴ Manuel (1995) p. 233

¹⁵ Hutcheon (1988) p. 3

This chapter demonstrates that although music has been interpreted as modern or postmodern on the basis of traits present, there needs to be a contextualisation of such arguments and a consideration of the text as a whole rather than simply on the basis of its constituent elements.

5 MIKE OLDFIELD

Mike Oldfield is best known for his debut solo work, *Tubular Bells* (1973), a synthesiser- and guitar-based recording in the form of two parts, each approximately twenty minutes in length. It was used for incidental music in the film *The Exorcist*, and as the first release on Virgin, its sales were integral to the early success of the label.

Tubular Bells is the first of a number of large-structure works recorded by Oldfield over the last twenty-five years. This chapter considers some of this work, focusing on the manipulation of thematic material, comparable to methods of classical composers, which appears alongside other seemingly classical-influenced techniques. Thematic transformation is often found in the music of composers such as Liszt, and it is considered a fundamental tool for promoting unity within a work within classical culture. Its use, along with various other classical-influenced devices, by an individual describing himself as a "rock musician",¹ is significant. Oldfield uses a variety of influences in his work: this chapter examines the way in which these are combined and asks whether his work reflects postmodernism.

5.1 Early works

Tubular Bells, *Hergest Ridge* (1974) and *Ommadawn* (1975) can be grouped together, forming a trio of early works in Oldfield's output. They appear together as *Boxed* (1976), issued as a set together with some previously unreleased material. Various other projects followed, including involvement with the realisation of an orchestral arrangement by David Bedford of *Tubular Bells*, and Oldfield's next solo album,

¹ Monaghan (1993) p. 28

Incantations, was not released until 1978. It demonstrates a considerable development in compositional technique and will be examined in detail in a subsequent section.

Tubular Bells takes the form of changing, contrasting musical landscapes. Despite its commercial success, and the recognition of its originality, it has been criticised for its sudden shifts between sections. There is little to unify the work as a whole.

Hergest Ridge begins to address the cohesivity of thematic material. Karl Dallas, writing in *Melody Maker* in 1975, noted that the work "was a collection of five or six themes per side, often re-surfacing in disguise and in combinations which hid their origins".² The first side of the work (note that the composition is designed for a tape or vinyl album format) makes use of a limited amount of material: there is a Mixolydian melody first heard played by a whistle sound over a drone, an oboe theme, and a stately melody towards the end to which layers of instruments and voices are added. These themes are repeated and varied slightly, usually by using a different instrumental arrangement or by adding other figures; they are not actually transformed. In addition to these three core themes, there are a number of linking patterns based on simple ostinato-type motifs, although these are not developed. The second side uses new material alongside themes heard on Side One in different arrangements, and with new instrumentation. The concern with creating a unified structure, as discussed in the previous chapter, may suggest a modernist aesthetic

Ommadawn consists again of two relatively long pieces, again with each taking up one side of an album, which are subtly linked by the doubling of the tempo of a theme towards the end of the second piece to refer back to a theme in the first part, with a distinctive 'quirky' arrangement contrasting with other, smoother themes, and the use of a distinctive quaver-quaver-crotchet motif. The first side presents a number of themes before returning to the two opening ideas in a recapitulatory structure. The

² Dallas (1975)

second side is dominated by Paddy Maloney's uilleann pipes (Maloney has played extensively with The Chieftains).

Irish music, like PRD and classical, is a strong influence on Oldfield's style. Oldfield has compared his use of grace-notes on the guitar to pipe-playing technique,³ and the similarities between his guitar ornamentation and the figures used by Maloney are striking. Oldfield's frequent use of modal themes evocative of traditional melodies characterises much of his work, and this is particularly the case with his most recent album, *Voyager* (1996). This uses a more conventional album format, consisting of ten relatively short, separate tracks, six of which are arrangements of traditional melodies. Oldfield's mother was Irish, and his sense of ethnic identity resulting from this appears to have affected his musical influences.

There are other suggestions of Irish influences which can perhaps best be demonstrated by the 'pan-pipe' theme (**C**: figure 5.7) from *Incantations*. The range of the opening four bars is 9 notes (Breathnach describes a range of 9-11 notes as typical of Irish music⁴). This increases to an atypically large range only when referring back to the pentatonic arpeggios of *Incantations* theme **A**. The heptatonic Aeolian mode is one of four heptatonic modes used in Irish music, although it is not as common as the Ionian, Dorian or Mixolydian modes.

The ornamentation reflects several traditional Irish techniques. The use of single grace notes to cut or separate notes of the same pitch (the Ds and Gs in bars 2 and 4 of **C**) is typical, as is the ornamentation of unaccented notes (the top D in bar 5 of **C**) to give the music a 'lift'. Runs (bar 10 of **C**) are a feature of Irish music – it is thought they may derive from the *sruth mór* or 'great stream' of ancient harpists. Filling in of intervals (for example, the three-note runs on the second quavers of the sixth and eighth bars) is again a typical traditional ornamentation.

³ Randall (1995)

⁴ Breathnach (1983) p. 14

These kinds of figurations appear in many of Oldfield's themes – note the filling in of intervals and separating of pitches with a brief, differently-pitched note in the imitative texture of *Incantations* theme D (figure 5.6).

There appears to be greater unity between themes on *Hergest Ridge* than on the later *Ommadawn*, although both are clearly more cohesive than *Tubular Bells*. Oldfield's technique in dealing with organising large scale structures seems to be emerging at this stage. Yet his music, particularly the lack of development of themes, was subject to criticism in an article by Bernard Benoliel in *Tempo* in the Spring of 1977:

the technical limitations of the music on these discs is obvious on first hearing. The lack of solid musical architecture on a large scale, or of ingenious contrapuntal activity, or of a highly developed variation technique, a primitive use of tonality, a minimum of motivic developmental processes and a very slow rate of change in events – these are all noticeable weaknesses . . .⁵

There are obviously many issues raised by the article, particularly concerning the application of classical criteria for judging music that cannot be considered classical, despite displaying evidence of its influences. These will be addressed in a subsequent section. Firstly, the success of Oldfield's next composition, *Incantations*, in overcoming these problems should be examined.

⁵ Benoliel (1977) p. 27

5.2 Mid-period works: *Incantations*

The four movements are linked together by common themes that undergo transformation from movement to movement.⁶

Incantations (1978) consists of four movements, bound together by thematic material which is extensively manipulated. The quotation above, however, is taken from a description not of Oldfield's work but of Liszt's Piano Concerto no. 1 in E flat.

Incantations combines thematic transformation (most strongly associated with nineteenth century classical music) with techniques often found in PRD music, such as modality and instrumentation of electric guitars, synthesisers and drum kit. Together, the four movements last over an hour – lengthy by classical standards, let alone those of PRD – and form a structure considerably larger than those on Oldfield's previous albums.

The material in *Incantations* stems almost exclusively from a very small number of motifs which are built into themes which may contrast considerably, but are linked because they are formed from the same 'building blocks'. This provides a link to thematic transformation, where new material is developed from old by the retention of a limited amount of the original material in some way, be it pitch, rhythm, harmony or some other element, which is then manipulated and added to in order to create something new. In *Incantations*, the retained element is that which links to the group of motifs. In addition, the work features themes being developed, repeated and varied. The overall effect is one of extensive unity, and the very occasional appearance of material which is not bound to the motifs is particularly distinctive.

Monaghan commented on the unity throughout the work being created by having a limited number of recurring aspects, such as instrumentation or themes:

⁶ Grout and Palisca (1988) pp. 693-4

The piece is particularly cohesive, with the same limited set of main and accompanying instruments, and with vocals appearing at regular intervals; Mike also achieves a smooth unity by playing almost all the music on synthesisers, and by making these at times resemble the flute, trumpet and strings also present.⁷

The structure of the first part can be summarised as follows (each theme has been given a letter for ease of reference later):

- Introduction building up chords one note at a time
- **A:** Arpeggiated patterns over cycle-of-keys/modes harmony, irregular through alternation of 6 and 5 quaver groupings, repeated several times with flute, then synthesiser, then combination of the two
- Bridge section, focusing on cycle-of-keys/modes harmony alternated with new triple-time melody **B** repeated over static harmony several times
- Panpipe melody **C** with percussion and string wash, reminiscent of **A**'s arpeggiated patterns earlier
- Imitative melody **D** first on trumpets, then synthesisers, then trumpets again
- Bridge section with sequences and shifting harmonies
- Sequences of synthesiser and percussion, to which is added a simple conjunct choir part in groupings of three notes **E**, repeated several times with slight variations and added layers, leading to brief codetta-type section
- Repeat of introduction, arpeggiated patterns **A** and triple-time melody **B** from early in the piece

⁷ Monaghan (1993) p. 88

There are various kinds of repetition; a theme may reappear in a different setting, or a familiar timbre may be given a new theme. However, surely the most significant technique in terms of classical influence is the use of thematic transformation, which is not mentioned by Monaghan. For the listener, the recurring themes in *Incantations* are quite audible, and initial listenings suggest variation with, for example, different instrumentations or hints of one theme during subsequent material.

From the summary on the previous page it is clear that there are elements of variation and repetition within a recapitulatory structure. There appear, however, to be a number of separate themes, with no clear connection between them at this stage. In addition to these, there are various sequential patterns which deserve some attention.

Given that there are links suggested between the themes of different sections (for example, the panpipe melody **C** is reminiscent of the arpeggio-based theme **A**), an appropriate method of investigating them is required. As with Talk Talk's music, a visual representation of the music is of great benefit despite not being in accordance with its usual format, and transcriptions have been used in conjunction with the recording in order to build an analysis. Many of the sections of *Incantations* use frantic tempi, and are chronologically separated from each other: transcriptions help greatly to overcome these impedances to analysis.

The themes above will be discussed shortly. Firstly, however, it is necessary to outline the cycle-of-keys/modes concept, which is a particularly noticeable harmonic device in the movement. This refers to harmonic motion in fifths: for instance, moving from the key or mode on note C to G to D, or from F to B flat to E flat. Continuing the pattern eventually leads back to the starting location. The device can be used for modulatory sequences, passing through a chain of keys or modes. In *Incantations*, no new chord is established as a tonic, and the device has more the effect of a chain of passing chords than a movement through keys or modes.

In order to demonstrate the key/mode-cycle's predominance, the chord tables developed in conjunction with the study of Talk Talk's music provide a suitable starting point, and a tabulation of 'Incantations (Part I)' can be found in figure 5.1. The method is altered slightly from that used for Talk Talk. Firstly, instead of recognising a key or mode to be present for each section, and using Roman numerals to relate each harmony to that key or mode, this table uses mode or key names such as D minor, G Aeolian and A Mixolydian to describe the tonality of a bar based on considering melodic and harmonic elements. These will be shortened to Dm, Ga and Ax respectively. The reason for using the letters rather than numerals is because the extensive use of key/mode-cycles means that this alternative method will be much clearer. The sections and themes are numbered on the right of the tabulation in accordance with the previous summary. In addition to outlining the structure with the bar-harmony method used in Chapter 4, the areas using sharpwise cycles (moving to the dominant with each transition) of keys/modes have been shaded dark grey to represent a complete cycle, and mid grey to represent a smaller fragment (between three and eleven chords) of the cycle. A light grey denotes a flatwise cycle (moving to the subdominant with each transition), which is implied by the motif in the introduction and its recapitulation.

I want to consider themes A to E listed previously, and examine how they might be related to each other. The figures overleaf are approximate transcriptions of themes A (figure 5.2) and E (figure 5.3). The second of these themes, E, to which the words "Diana, luna, lucina" are set (it will be referred to as the Diana-luna theme), is based on rising and falling groups of three adjacent notes, in a strong-weak-strong arrangement. These patterns can be seen forming a base from which the arpeggios in A are launched (the appropriate notes have been asterisked in figure 5.2).

'Incantations (Part 1)' Tabulation (figure 5.1)

Key

- substantial elements of flatwise cycle
- substantial elements of sharpwise cycle
- complete sharpwise cycle

x represents Mixolydian and m minor:

Ax = A Mixolydian mode, Am = A minor, A = A major

	G																Section 1
			D														I n t r o d u c t i o n
				C													
					G'												
						F											
							C'										
								B♭									
									F'								
	G																
		D															
			C														
				G'													
					F												
						C'											
							B♭										
								F									
3 5 4 8	Gm	Dm	Am	Em	Bm	F#m	C#m	A♭x	E♭m	B♭m	Fm	Cm				Section 2	
	Gm	Dm	Am	Em	Bm	F#m	C#m	A♭x	E♭m	B♭m	Fm	Cm				Theme A (5th/2nd)	
	Gm	Dm	Am	Em	Bm	F#m	C#m	A♭x	E♭m	B♭m	Fm	Cm					
	Gm	Dm	Am	Em	Bm	F#m	C#m	A♭x	E♭m	B♭m	Fm	Cm					
	Gm	Dm	Am	Em	Bm	F#m	C#m	A♭x	E♭m	B♭m	Fm	Cm	Cm	Cm	Cm		Section 3 Bridge
3 4	B♭																Section 4 Theme B
	B♭																
11 8	A♭m	E♭m	B♭m	Fm	Cm	Gm	Dm	Am	Em	Bm	F#m	C#m				Bridge	
	A♭m	E♭m	B♭m	Fm	Cm	Gm	Dm	Am	Em	Bm	F#m	C#m					
3 4	B♭																Theme B
	B♭																
4 2 4 4	A♭	E♭	B♭4	F	Gm	Dm	Am	Em								Bridge	
	Dm	Cm	Gm														
	Dm	C	E4	C#m								Section 5 Theme C (panpipe)					
	F#	C#	G#m	E♭													



Figure 5.2: Theme A, 'Incantations (Part I)'

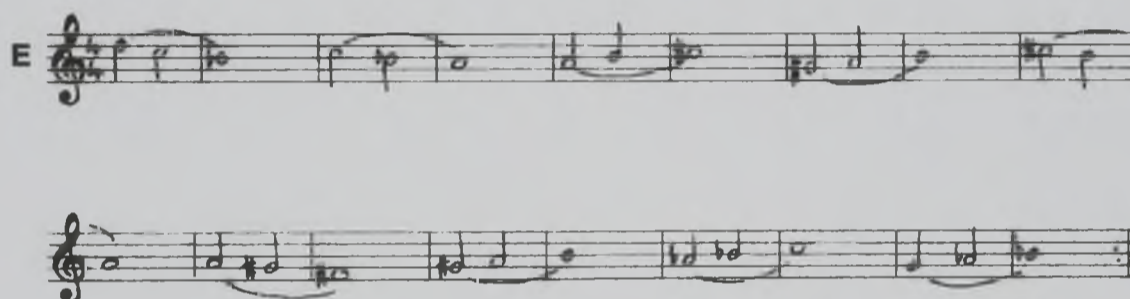


Figure 5.3: Theme E, 'Incantations (Part I)'

Theme A contains a substantial number of patterns based on a rising fifth followed by a falling second (marked x), repeated to form a sequence. Note that the pattern also appears in retrograde (x^2) and that, in the descending patterns in bars 3, 5, 8, 10 and 12, the rising fifth is inverted to become a falling fourth (x^1). Almost all of theme A can be traced to the 5th/2nd motif through variations of it, and the motif is in turn related to the cycle of keys concept so fundamental to the harmonic construction of the movement.

Figure 5.4 shows how the 5th-2nd motif is used sequentially in the introduction to build a chord (see also the tabulation in figure 5.1):

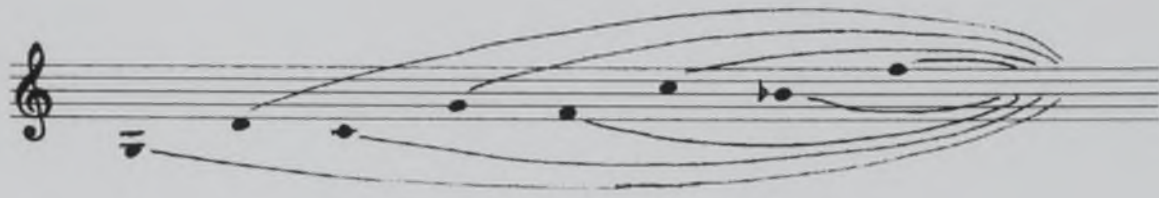


Figure 5.4: Use of 5th-2nd motif in introduction of 'Incantations (Part I)'

This provides a link to the mode cycles used in the harmony: the mode cycles went 'sharpwise' (that is, adding a sharp to or removing a flat from the mode implied by each chord in order to find the next: for example C, G, D, etc.) whereas this pattern moves a key 'flatwise' with each repetition (adding a flat or removing a sharp with each change: for example, C, F, B flat etc.).

The Diana-luna motif (E) is not only evident in the arpeggios of theme A, but also relates to patterns in themes B and D. In theme D – figure 5.6 – it is used in quadruple time to create an imitative texture; the groupings of three notes have been bracketed. Note also the suggestion of the 5th/2nd theme in bar 3. The pattern in bar 12 of the second trumpet part appears again in bars 14 and 22, adding further unity to the theme.

Theme B, shown in figure 5.5, again follows similar conjunct rising and falling patterns, this time in groups of four notes:



Figure 5.5: Theme B, 'Incantations (Part I)'

The musical score for Theme D, 'Incantations (Part I)', is presented in four systems. Each system contains two staves, labeled 'trumpet 1' and 'trumpet 2'. The first system is marked with a large 'D'. The music is written in 2/4 time and features complex rhythmic patterns with many beamed notes and slurs. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

Figure 5.6: Theme D, 'Incantations (Part I)'

Both theme B and theme D use Diana-luna-related material for the bulk of their construction, rather than in a way which suggests the occasional passing note, and this strengthens the argument for conscious thematic consideration by the composer.

Theme C, however, is more allied to the 5th/2nd theme. It is reproduced (figure 5.7), with the markings P, Q and R. P denotes the original rising fifth/falling second pattern, and Q the semi-inverted falling fourth/falling second pattern. R represents further development of these motifs; although the figures around bar 7 use rising 4ths

and 6ths, the relationship between the contours of these patterns and the original 5th/2nd theme is clearly audible, and there is thus clear evidence of not only the transformation of thematic ideas (using them as the basis for a theme which is not obviously related), but the development of material (deriving patterns that are clearly related to the original). Again, much of the theme can be seen to derive from these motifs, developed by the addition of scalar figures and passing notes.



Figure 5.7: Theme C, 'Incantations (Part I)'

In addition to these five core themes, 'Incantations (Part I)' also features a number of brief patterns, often used sequentially, which are not themes as such, but nevertheless relate to the thematic material on which themes A to E are based. The following transcription (figure 5.8) shows cycle-of-keys harmony accompanying a 5th/2nd sequence and a key-related glissando-effect sequence, which appears in section 3 (see figure 5.1). We have already established a relationship between the

5th/2nd pattern and the cycle of keys; the former is cyclic going in a flat-wise direction, the latter so in a sharp-wise direction.



Figure 5.8: Bridge, section 3, 'Incantations (Part I)'

Similar passages are used as linking sections throughout *Incantations*.

In Parts II to IV, the material established in Part I often recurs although it is normally varied. Further themes are introduced, but almost exclusively relate back to the material in Part I. The following pentatonic theme, harmonised in D Aeolian mode, is introduced in Part II and repeated many times; it is clearly based on the 5th/2nd motif. The theme is used for a vocal setting of Longfellow's *Hiawatha*, and is varied slightly on each repetition. The transcription in figure 5.9 is of the melody of the first 'verse'; there are 19 of these, punctuated only by a guitar rendition of the theme between verses fourteen and fifteen. There is some variation, with patterns of two crotchets, quaver-dotted crotchet and dotted crotchet-quaver interchanged to make each verse a slight variation. It is not clear why this is done, since the text does not suggest any need for such irregularity. It is feasible that since there are so many repetitions, Oldfield believed slight variation would add interest to a potentially monotonous passage, although there is little distinction created by the technique. The device bears some relation to rhythmic variation, a form of ornamentation in traditional Irish music, where, for example, a triplet

may be replaced with a dotted crotchet, or a crotchet and quaver, or a crotchet and two semi quavers replaced by three quavers.⁸



Figure 5.9: 'Hiawatha' theme, 'Incantations (Part II)'

The importance of the 'Hiawatha' theme as a source for further material should be considered. The melodic patterns are clearly related to the patterns of 5ths and 2nds, but the harmony accompanying is new, more repetitive and conventional (in terms of PRD music) in its eight bar pattern. It provides an alternative to the cycle of fifths, yet is not totally unrelated, because the overlying melody links back to the 5th/2nd motif.

The harmony used for the 'Hiawatha' theme returns later on in the work with xylophone passages lifted directly from the ostinato patterns, and also as the basis for a bass pattern in 'Part IV' (figure 5.10), where the rhythmic patterns are reminiscent of those in theme A:

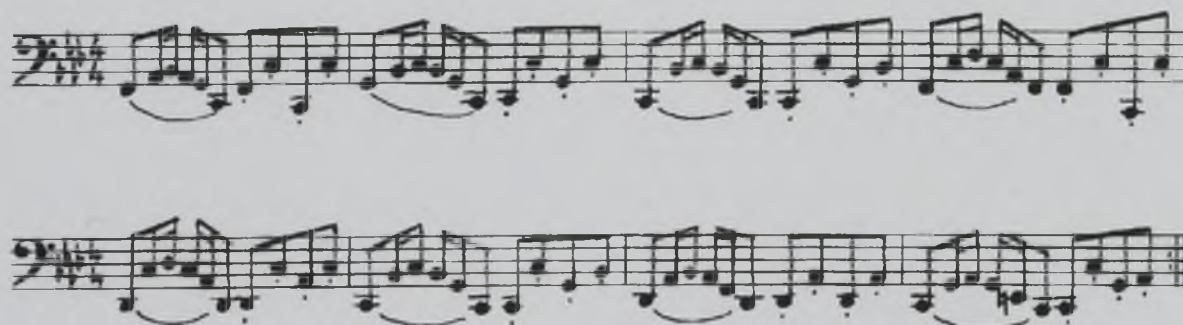


Figure 5.10: Bass pattern derived from 'Hiawatha' theme, 'Incantations (Part IV)'

⁸ Breathnach (1983) p. 99

The 'Hiawatha' theme thus becomes central to the work, because of the length of the initial setting, and because of its relationship with much of the other material in the work.

There are, however, themes which are more difficult to link with other material.

The first theme of 'Part II' is an example (figure 5.11)



Figure 5.11: Opening theme, 'Incantations (Part II)'

The falling 2nd/rising 3rd motif seems to link only to the first theme of 'Part III' (see following paragraph), although its contours could be compared to the falling 2nd/rising 5th motif (which in theme C uses other intervals in place of the fifth). The harmony of the section is the cycle of fifths so predominant in 'Part I', and the theme is, much like theme A, one which gives an impression of improvisation around the cycle of fifths harmony. In this sense, it is not unrelated to theme A, and serves a similar purpose in 'Part II' to that of theme A in 'Part I', namely an opening idea established by repetition.

The first theme of 'Part III', referred to above, stands out because its contours, harmony and textures are distinct from much of the rest of *Incantations*. The first eight bars are transcribed in figure 5.12:



Figure 5.12: Opening theme, 'Incantations (Part III)'

The melody links with the first theme of 'Part II' (discussed in the previous paragraph) in that it features chains of rising thirds and falling seconds (figure 5.13):

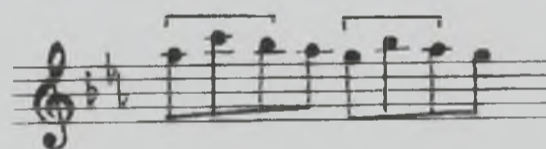


Figure 5.13: Rising thirds and falling seconds, opening theme, 'Incantations (Part III)'

The scalic elements are also found in the first theme of 'Part II', in bars 1, 3, 6, 9 and 11. The problem with assuming that these scales are examples of thematic unity is that scalic figures are very widely used, and are not distinctive in the way that a more angular motif is. In addition, the 'Part III' theme can only be related the rest of the *Incantations* material through the 'Part II' theme. This diminishes its relationship with the rest of the work. However, it is very much an isolated example.

Figure 5.14: Combination of 5th-2nd theme and 'Diana-Luna' theme, 'Incantations (Part I)'

Perhaps the greatest display of thematic unity is during the repetitions of the Diana-luna theme in which material is layered as shown in figure 5.14, in a manner which brings together the Diana-luna and 5th/2nd motifs in a contrapuntal interplay, which is particularly significant with regard to the *Tempo* review of previous works criticising the lack of contrapuntal devices. The structure of 'Part I' can thus be summarised as:

1. Introduction of 5th/2nd theme
2. Use of material alluding to 5th/2nd theme and 'Diana' theme
3. Introduction of 'Diana' theme
4. Combination of 5th/2nd theme and 'Diana' theme
5. Recapitulation of (1)

This combination of the two contrasting thematic ideas provides a climax in terms of musical material which correlates with the statement-development-recapitulation structure of 'Part I' in that it appears just prior to the recapitulation, about two thirds of the way through the movement.

If the thematic unity of *Incantations* is considered in the context of Benoliel's review, it is not unfeasible that the criticisms were taken into account. *Incantations* not only displays thematic transformation and motivic development, but is perhaps more adventurous in terms of tonality (cycles of fifths, hints of modality, subtle melody-based shifts), and ideas change, generally, quite quickly (although the length of the 'Hiawatha' setting is an obvious exception). There are suggestions of a greater contrapuntal awareness in the trumpet canon, for example (although Bedford's control over this as arranger cannot be quantified), or the fourth rendition of the opening theme, which the synthesiser plays in its original form while a variation on the flute forms a counterpoint. The vertical combining of the Diana-luna and 5th-2nd theme towards the end of 'Incantations Part I' also demonstrates at least a basic awareness of contrapuntal issues. It is not unlikely that Bedford would have brought the article to Oldfield's attention, or even that the *Tempo* review was purposely invited, although we can only speculate.

Even if Benoliel's review was not a factor influencing the developments on *Incantations*, they are such that some increased classical influence seems to have been present; whether it was the review, Bedford's instruction or some other factor that

caused this is not clear. Neither is it certain to what extent these developments have been recognised. Monaghan acknowledges a greater unity, but only one achieved through limited instrumentation, recurring vocals and synthesiser imitations of acoustic instruments used,⁹ rather than manipulation of thematic material.

Although there are exceptions, the relationship between different themes is generally strong enough to support a theory of conscious thematic transformation by Oldfield, even taking into account the possibility that some of the less obvious links are purely coincidental. This unity of material and carefully controlled structure suggest a modern rather than postmodern approach.

5.3 Mid-period works: after *Incantations*

It is convenient to divide Oldfield's output to date into three periods: the early works collected on *Boxed*, works between 1978 and 1984, and works from 1987 onwards. To generalise, early structures are based on the two twenty minute sections suggested by tape or record format, mid-period works display a move towards a mixture of short and long forms, and later works demonstrate a greater eclecticism: 1994's *Songs of Distant Earth* uses predominantly 'futuristic' synthesiser timbres and effects, interspersed with archaic and traditional vocal passages and samples and is based around the Arthur C. Clarke novel of the same name, whereas Oldfield's subsequent album, 1996's *Voyager*, consists mainly of arrangements of traditional melodies such as 'She Moves Through the Fair'. This is perhaps in part due to the more flexible format of compact discs.

The mixing of one long work with a number of shorter pieces has obvious commercial benefits because the latter can be issued as singles, and Oldfield has had some commercial success with short, vocalised pieces. 'Moonlight Shadow' from *Crises* (1983) reached number four in the UK singles chart for several weeks in Summer 1983,

⁹ Monaghan (1993) p. 88

while *Five Miles Out* (1982) provided a hit for Hall and Oates with 'Family Man'. Both are relatively conventional PRD-songs with repeated verse-refrain structures, and guitar/bass/drum-kit/keyboard instrumentation. Longer works, however, maintain a concern with the thematic manipulation on earlier albums, with more ambiguous arrangements, using instrumentals with orchestral and folk connotations.

The title track of *Crises* is a twenty-minute recapitulatory structure in which the opening theme returns, transformed, to close the piece. The original statement of the theme uses high-pitched string and bell timbres interspersing the melody line with ostinato accompaniment, broadening out to accommodate a leisurely kit and bass part. In its restatement, fragments of the theme appear passed around various instruments with a frantic percussion backing, hence it is transformed. *Platinum* (1979) features a title track demonstrating links with *Incantations* with regard to thematic material, with the use of cyclic harmony patterns (although the cycles are incomplete) and choir singing very similar patterns to the Diana-luna theme (groups of three notes rising and falling in conjunct motion). There is no large-scale recapitulating structure, however; instead the piece is divided into four sections with only one featuring significant amounts of repetition and recapitulation, alternating between three related 12/8 themes. The first section achieves unity in a different way, by layering and interchanging new themes with those already established.

Although there appears to be an awareness of extended structures running through much of Oldfield's output, there is no consistent development of the technique: on *Incantations* it is integral, on *Platinum's* title track of relatively little importance, but then used more extensively on the title track of *Crises*. Oldfield's music is erratic stylistically: while the first few works seem to see a consistent approach with develops and matures, this is subsequently discarded. When commercial success is not forthcoming, there is a change of tactic. There are various attempts to adopt certain aesthetics rather than a real development of personal style, and the result is that Oldfield is seen as unfashionable in the PRD market and lacking in technique by

classical commentators. In a sense, there is fragmentation, eclecticism and lack of unity across the output as a whole, but rather than reflecting postmodernism, this seems more symptomatic of an artist chasing universal credibility.

5.4 Late period works

Although Oldfield's music shows limited logical development, it does include works which in themselves are unified, suggesting a modernist approach. There is also an album which reflects a 'postmodern spirit' perhaps more than any of the other music considered in Chapters 4 to 6: *Amarok*, which will be considered shortly. The later period Oldfield includes *Amarok*, the disappointing *Earth Moving* and a return to thematic transformation in *Songs of Distant Earth*.

1989's *Earth Moving* is a relatively conventional collection of songs, written in typically PRD strophic forms. Layers of ostinati are placed in song structures, which leads to harmonic limitation because modulatory shifts are not so suited to the repetitive verse-based idiom.

The approach on *Earth Moving* appears to be, in part at least, a response to Virgin. There had been some pressure on Oldfield to extend the success brought by songs such as 'Moonlight Shadow', although *Earth Moving* did not sell particularly well in the UK. This perhaps demonstrates the perception that a less ambiguous style, moving towards a PRD format (thus deploying the theory that popular styles make music more accessible) should increase commercial success. That this did not happen could be for any number of reasons: the late 80s was an era when classical-influenced progressive styles were viewed unfavourably and the preference of Oldfield's established fan base for more ambiguous styles may explain the disappointing sales.

Amarok, released in 1990, shows a return to the lengthy, through-composed structure. Commercially, it has been one of the least successful of Oldfield's albums,

although one of the most highly acclaimed. The CD format has the whole album registering as a single, 60 minute track; this discourages the listener from listening to selected excerpts, and can be seen as being allied to the classical disdain for the practice (encouraged by compilations which may only feature one movement of a work) of not listening to a work in its entirety. *Songs of Distant Earth*, the next album to be considered is, in contrast, represented as 17 tracks.

Although *Amarok* is presented as a single long piece, it is still structurally very much typical of Oldfield because of the short, contrasting sections within it.

The content of *Amarok* and the way material is presented takes concepts seen in *Incantations* and brings in more contemporary influences. The stuttering effect applied to a distorted voice, is typical of the era (note its presence on 'Ride On Time' by Black Box, number one in the UK singles charts for a number of weeks in 1989). However, the usual technique used to produce the effect is sampling, and *Amarok* uses no samplers, the focus being on 'handcrafting' an album without samplers and with very little use of synthesiser. It must therefore be assumed that the sample-like effect was produced by some other recording process – tape loops and skilful splicing, for example. Its overall impression is no less significant, whatever process was used to create it. It suggests a fragmentation of the voice: "Happy?" it asks the listener, before breaking down into a machine-gun like stutter "h-h-h-h-happy?" Fragmentation is also present in much of the thematic material. The longer, lyrical themes which characterise much of Oldfield's early writing are rarely used. Instead, short motifs and patterns are layered, and material often recurs. This still allows for development and alteration of material: a parodying effect is, for example, used when the tonal writing which dominates the piece is briefly discarded as the music breaks into discord, and what might be described as 'wrong notes' in the overall mainly diatonic context. The lyric "Happy" is exchanged for "Bugger".

Themes recur throughout the piece. The spiky ostinati, stabs and hemiola-inspired rhythms of the opening section reappear several times. The first recurrence, at

18.00 minutes, develops the motifs by adding further layers, doubling up the lines presented in the introduction. The second recurrence, at 39.50 minutes, is more altered, using the patterns with different instrumentation (focusing on the distorted electric rather than acoustic guitar), adding layers (a guitar melody in thirds for example) and using the passage as a modulatory device, repeated slightly higher, then higher still, to prepare for subsequent keys.

The reference to previous themes can be very brief, further underlining the fragmentary aspects of *Amarok*. The initial non-diatonic ('Bugger') passage lasts about a minute including a contrasting, more tonal, middle section in its original appearance. When it recurs, at 41.20, it is only necessary to produce a second or so of 'wrong notes' in order to refer back.

Amarok is disjointed: sections shift abruptly into contrasting passages with little warning, with no obvious continuation. While it could be argued that is a return to the weaknesses of *Tubular Bells* and *Hergest Ridge*, the context and attitude are quite different: the irreverent subversion and fragmentation play with the listener's senses. This is not an attempt to please the classical or PRD audiences, but more a two-fingered gesture to Oldfield's critics, which veers into political satire in the closing section.

There is a guest appearance from the impersonator Janet Brown imitating Margaret Thatcher. The unlikelihood of Thatcher clog-dancing, which is the visual impression created in the listener's mind, forms the basis for this satire. Janet Brown's words in response to an Irish-style whistle accompanied by bodhran – "Isn't that charming? You know, I really feel I could dance . . ." – are followed by rhythmical clog-sound patterns panned around the stereo spectrum to create the impression of someone dancing around in a circle. At the time, Thatcher had been Prime Minister for over 10 years and was extremely unpopular both with the public and her party. Her appropriation of the previous vocal question, "Happy?", underlines political irony.

Amarok features fragmentation and juxtaposition of Irish, Spanish and Greek influences (among others) – although Oldfield has personal and family connections with these geographical areas, why should he want to evoke these places for such brief periods? Parody and pastiche question the listener's state of mind: "Happy?" asks a disembodied, processed voice, echoed by Margaret Thatcher. Reality is played with: the visual image of Thatcher clog-dancing is strong, but obviously did not take place. The picture is stimulated by a sound collage of clog sounds, imitations of Thatcher's voice, whistle, bodhran and clever use of stereo panning.

Amarok asks the listener questions: what is real? And what is the meaning of this music, with its sudden shifts, eclecticism and parodying of itself? These concepts point towards a postmodern tendency, as do the fragmentations. The eclecticism contributes towards this, but this is largely due to *lack* of integration: influences are confined to their own passages and segregated. They are drafted in, referring to something external, although reasons for this are not made clear.¹⁰ Such references cannot be meaningless – guitar hemiola 'means' Spanish music, as it is a sign behaving as a conventionalised index according to semiotic theory. It is not the ambiguity of style, or the integration of influences which seem to convey a 'postmodern spirit', but rather the contrast achieved through segregation, the pastiche and questioning of reality. While pastiche is suggested to be postmodern by Jameson,¹¹ and parody is supposedly modernist through a satirical, witty element, the Thatcher parody, which is satirical rather than simply imitative presents an artificially constructed 'reality' which allies itself with the 'postmodern spirit'. Not only do the traits point to postmodernism, but the general aesthetic is imbued with a postmodern attitude behind the compositional process.

¹⁰ This is perhaps as close to the idea of a 'meaningless' reference as music can come. References cannot be without some kind of meaning if they evoke, through their reference to a certain convention, some kind of connection. The interpretation of the meaning is subject to question, but that does not necessarily make it without meaning.

¹¹ Jameson (1991) pp. 16-18

This is not evident on *Songs of Distant Earth*, which sees a return to the thematically unified pieces of the 1970s. Released a decade and a half after *Incantations*, the album shows Oldfield developing cohesive large-scale forms, demonstrating how unity can be achieved in new ways as well as deploying the devices used on *Incantations*.

Incantations featured an extensive thematic unity with almost all the material derived from a very small number of motifs. *Songs of Distant Earth* has some degree of unity, but differs from *Incantations* in a number of respects. The work is summarised in the table in figure 5.16 (overleaf) with regard to its tracks, themes and keys.

A significant amount of material does not appear to relate to other thematic aspects. Also, material is not built up from small motifs, but tends to consist of themes which are sometimes repeated, or varied slightly, or even changed more dramatically. A motif appearing initially in a vocal sample (possibly native American?) recurs, but is not developed although a chain of similar ornaments forms a theme in 'The Shining Ones'. The motif and theme are shown in figure 5.15.

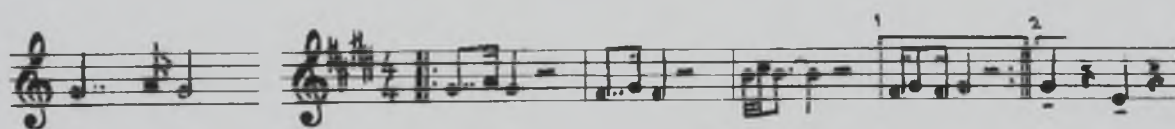


Figure 5.15: Motif and theme, 'The Shining Ones', *Songs of Distant Earth*

There is, however, some thematic transformation. The theme behaving as a 'first subject' ('Light' theme) is reproduced in figure 5.17 (overleaf). The harmony is outlined too – it features distinctive cambiata figures.

Track	TITLE	REF.	THEME	KEY/MODE
1	In the Beginning	1	'Beginning' (scalic motif)	B Aeolian
2	Let There Be Light	2a	'Light' (figure 5.15) = suspension harmonic patterns	"
		2b	'Dominus' (male choir, narrow, conjunct melody)	E Aeolian
		2c	'Treble' (gentle alternated 3rd and 5th)	G Aeolian
3	Supernova	3	Motif from figure 5.15	C# Aeolian
4	Magellan	4	'Magellan' (see figure 5.18) and piano variant (figure 5.19)	D \flat major
5	First Landing	5	Effects	"
6	Oceania	6	'Light' variation (figure 16)	E Aeolian
7	Only Time Will Tell	7	'Time' harmony, sampled 'mordant' effect vocal motif	"
8	Prayer for the Earth	8	Motif from figure 5.15	B major
9	Lament for Atlantis	9	Variant of 'Magellan' (figure 21)	F# major
10	The Chamber	10	'Chamber'	E \flat Aeolian
11	Hibernaculum	11a	'Chamber' (slightly altered)	G Aeolian
		11b	'Hibern 2' (inverted 'Light'?) (figure 17)	G major
12	Tubular World	12	'Tubular', direct reference to Tubular Bells	A Aeolian
13	The Shining Ones	13a	'Ornaments' - theme imitates motif from figure 5.15	E major
		13b	'Legato'	"
14	Crystal Clear	14a	'Crystal' (conjunct, ornamented)	A Aeolian
		14b	'Arpeggio' (triadic motif)	A major
15	The Sunken Forest	15	'Forest' (staccato crotchets suggest major & minor)	B Aeolian
16	Ascension	16 (i)	'Light'; 'Light' and 'Time' harmony alternated	C# Aeolian
		16 (ii)	rising chord progression	E \flat /C major
		16 (iii)	'Time' harmony, sampled 'mordant' effect vocal motif	E Aeolian
		16 (iv)	'Light' (first phrase) alternated with \square \boxtimes motif	G
17	A New Beginning	17	African call & response, polyphonic vocal music	

Figure 5.16: Summary of tracks on Songs of Distant Earth

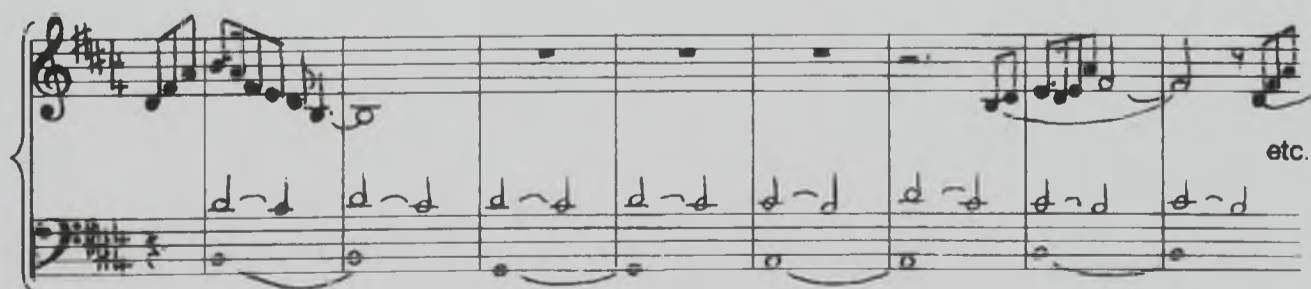


Figure 5.17: 'Light' theme, Songs of Distant Earth

In 'Oceania', the theme is transformed, filled out and harmonised more simply (figure 5.18):

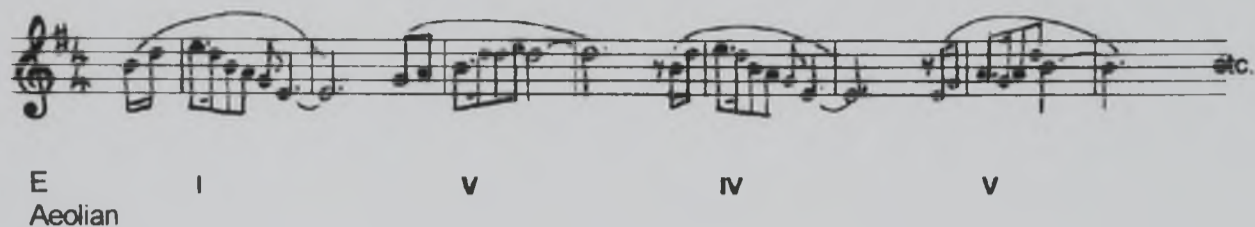


Figure 5.18: 'Oceania' development of 'Light' theme, Songs of Distant Earth

There remains a clear relationship between this and the 'Light' theme. There are also hints of an inversion of the opening phrase of the 'Light' theme on the second theme of 'Hibernaculum' (figure 5.19).



Figure 5.19: 'Hibernaculum', second theme, Songs of Distant Earth

The dotted pattern could almost be taken as a unifying fragment, so widely does it feature, although it does not appear in every theme and is neither long nor distinctive enough to warrant its being taken as a 'building block' motif as, say, the 5th-2nd fragment in *Incantations* was.

Transformation can also be seen in a comparison of the 'Magellan' theme, its conversion to a piano theme, and the appearance of a related idea on 'Lament for Atlantis'. Firstly, compare the original theme (figure 5.20) with the piano variation on it (figure 5.21)

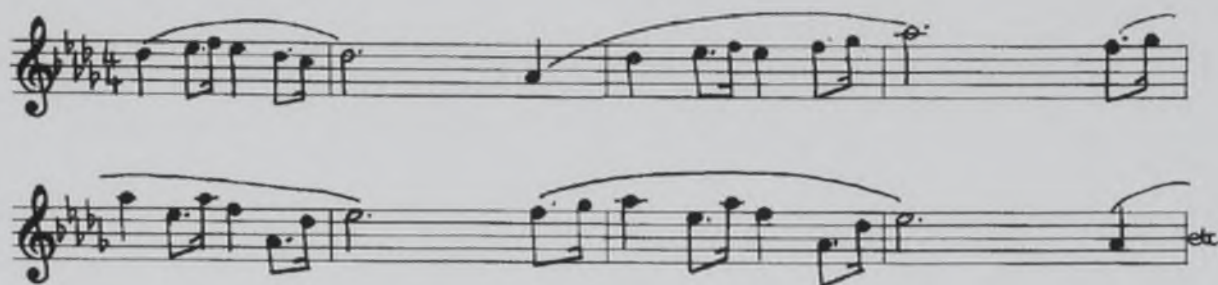


Figure 5.20: Original 'Magellan' theme (*tutti*), Songs of Distant Earth

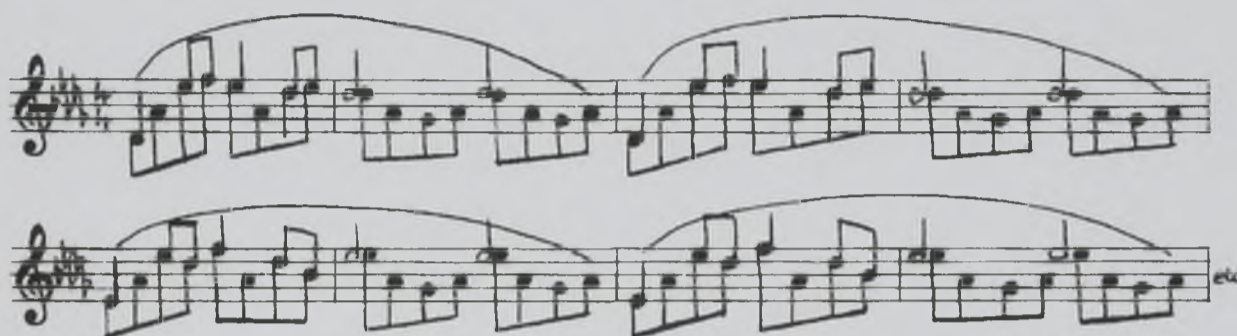


Figure 5.21: Conversion of 'Magellan' theme to piano, Songs of Distant Earth

The dotted rhythm is smoothed out, and a 'theme and accompaniment' arrangement derived, but the melody is still closely related to the 'Magellan' theme, albeit with a distinctively different flavour.

Secondly, by transposing the 'Magellan' theme and the theme on 'Lament for Atlantis' into C major (figures 5.22 and 5.23 respectively), direct comparisons are easily drawn: matching fragments are denoted by the arrows.

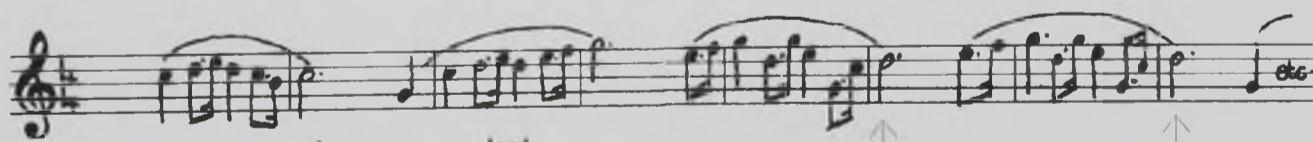


Figure 5.22: 'Magellan' theme transposed into C major, Songs of Distant Earth

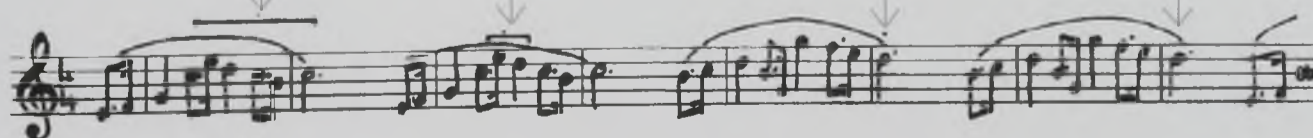


Figure 5.23: 'Lament for Atlantis' theme transposed into C major, Songs of Distant Earth

The themes are rhythmically almost the same (except for the anacruses in figure 5.23 leading into both of the first two phrases), match harmonically and in places are identical both in terms of melody, harmony and rhythm. The concept of recapitulation combining various themes introduced earlier was seen in *Incantations*, and appears again in *Songs of Distant Earth*. 'Ascension' recaps the 'Light' theme first, alternating the original suspension figure harmony with a harmony from another, earlier track, 'Only Time Will Tell'. After a lengthy chain of sostenuto harmony, giving a sense of lift through rising pairs of chords (I-IV, II-V, III-VI), the 'Time' harmony returns in its original guise, as an accompaniment to vocal samples. Towards the end the opening motif of the 'Light' theme is used in an interplay with the vocal sample from 'Supernova'.

There are clearly elements of statement, variation, development, transformation and recapitulation in the treatment of themes outlined above. In addition there is a reference to *Tubular Bells*, Oldfield's debut solo album of some 20 years previously, on the track 'Tubular World', using similarly pointillistic patterns, with delicate bell-like timbres and rapid, syncopated figures, all obviously referring to the earlier work.

The 'Tubular World' theme occurs only on that one track, however, and there are several other themes which do not link to other parts of the work, standing as pieces in their own right, while being woven into the continuity of the whole.

It could be argued that *Songs of Distant Earth* is to some extent a compromise between a large-scale unified form such as *Incantations* (which was attacked for being too repetitive) and the more conventional album structure, with potential 'singles', existing more as a collection of short, unconnected pieces.

The structures used by Oldfield and possible sources of influence can be summarised as follows (figure 5.24):

Key (probable source of influences):

- E = classical influence
 P = Popular/rock influence
 I = traditional Irish influence

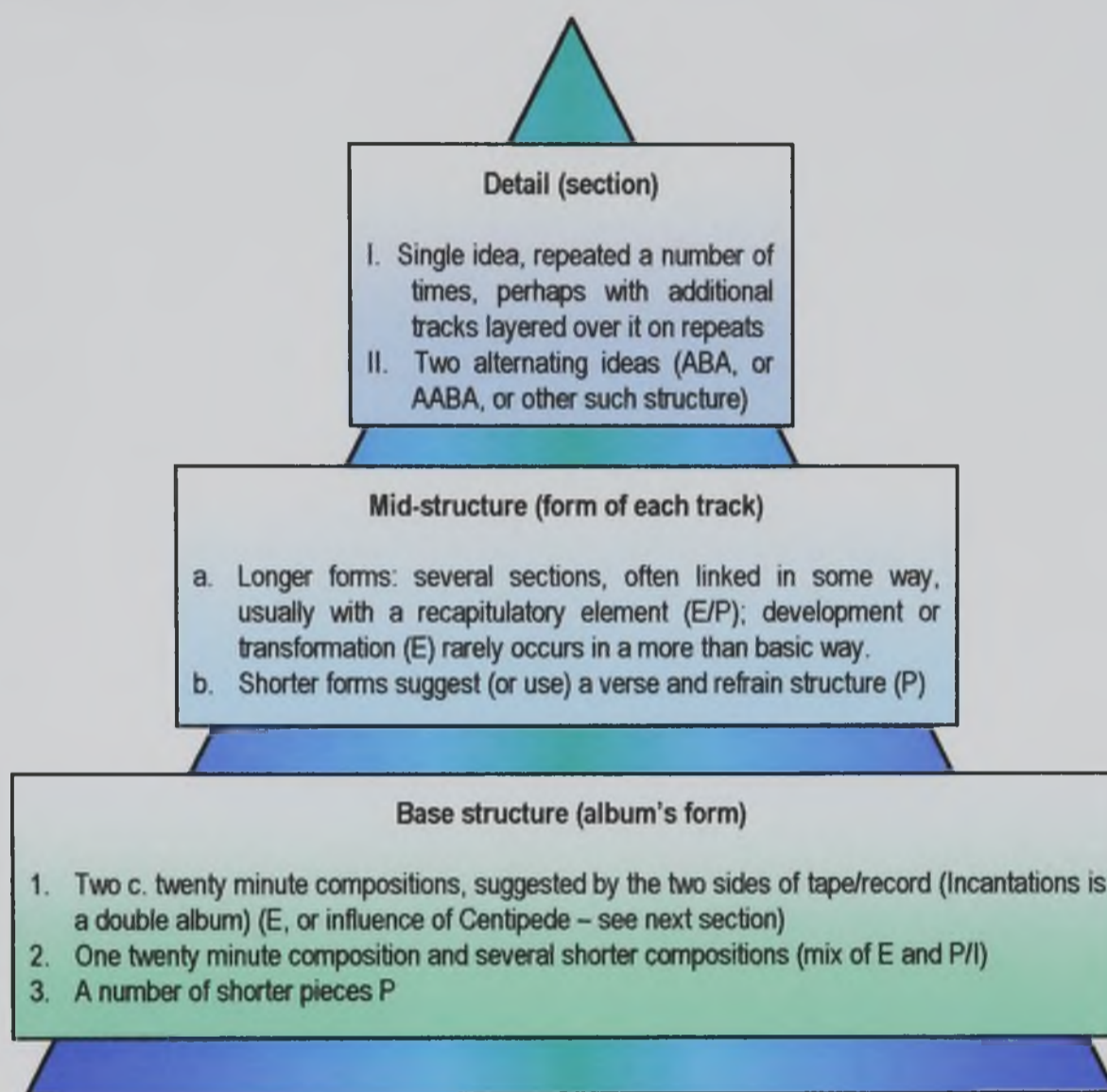


Figure 5.24: Influences on structural elements of Oldfield's work

Returning to the extract from Benoliel's article on page 3, it is interesting to see how subsequent works from Oldfield appear to address the criticisms. These concern, to summarise:

1. lack of solid large scale form
2. lack of advanced counterpoint techniques
3. primitive tonality
4. lack of motivic development
5. slow rate of change of events

Oldfield's concern with extended structures and his awareness of motivic development, particularly on *Incantations*, has already been discussed at length. Contrapuntally, *Incantations* combines elements of themes vertically, for example in the layering of the Diana-luna theme towards the end of Part I with elements of the mode cycle and 5th-2nd-based arpeggio figures of the opening theme. Subsequent works also feature vertical combinations of themes presented separately at an earlier stage of the piece concerned (in 'Ascension', towards the end of *Songs of Distant Earth* for example). Generally sections in *Incantations* are less prolonged than on previous works, and there is greater variation, for example regarding instrumentations, within the sections (although the nineteen stanzas of the 'Hiawatha' setting are a striking exception). The accusation of slow rates of change thus appears to be addressed.

Oldfield himself insists that *Incantations* is a relatively complex piece, pointing out that, in its opening, it moves through every key (thus addressing accusations of using primitive harmony) and a vast array of time signatures.¹² Under scrutiny, this claim is perhaps a little overstated. Firstly, the movement through every key (or rather through all 12 notes as the tonic of a mode, usually Aeolian but Mixolydian for one measure in the centre of the cycle) uses a simple, rather clichéd device. Secondly, the use of different time signatures is similarly basic, forming repetitive metre (the alternating 3/4 and 5/8 in figure 6.2 underlines an 11-quaver sequential motif and is no great departure from the use of a steady pulse). This tends to change with each section, and bars are often filled somewhat unimaginatively by the repetition of a motif to complete the requisite number of beats; there is, for example, no exploration of the rhythmic possibilities within the different metres. Nevertheless, that the composer sees these elements as complex says something of his aspirations, and both the metre and use of so many different tonics mark the piece out from a great deal of popular music.

The issue of complexity itself is related to the perceived division between popular and classical music. A simple-complex differentiation is made by some who

attempt to define or describe contrasts between popular and classical styles: Reginald Smith Brindle, for example, does just that with his comment that “jazz and pop . . . both have simple melodic lines and conventional harmonies”.¹³ The argument fails to hold, as anyone who has attempted to transcribe a Hendrix guitar solo will testify, and the opening riffs of ‘Cigarettes and Alcohol’ (Oasis, 1994) or ‘Firestarter’ (Prodigy, 1996) provide recent examples of juxtaposition and superimposition of major and minor modes creating harmonic ambiguity, and are not conventional as far as classical music is concerned. Ratner’s argument that popular music is “in the last third of the twentieth century . . . the sole heir of the traditional Western music system”¹⁴ (that is, functional harmony) becomes somewhat contentious when these examples – there are many more which are similar – are taken into account. Yet the underlying belief that popular styles are somehow simplistic and inferior to classical music persists among those in the latter camp, and it is these accusations that Oldfield seems to be addressing, perhaps trying to prove his music can be considered on the same terms. In the Benoliel article, this is to some degree what is happening, even before the release of subsequent work, such as *Incantations*, which appears to address the criticisms put forward with some success.

5.5 Oldfield the musician

While Talk Talk's aesthetic demonstrated a gradual progression towards a personal fused aesthetic, Oldfield's output is far more erratic. Can he be considered to be writing fused music, or is he simply veering from one style to another? The examples in the previous sections demonstrate the unity of thematic material in Oldfield's music, but there are several issues surrounding his thematic transformations which require some discussion. Firstly one must ask to what extent the unity between themes could be

¹² Oldfield in Monaghan (1993)

¹³ Brindle (1987) p. 137

¹⁴ Ratner (1977) p. 245

accidental – this is highly relevant if the intensional unification within works is perceived as modernist – and secondly the input of David Bedford should be taken into account.

Bedford and Oldfield first worked together in the band The Whole World, in which Bedford played keyboards and Oldfield bass. The band was active around the years 1970-2, sometime before Oldfield's debut album, *Tubular Bells*, was released. Oldfield was still a teenager at the time, and it appears Bedford, at twice his age and already an acclaimed classical composer, was both influential and inspirational. The two have enjoyed a symbiotic musical relationship since, contributing to each other's recordings, with Bedford formulating many of the arrangements on Oldfield's albums.

The support from Bedford is important. He described *Hergest Ridge* as "formally speaking... far more successful in compositional procedure than *Tubular Bells*",¹⁵ clearly considering the music on classical terms. Even at this early stage in his career, Oldfield was involved in performances of Bedford's avant-garde classical compositions, with The Whole World taking part in the premiere of *The Garden of Love* with members of the London Sinfonietta. The concert, which took place in September 1970, was broadcast by Radio 3 a month later.

Perhaps surprisingly, Oldfield does not cite classical music as influencing his decision to compose large-scale works, but instead acknowledges Centipede, a large jazz orchestra led by Keith Tippett, which played at the same venues as The Whole World and performed a piece twenty-five minutes in length. "That was the first time I'd ever seen or heard a long piece of music",¹⁶ claims Oldfield, which is surprising for someone who also maintains he had "listened to and loved classical music for most of my life".¹⁷ It is perhaps more likely that the eclecticism of the jazz orchestra, which also drew on rock and African influences, and the concept that something other than

¹⁵ Bedford in Monaghan (1993) p. 56. The formal success in question involved techniques such as the smooth transition between sections.

¹⁶ Newman (1993) p. 87

¹⁷ Ibid.

classical music could sustain itself over long periods of time, inspired Oldfield's large scale compositions; one can only speculate.

It should be noted that Bedford's work has generally been accorded a peripheral position in contemporary classical music, largely through its experimental approach, using instrumental effects, visual media and PRD musicians. Oldfield provides an interesting description of The Whole World's live appearances and Bedford's role in the band:

Our gigs were very anarchic affairs — mostly drunk and out of tune. Our keyboard player played his keyboards with a brick.¹⁸

Nevertheless, Bedford's classical background is still important. He recommended composers to Oldfield, among them Delius and Debussy, but played down his influence — "I'm sure he would have found those pieces anyway".¹⁹ Whether or not this is the case, it questions Bedford's role in Oldfield's development, and the extent to which his ideas might have moulded Oldfield's, or merely acted as a catalyst. Oldfield was, after all, using different media to these composers, with a heavy electronic bias. In addition, his primary talent, that of an improvisational guitarist, is not one associated with late nineteenth/early twentieth century classical music. The main effect of classical works on Oldfield's compositions appears to be that they created for him a particular mood, or instigated a certain frame of mind, which he would attempt to emulate with his own music.²⁰ It is also significant that the demise of The Whole World was due partly to Oldfield's wish to pursue his own creative projects — that is, to break loose from the restrictions imposed by other people's approaches. To summarise, although Bedford may have actively nurtured Oldfield's abilities, and suggested ways in which he might develop his musicality, Oldfield worked quite individually as an artist.

¹⁸ Oldfield (1995)

¹⁹ Quoted in Monaghan (1993) p. 27

²⁰ Monaghan (1993) p. 28

Although he has described himself as a rock musician rather than as a composer, his eagerness to have his music recognised by those in the 'classical establishment' suggests that he sees himself in a dual role.

Ultimately, classical musical culture focuses on the written (notation and interpretation of scores) and the formal training required to perform and produce music in this format. Working primarily in a folk-based idiom up to this stage, and with a talent lying primarily in guitar improvisation, Oldfield did not have this background. His attempts to study composition were unsuccessful because, he said, he had no aptitude for methodical learning. Bedford recommended books on notation, but Oldfield's methods have remained studio-based, which is appropriate for the kind of music he wishes to produce. It appears that when session musicians are used, arrangements of their parts tend to be made by other people (Bedford is credited with a number of them).

Oldfield enthuses over classical music, and the inspiration offered to Oldfield by Sibelius's Fifth Symphony was well-documented even before the appearance of a short article by Oldfield in 1995 in *The Guardian*, discussing his love of the work and its influence on him.²¹ Nevertheless, he dismisses it as irrelevant to future musical practices:

orchestral classical music is wonderful, but it is like going to a wonderful museum . . . avant-garde classical music to me is not the way forward for classical music. They have to develop the instruments a bit more . . . once you're stuck with the old instruments it becomes a bit limited²²

It is interesting that his incorporation of these 'old' instruments into his pieces tends to favour their natural sounds.

Oldfield's use of extended forms has provoked comparisons with bands such as Deep Purple and ELO, whose music he dismisses as "where the band played a rock

²¹ Oldfield (1995)

²² Oldfield in Glasser (1995)

thing and then the orchestra did a pathetic classical like thing".²³ His dislike of this style, which is distinct from his own since it tends to contrast genres rather than integrate them, may also stem from a desire to avoid comparison with what is still seen as "the nadir of British youth culture".²⁴ Nevertheless, both 'classical-rock' and Oldfield's music combine strong influences from both PRD and classical music, although to be fair to Oldfield, 'folk' musics, particularly traditional Irish styles, are as much an influence.

Returning to the Benoliel article, it appears – particularly with regard to the thematic structuring on *Incantations* – that whatever he may say about his influences, Oldfield aspires to produce music which meets the classical establishment's criteria. There seems to have been compromise during the 80s, when, following the success of 'Moonlight Shadow', he was pressured by his record company to produce more of the same. There is perhaps a sense of trying to please both camps, but an acknowledgement that he cannot produce conventional PRD songs of quality to order.²⁵

The issue of whether Oldfield's thematic transformation is intentional or an accident arising out of his compositional style is best considered by examining some of his other themes for traces of the 'Diana' and 5th/2nd motifs. Assuming they are in the same style, elements of the motifs in them would suggest that thematic transformation on *Incantations* is accidental.

Figure 5.25 shows the main theme from *Ommadawn* (1975):

²³ Hochman (1993)

²⁴ Grundy and Masters (1995): this article on 'The New Prog Rock' compares Oldfield ("Rock only more so") to Future Sound of London ("techno only more so") on the basis of "gigs in daft places"!

²⁵ Randall (1995)



Figure 5.25: 'Ommadawn', opening theme

There are various parallels between this theme and those in *Incantations*: the sequence-based pattern in bars 2 to 4 (A-C-B flat, G-B flat-A, F-A-G) shows motion reminiscent of the rising 5th/falling 2nd motif, but is very different on account of the repetition and the emphasis on thirds, resulting in a far less angular theme. The sequence above has hints of the first theme from Part III (see figure 5.13 bar 2), but this theme was itself linked to the rest of *Incantations* only tenuously.

The trumpet canon is based heavily on thirds, but executes these in a different manner, typically falling rather than rising. Both themes display repetition, but this can be interpreted as a trait of Oldfield's style, and indeed is typical of many themes by other composers.

Parallels can be drawn in the way one might expect between themes written by the same composer, but the similarities between the *Ommadawn* theme and those used in *Incantations* are not such to suggest the link between themes is stronger than this.

A distinction should be made between themes on one album which may be similar in style to those on another and those which refer directly to other themes. 'Tubular' on *Songs of Distant Earth* is an example, being an overt reference to *Tubular Bells*' opening theme in both name and musical style.

Of course, there are so many examples of particular intervals in melodies, which are, after all, the consequence of chains of them, that there needs to be differentiation between those that might be connected and those which are not. There is a clear need for something more substantial than a mere interval to link themes: there

needs to be a more distinctive figuration, and longer phrases built from it. It is particularly difficult to describe a scalic figure as a distinctive figuration in this sense, since elements of scales are so widespread; it is more of a challenge to find a theme with no scalic content than one with. For a scalic figuration to be considered in motivic terms, additional aspects to its use are required; in the Diana-luna theme, this is achieved by using only a three-step scalic figuration for eighteen bars, with the same rhythm each time.

A pattern of thematic unity has been established in *Incantations*, and has been discussed as might be the same process in a late Romantic composer, yet Oldfield is most frequently considered as a PRD artist; the discrepancies arising from an attempt to find an appropriate musicology should be acknowledged. Discussions of PRD music by classical musicologists are often weakened by the application of inappropriate criteria and the assumption that PRD and classical music are constructed in the same manner or from the same elements; Ratner's claim (towards the end of section 5.4) is based on this. Popular music is overwhelmingly modal and does not follow the 'rules' of key-based functional harmony in terms of, for example, resolving harmonies and raising sevenths. Application of classical concepts to non-classical music can lead to inaccuracies, such as in late nineteenth-century folk-song collections, where collectors transcribed melodies 'correcting' those notes which did not fit classical patterns with which they were familiar.

Not only is the application of musicology A to music B likely to distort findings, it also implies that musicology A has some kind of superiority or universality, which distorts perceptions still further. Of course, the concept of musicology is itself largely a product of the classical tradition, so some kind of anomaly exists whatever approach is used with non-classical music.

The issue, however, with Oldfield's music is whether it *is* in a 'non-classical' idiom. Lengthy instrumentals point clearly away from PRD, and on later albums, where Oldfield has included PRD-style songs as well as structures more suggestive of a

classical influence, the contrast is marked. In terms of catches or hooks, repetitions, instrumentation, sense of the strophic even when there are no words set, and regular percussion backbeat, the music is more allied to PRD. Compositional technique, the improvisational/immediate recording approach used in preference to notation, and lack of 'formal training' in classical music certainly seem to set Oldfield apart from most other contemporary classical composers, but should such characteristics be applied as criteria to denote Oldfield as PRD or classical? His music is straddling the two camps and other styles are also influential.

Oldfield's pigeonholing of himself as 'rock' is over-simplistic, and on other occasions he has recognised this: on a New York radio station interview he challenged the host John Schaeffer (author of *The Virgin Guide to the New Music*, a book examining a wide variety of contemporary genres) to invent a 'label' for his music – Schaeffer was reluctant to apply anything more specific than 'New Music'.

Because of its ambiguity, differing sets of criteria have been used to judge Oldfield's music. The Benoliel article criticises it largely on the basis of what is considered 'good practice' in classical composition. Nevertheless, Benoliel argues that the weaknesses he points out are present in "the overwhelming majority of traditional and *avant-garde* compositions of the past quarter of a century",²⁶ and sets Oldfield's music apart from these works by virtue of its "immediacy of appeal, direct emotional impact and small but definite vein of originality".²⁷ Originality is prized in both classical and PRD music, but immediacy of impact and directness of emotional appeal, though often considered desirable in PRD, are of less consequence in classical music, particularly in academic considerations and twentieth-century composition. Ives was an early critic of 'easy' listening:

²⁶ Benoliel (1977) p. 27

²⁷ Ibid.

I personally (this is a personal remark) think that many or most of the celebrities of world fame are the greatest enemies of music — unless the art is going to lie forever as an emasculated art, degenerating down to one function and purpose only — that is, to massage the mind and ear, bring bodily ease to the self, and please the ladies and get their money.²⁸

Lumsdaine, as seen in section 3.5, encapsulates the anti-accessibility stance often found among contemporary commentators.

The influence of composers such as Sibelius, Debussy and Delius has already been noted and Oldfield has acknowledged his attempts to recreate the moods of these composers' works in his own music — that is, he considers them more on the basis of emotions provoked rather than, say, formal elements, or key structures.

It is clear that Oldfield's music contains many contradictions, and formulating an appropriate musicological approach is difficult. There is a similar situation with regard to many late twentieth century works, particularly electro-acoustic pieces, since the variety of compositional techniques is so great. Here most composers are trained covering traditional classical elements, which more recent musical developments have seen increasingly questioned and rejected in favour of alternatives. Yet this background is still present, linking composers, who will usually retain some elements of it, using, for example, material within a piece, sonata form structures, or traditional notation. This means that method and analysis can be built on as appropriate and it is still relatively straightforward to put the music in context.

The Oldfield study, like that of Talk Talk, suggests a conscious, controlled appropriation of influences, careful planning and an awareness of concepts covered by classical musicology. This disputes the idea of fusion as a superficial, eclectic 'dabbling', and has obvious consequences in terms of considering it as a postmodern phenomenon. Unity of material is more associated with modernism, serial music being an example of this. Also drawn into question is the concept of musical expression

²⁸ Ives (1973) p. 41

reflecting ideas subconsciously absorbed from the listening environment. This is not to dispute that this process exists to some extent, but it can be argued that absorption of a style occurs on both a subconscious level and on a more considered basis. The structures in Oldfield's music, his use of form and awareness of compositional procedures point to the latter, while the melodies of the 'Hiawatha' theme, or main theme from *Ommadawn*, quoted previously, seem to suggest a flair for what the layperson might term a 'hummable tune', a concept which is probably more subconscious. To demonstrate this and support this argument, the generative grammar developed by Sundberg and Lindblom²⁹ provides a useful example. Sundberg and Lindblom took the Swedish nursery tunes of Alice Tegnér and assigned each note of the melody a number between 1 and 6 depending on its importance (1 as the most important note, for example the final note of the melody, a tonic, while 6 is the least important, for example a second quaver of a pair, behaving as a passing note). The harmony was similarly encoded, using number between 0 and 3, 3 denoting the greatest distance from the tonic, and 0 denoting the tonic. Using the resultant figures, and applying random and neutral processes, Sundberg and Lindblom generated tunes which were as acceptable to Swedish listeners as the Tegnér originals, reflecting a folk-influenced Nordic style. The relevance of this to the Oldfield melodies is that it shows a process that can be reduced to rules, although in practice these are followed subconsciously: Tegnér did not use these processes to generate her tunes, but since they follow the rules we can assume the presence of what might be termed as a 'feel' for the style, the ability to follow rules of which the composer is not consciously aware.

This very much corresponds with Lerdahl and Jackendoff's ideas of generative analysis. Their system is actually analytical rather than generative, but it is based very much on listener intuition rather than composition, proposing that the listener grasps a piece by mentally reducing it to a few events, or even just one, within a hierarchical structure. In many respects, this is related to Schenkerian analysis, but it is applied to

²⁹ In Monelle (1992) Section 5.7

other parameters. Lerdahl and Jackendoff also attempt to devise a more systematic analytical process, whereas Schenkerian analysis is more dependent on intuition. Lerdahl and Jackendoff show how hierarchies, although intuitive, are based on systematic rules.

To conclude, it appears that music is very much more systematic and rule-based than the advocates of 'natural absorption' might believe, but that this absorption is a factor present, nevertheless, since the rules are not followed consciously. These hidden rules perhaps explain why the brain finds it possible to absorb styles and generate music of its own. It is also of relevance to composers of classical music, who have normally studied formalised rules extensively; even if they do not apply the same rules in their music, it is still usual to find composers very conscious of controlling their resources in some way. Nevertheless, they are presumably no less subject to the subconscious absorption of style which, according to Lerdahl and Jackendoff, the mind undertakes. Thus their music is not necessarily heavily formalised, although it will follow rules: this further supports the idea that musicology, while it may recognise systematic processes occurring in the content of the music, cannot automatically assume that the composer intends them to be there.

The relationship between PRD and classical has already been suggested to be closer than is often acknowledged, there being an established symbiosis between composers in terms of techniques. In addition, it should be recognised that although emphases may be different, classical being judged on criteria relating to organisation far more than PRD, the mental processes are consistent from person to person; that is, rules are absorbed both consciously and subconsciously. Perhaps PRD and classical can be differentiated to some extent by considering the balance struck between formalised organisation and intuitive processes in terms of compositional methods and pervading aesthetic emphases. Whatever the actual procedure in creating a piece of music (which can never be fully substantiated anyway), it is probably fair to say that classical technique advocates more conscious control than the PRD aesthetic, where

intuition carries greater weight. This is not to say either style advocates one approach exclusively at the expense of the other, but is a recognition of certain tendencies within the practices. This is surely demonstrated by the formal training received by the vast majority of classical composers which draws attention to rules of structure, and conscious procedures, and it is interesting to note that while many of the old 'rules' of harmony have been relaxed over the past century, control of compositional processes is still very much advocated but within different constraints, such as unity of material – this is clearly within Benoliel's criteria for a 'good' piece of music.

A thorough analysis of a selection of Oldfield's work does reveal levels of integration and an awareness of techniques from styles ranging from Spanish guitar music to Romantic era classical music. This versatility is not necessarily an asset: the flexibility results in inconsistency. Added to this are the contradictions: having always loved classical music (reference 17), Oldfield also argues it is fit only for a museum (reference 22). There is an embracing of styles followed by rejection which seems to some extent governed by commercial success. rather than keeping within a genre or style and developing ideas in order to increase his success, Oldfield appears to prefer a change of approach. Nevertheless, some of his music – most notably perhaps *Incantations* and *Songs of Distant Earth*, show an integration of material with themes and structures carefully controlled. There is not the complexity of fusion of later Talk Talk, but Oldfield's work is more than simple appropriation, and both *Incantations* and *Songs of Distant Earth* qualify as fusion.

5.6 Summary

Looking at a selection of Oldfield's music, it is notable that the piece with the most 'postmodern spirit', *Amarok*, is polystylistic rather than fused: there is a sense of many elements side by side rather than an integrated whole.

This is significant since the sense of 'postmodern spirit' is conveyed partly by the fragmentation and juxtaposition of different ideas. Where themes recur, they are distorted, opposing the kind of integration present in *Incantations*, or the later Talk Talk pieces.

Hence it appears that fusion and the 'postmodern spirit' are inversely proportional to each other. This was not detectable in Talk Talk's music, where the cross-influences were integrated in a more complex, multi-directional manner.

Again we see the importance of gaining a sense of 'postmodern spirit' as well as recognising traits often cited as postmodern or modern characteristics – it is the sense of 'postmodern spirit' in the whole entity that relates to a postmodern context.

6 GRAHAM FITKIN

Fitkin's blending of influences produces music that, in my experience, results in particularly inconsistent readings of style identity at the esthetic level. There is not any strong sense of polystylism, but rather one of integration. The stylistic ambiguity of the results underlines Fitkin's aesthetic as one of fusion, and there are various examples to consider. Through consideration of Fitkin's background, music and the reception of it, it will be examined how his work might relate to a postmodern approach.

At the simplest level, Fitkin's music is typically written for piano(s) and/or chamber ensembles. There is a focus on wind and brass instruments, particularly saxophone, and electric guitars and synthesisers are also used. Syncopated rhythms and riff-like figures permeate his pieces.

Analysis of Fitkin's work demonstrates an arithmetical logic in many of his structures, and a tight control of these in the method by which he creates specific temporal effects – for example, a sense of speeding up or slowing down. The kind of patterns revealed are consistent with compositional approaches of late twentieth-century classical composers, and show a concern with controlling material and shaping the overall structure. In the context of ambiguity, cross-influences and the strong influences of PRD and classical music, it is interesting to consider how the composer perceives himself within the musical environment, and the way in which he approaches his audience.

Fitkin's background perhaps gives some clue to why his music should seem eclectic. Born in 1963, his interest in PRD began while he was at primary school, where he claims to have "bored [his] primary school teachers sick reciting the Top Twenty to

them".¹ During his teens, Fitkin began listening to jazz – Keith Jarrett, Miles Davis and Chick Corea – subsequently becoming more interested in alternative bands such as Wire, The Smiths, The Wedding Present and The Fall. His taste went on to embrace more mainstream styles such as Madonna and Take That. Simultaneously, Fitkin was absorbing a wide variety of music through his classical-linked musical training, and remains particularly keen on Stravinsky, Bach and Reich. He came across Reich's music while still at school, having been listening to Stockhausen. The alternative approach of Reich appealed – "I liked the fact that nothing was hidden"² – and Reich became an important influence as Fitkin moved on to University in the early 1980s, graduating from Nottingham and subsequently studying in Holland with Andriessen. It is surely no coincidence that Fitkin frequently employs phasing, a technique strongly associated with Reich's earlier pieces particularly. Andriessen's association with minimalism and his interest in certain PRD subgenres are also important to note.

Fitkin has links with Steve Martland, who was mentioned in Chapter 2. Martland studied with Andriessen the year before Fitkin went to Holland, and both Martland and Fitkin have been recognised as displaying PRD influences. They both signed to Factory Classical, a wing of the Factory label, although the association was short-lived and not commercially a great success. Yet reactions to Martland's usage of PRD influences have frequently been negative. Mark Sinker writing in 1992 argues that Martland:

may still believe that 'classical' music offers a unique analytical rigour, as well as deep possibilities not yet exploited — though certainly latent — in overground pop (and underground rock), but he appears to allow himself to listen as if everything is already pop (or rock), or ought to be.³

More recently, Sweeney-Turner has argued that:

¹ Fitkin (1997)

² Fitkin (1997)

³ Mark Sinker in Morton/Collins (1992)

Although Martland 'sounds poppy' to classical audiences, as far as actual students and practitioners of popular music are concerned, he's anything but.⁴

Fitkin's own comments encapsulate the general tone of various critiques:

Steve does go through phases where he wants to be a pop star, and I think he's a lot better when he sticks to the stuff which is less poppy.⁵

Martland's *Glad Day* of 1990 uses a CD single format for four tracks incorporating strong PRD influences. 'Festival of Britain', the first track, demonstrates perhaps why Martland is not considered as idiomatic as Fitkin. The vocal points towards PRD; Sarah Jane Morris, whose voice exhibits a distinctive low range and male-sounding timbre, is probably best known for collaborating with The Communards on their single 'Don't Leave Me This Way'. Her vocal style is clearly not classical in terms of timbre, yet the clarity of diction is quite atypical of PRD, being closer to the 'overpronunciation' of classical vocal styles, and seems inappropriate in this context, creating what might be described as a stiltedness. Similarly awkward are the rhythmic devices used; while there is some syncopation anticipating the next beat in the vocal, one would expect the backing to reflect this. However, it is kept very much more simple, with patterns predominantly based around groupings of four equal quavers and harmonic shifts taking place on the first beat of a grouping, rather than anticipating the beat a quaver early, as is more typical of PRD styles. This kind of syncopation, used infrequently in Martland's music, is a particularly strong element of Fitkin's style.

Sweeney-Turner, in the same article that criticises Martland, endorses Fitkin's *Hard Fairy* CD (which includes *ARACT*, considered in detail in section 6.3) as containing "some truly idiomatic popular references".⁶ The rhythmic devices are probably part of

⁴ Sweeney-Turner (1995b) p. 600

⁵ Fitkin (1997)

⁶ Sweeney Turner (1995b) p. 601

the reason for this, alongside harmonic and structural elements which will be looked at in the section on *ARACT*. Martland's music is in some respects more reminiscent of minimalism which is far less reliant on syncopation.

In other works Martland reflects minimalist influences without simultaneously trying to present an obviously PRD-inspired approach: *Crossing the Border's* repetitive layers of string motifs are an example of music more effective for having been freed from the desire to be PRD: it is particularly reminiscent of some of John Adams' earlier work.

My experiences have suggested that Fitkin can suggest PRD to PRD listeners and classical to classical listeners; with Martland the reverse appears to be true (see earlier comments from Sweeney-Turner), suggesting a lack of identification with the music by audiences. This chapter will examine possible reasons for Fitkin being considered idiomatic to different audiences by examining *ARACT*, a piano duet written in 1990 (section 6.3). Firstly, however, I first want to approach Fitkin's music through two earlier pieces: *Sciosophy* (eight hands on two pianos, 1986) and *CUD* (large ensemble, 1988).

6.1 *Sciosophy*: small scale structures

'Sciosophy' does not appear in the Oxford English Dictionary, but appears to derive from the Latin *scio*, 'I know' and the Greek *sophos*, 'wise'. The title is unusual for Fitkin, perhaps betraying *Sciosophy's* position as a composition written fairly early in his career. Later titles tend to be short and direct (*CUD* and *ARACT* are typical) and often connotative (*MESH*, *STUB*) while not necessarily seeming relevant to the content. The exceptions are solo piano pieces, which are usually titled as a piano piece and the date (for example, *Piano piece very late 92*). This development of title style appears to be linked to a desire to be direct in communicating with an audience, and is thus very much

part of the total Fitkin aesthetic, linking with the musical content even if not seeming to refer directly to it.

Written in 1986, Fitkin's *Sciosophy* for eight hands on two pianos shows patterns of structuring which are subsequently applied on a much larger scale in *CUD*, which is discussed in the next section. A number of traits in the piece are typical of Fitkin, and its small scale makes it an ideal preface to the analysis of *CUD*.

Three contrasting ideas form the basis of the sections in *Sciosophy*. **A** is a strong theme in 6/4, based on a one-bar-long pattern (fourth and second parts), although the first part is slightly varied, with the first pattern played four times, the second three, the third two and the fourth one. This explains why sections featuring **A**-based material are 10 (4 + 3 + 2 + 1), 6 (3 + 2 + 1), 3 (2 + 1) or 1 bar long (see table in figure 6.6). **A** is shown in figures 6.1 – note the 'obliterating' chords in the third part, which are related to features in *ARACT* – and 6.2 (section references are taken from the table in figure 6.6).

The opening bars (figure 6.1) already present some syncopation, with the off-beat quavers (E flat - G - C and F - E flat in the second and fourth parts) contradicting the underlying 6/4 pulse and suggesting jazz and popular idioms rather than classical music. The second excerpt (figure 6.2) shows how the original pattern is varied slightly, maintaining the underlying motifs, but creating an even more intricate texture while retaining the features of the original. This is reminiscent of the multi-tracking technique used in *PRD*, where the texture is expanded with additional tracks forming layers over a riff. In this case, the new material does not simply add harmonic and melodic interest but contributes to the rhythmic qualities, creating complexities around what is still recognisable as the initial **A** pattern.

The opening tonality is based on a Dorian mode using C as the tonic (C, D, E♭, F, G, A, B♭): use of modes rather than keys is a recurrent feature of Fitkin's work, and the resultant unraised sevenths contribute to the popular and jazz codings present in the music. The third piano part is significant in the way it adds jazz colours to passages,

such as in section 3 (figure 6.2) by way of additional accidentals — the F# and C#, for example. The use of acciaccaturas imitates jazz ornamentation; the patterns here are typical of keyboard improvisational devices widespread in jazz performance. These examples show Fitkin's concern with non-classical influences such as PRD and jazz in terms of texture and melody. Note also the firm I-III-IV-V bass line, with the 9th, 11th and 13th (Bb, F and D) enriching the harmony provided by the Eb and G of the C minor triad (these added notes are also used widely elsewhere, for example in the later *ARACT*).

The image shows the first system of a musical score for 'Sciosophy, section 1'. It consists of three systems of staves. The top system has a treble clef and a 6/4 time signature, with a dynamic marking of 'f'. The middle system has a treble clef and a 6/4 time signature, with a dynamic marking of 'ff'. The bottom system has a treble clef and a 6/4 time signature, with a dynamic marking of 'ff'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and acciaccaturas.

Figure 6.1 : Sciosophy, section 1

The image shows the third system of a musical score for 'Sciosophy, section 3'. It consists of four systems of staves. The top system has a treble clef and a 6/4 time signature, with a dynamic marking of 'f'. The second system has a treble clef and a 6/4 time signature, with a dynamic marking of 'ff'. The third system has a treble clef and a 6/4 time signature, with a dynamic marking of 'ff'. The bottom system has a treble clef and a 6/4 time signature, with a dynamic marking of 'ff'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and acciaccaturas.

Figure 6.2: Sciosophy, section 3

The image shows a musical score for three staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a time signature of 6/8. It begins with a dynamic marking of *f* and contains several measures of music with notes and rests. The middle staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat and a time signature of 6/8. It starts with a dynamic marking of *ff* and features a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The bottom staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat and a time signature of 6/8, starting with a dynamic marking of *f* and containing a rhythmic pattern similar to the middle staff. There are various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings throughout the score.

Figure 6.3: Sciosophy, section 2

While **A**, despite syncopation, has an underlying evenness because of its straightforward compound duple basis, the main pattern of **B** is in 7/8 (occasionally moving to 6/8), necessitating unequal subdivisions into 3 + 4 quavers (figure 6.3).

This is further complicated by cross-rhythms going against the underlying one-bar pattern. Other **B**-based sections tend to focus on adding and varying the lines forming the counterpoint, much as with **A**. Section 11 (see table in figure 6.6) features a variant, still in 7/8 but with the bass ostinato varying the subdivision with a new repeated pattern.

C is a gentler concept in 4/4, with a two-bar basic pattern (figure 6.4).

The image shows a musical score for four staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a time signature of 4/4. It begins with a dynamic marking of *mp* and contains several measures of music with notes and rests. The second staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat and a time signature of 4/4, starting with a dynamic marking of *p* and featuring a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The third staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat and a time signature of 4/4, starting with a dynamic marking of *mp* and containing a rhythmic pattern similar to the second staff. The bottom staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat and a time signature of 4/4, starting with a dynamic marking of *mp* and containing a rhythmic pattern similar to the second staff. There are various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings throughout the score.

Figure 6.4: Sciosophy, section 4

Again, by looking at the similar passage in figure 6.5, it can be seen that similar varying layers are used to expand a distinctive rhythmic motif, using phasing of 5/8 against the two-bar, 4/4 underlying pattern.

To refer to these ideas as themes is somewhat misleading. The contrapuntal activity between the pianos is such that, rather than a single strand being more prominent with the other parts forming an accompaniment, the patterns link to create strongly rhythmical and thickly-textured figures in a manner similar to that of a PRD riff where, for example, drums, bass and guitar might combine to create a distinctive pattern that relies on the presence of all the instruments rather than being carried by a specific part.

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled 'Sciosophy, section 8'. It consists of four staves of music. The top staff is a grand staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The second staff has a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The third staff has a bass clef and a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff has a bass clef and a 4/4 time signature. The music is characterized by complex rhythmic patterns, including frequent use of eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. There are dynamic markings such as 'p' (piano) and 'f' (forte) throughout the score. The overall texture is dense and rhythmically intricate, reflecting the 'thickly-textured' nature mentioned in the text.

Figure 6.5: *Sciosophy*, section 8

Stylistically, there are a number of elements in *Sciosophy* which are present in other Fitkin works and are typical of his compositional approach. Piano is often featured and tends to appear in larger-scale works, and there are a number of pieces for between one and four pianists. *Sciosophy* is written for eight hands on two pianos because at this time the composer had formed a group of four pianists in order to have his work performed. The tendency to compose for piano seems to stem from the composer's own proficiency as a pianist – he features in many recordings of his work.

The structure of the piece utilises the patterns of A, B, and C, using them in passages of increasing and decreasing length. This kind of device, where, for example, a piece moves towards a certain point by shortening the sections progressively to seem to accelerate towards it, is found frequently in Fitkin's work and is used widely in *CUD*, as will be seen in the next section. Perhaps the simplest way of demonstrating this is to show the sections of *Sciosophy* in table form (figure 6.6).

Page	Section	Pattern		
		A	B	C
		Number of repetitions		
1	1	10		
2	2		7	
2	3	6		
3	4			1 1/2
3	5		7	
3	6	3		
3-4	7		6	
4	8			3
4	9	1		
4-5	10			5
5	11		8 (variant)	
5-6	12		7	
6	13	3		
6	14		6 (variant)	
6-7	15			5
7-8	16	6		
8	17			6
8	18		7	
8-9	19			1 1/2 + 1/4
9-10	20	10		
10	21	6		
10	22			3 x 1/2
10	23	3		

Figure 6.6: Table of structure of *Sciosophy*

In this diagram we can see clear patterns. A's presence diminishes as C's increases, and B remains consistent. Then A gradually returns, with C maintaining a presence until the final section (around section 20-21) where it becomes very much less important; B, meanwhile, maintains a fairly consistent length for every appearance, although not occurring in the last sections, in which A is very much the dominant idea.

It should be noted that the ten repetitions of **A** in section 20 function as dominant preparation for a recapitulation and close in the subsequent sections.

The sequence of values of the repetitions of **A** shows a typically Fitkinesque logic, decreasing by 4, then 3, then 2, then increasing palindromically, and decreasing with the same pattern to the close.

Sciosophy's structure sees passages depending on a device, used often by Fitkin, of shortening or lengthening on each repetition. This occurs on the level outlined in the table, whereas in *CUD* it is extended to control sections, subsections and subsections down the structural hierarchy. This is not so much the case with *Sciosophy*, where consistent durations passing in and out of phase are more common (increasing or decreasing lengths within sections would hinder this effect). Nevertheless, there is a passage in section 14 (based on idea **B**) where the device occurs lower down the hierarchy — that is within a section rather than controlling relationships between sections (see figure 6.7).

The image displays a musical score for section 14 of *Sciosophy*. It consists of four staves of music, all in 7/8 time. The top staff features a series of notes with stems pointing upwards, some marked with accents. The second staff contains a more complex melodic line with various note values and rests. The third staff shows a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The bottom staff includes a dynamic marking of *ff* (fortissimo) and a measure with a duration of 8. The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines.

Figure 6.7: *Sciosophy*, section 14

The spacing between the quaver stabs in bars 3 and 4 of the top part in this excerpt increases by a quaver rest each time, which is again the case in the 6th bar. This is not reflected in the other parts which maintain consistent, repeated motifs. Fitkin often uses this kind of technique, frequently decreasing spacing rather than increasing it (as is the case here). This is used in many PRD styles where the rhythm becomes denser, for example with decreasing durations as notes become less spaced out in time – a change or climax in PRD music is often heralded with a drum fill or a pulse previously on every other beat occurring on every beat for a short period leading to the crucial point. The triplet (3 in the time of 2) is another typical PRD effect which uses a similar basis.

The final bars of *Sciosophy* are a precursor to the those of *ARACT*, repeating a single bar three times and suddenly cutting off. The dynamic for this final section is consistently *ff* in *Sciosophy*, whereas *ARACT* uses a final crescendo for the last repetition in what could be described as a more sophisticated development of the device used in *Sciosophy*. The end of *Sciosophy* seems to subvert both the conventional, cleanly-ended classical approach, typically ending on a prepared and/or reiterated tonic and the PRD repeat-to-fade device — it is more as if a needle has been lifted from a record.

Figure 6.5 shows an example of the use of phasing in *Sciosophy*. This is a device which appears in other Fitkin works, including the recent orchestral work *GRAF*, which was completed in Spring 1997 and premiered in Liverpool on 3rd May 1997. It can be seen clearly how repetitive groupings of 5 quavers, 8 crotchets (2 bars of 4/4) and 6 crotchets are phased for a short period during this section of idea C.

Further down the hierarchy of subsections, the rhythm utilises syncopation frequently; the examples of A, B, and C show this. Figure 6.1 shows the bass notes E \flat and F occurring on off-beats, while the last three bars of figure 6.3 show the third piano part anticipating the fifth beat, with the second marcato dotted crotchet appearing a quaver before the fifth quaver of the 4 + 3 pattern in the fourth part, which is maintaining

the underlying rhythm. The patterns in the first and third bar of figure 6.4 in the second and fourth parts anticipate the fifth beat a quaver early again, with the left hand syncopating around the equal subdivision of the bar into two groupings of four quavers. This kind of rhythmic device is found throughout *Sciosophy*, and also occurs frequently in Fitkin's other music.

The tonality in *Sciosophy* is typical of the composer – primarily modal and consonant, but with chromatic melodic colourings and 7ths, 9ths and 11ths added to the harmony (a similar style will be seen in *CUD* and *ARACT*). The tonic is constantly reiterated in the fourth piano part providing the equivalent of a bass line. The classical technique of preparing for a recapitulation with a passage focusing on the dominant occurs in *Sciosophy* and in *CUD*; *Sciosophy*, based in C, uses a reiterated bass G in sections 20 and 22 to prepare for important tonics – firstly the final restatement of idea A, and secondly the repetitions of the A pattern which form the coda (figure 6.8).

The image shows a musical score for section 23 of the piece 'Sciosophy'. It consists of four staves of music. The top staff has a measure number '23' above it. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'ff' and 'f'. The notation is dense and complex, reflecting the 'chromatic melodic colourings' mentioned in the text. The bottom staff appears to be a bass line, consistent with the text's description of a 'reiterated bass G'.

Figure 6.8: *Sciosophy*, section 23

However, the approach to harmonic structure is not always consistent with that generally found in classical music. The closing three statements of the same bar finish on dominant harmony, with the effect that the piece is left hanging rather than being brought to a satisfying tonic close. Additionally, key changes are often abrupt rather than approached more gradually – note, for example, the shift from Mixolydian B \flat into what is predominantly Aeolian A despite the G \sharp on the second quaver (figure 6.9, annotations in grey print).

The image shows a musical score for 'Sciosophy' with a section change from Section 7 to Section 8. The score is written on four staves. A vertical dashed line marks the transition between the two sections. Above the staves, the text 'Section 7' and 'Section 8' is written in grey. Various musical notations, including time signatures like 4/8, 6/8, and 6/4, are present throughout the score.

Figure 6.9: Sciosophy, section change from 7 to 8

This is clearly similar to the sudden shift from C to E \flat in *ARACT*, and is more typically found in PRD than classical music.

Similarly typical of PRD styles are the solid bass lines running throughout *Sciosophy*, and which are also a feature of *ARACT*. The harmonic progressions often focus on chord VII rather than V, within a modal context (the seventh step is not raised). The use of modes itself suggests non-classical influences, which, taking into account other aspects of style and the composer's background, seems particularly to imply PRD influences. The colouring of the modes with added notes and fleeting hints of chromaticism has a similar effect, suggesting PRD or jazz styles.

To summarise, there are a number of features in *Sciosophy* that suggest a mixture of PRD, jazz and classical influences; many of these are typical of Fitkin's music and will be evident in the analyses of *CUD* and *ARACT*. Traits noted in the analysis above include:

- texture developed by layering of additional material over the original pattern, filling it out
- jazz-influenced ornamentation of melodic lines
- chromatic colouring through brief use of accidentals not pertaining to the tonality of the context
- added notes in the harmony to form 7ths, 9ths and 11ths around the basic triad
- firm bass-lines stating the harmonic outlines
- syncopation, with rhythms anticipating beats, typically suggesting entries a quaver early
- contrapuntal interplay between different parts (used in many styles, perhaps particularly typical of classical)
- combination of several rhythmic motifs in different parts to create a 'riff', much like those used in PRD music
- use of piano
- increasing and decreasing lengths of repeated material
- sudden cut-off at the end of a piece
- phasing
- overridingly tonal approach to harmony
- consistent, unchanging pulse
- frequent change of metre (typical of twentieth century classical music)
- logical patterns in section length controlling the structure (found particularly in contemporary classical music)

In the next section, ideas seen in *Sciosophy* are developed by Fitkin for a larger-scale work, which effectively complicates the interaction of elements of different influences.

6.2 *CUD*: large scale structures

In the chapter on Talk Talk, it was suggested that clear, logical, pattern-based organisation within a piece, not necessarily obvious to the listener but nevertheless undertaking some structural role, suggested a classical aesthetic. This is true for patterns such as the palindromic section of Talk Talk's 'Myrrhman'. Fitkin uses passages with carefully calculated lengths in order to build to a point requiring emphasis – this was demonstrated by examples from *Sciosophy* in the previous section and forms the basis of the structure in *CUD*. There are structural elements that suggest PRD – the abundance of repetition, for example, and the commencement in *CUD* of each section with the same pattern (see figures 6.21-6.25).

Fitkin's compositions appear first as scores and use conventional classical notation, but some aspects of *CUD*'s score are perhaps unusual. The keyboard part, labelled 'synth', demands that brass voice is used for sustained notes and chords, and a marimba sound for the rest of the part. This allows for intricate 'marimba' patterns on the keyboard, while later in the score a real marimba is used and the keyboard doubles it. The sustained notes tend to double the brass section (two trumpets, two trombones, one bass trombone), thus enriching the sound without using significant extra forces. That the keyboard is imitating specific instruments is itself worthy of comment – it appears to be used for practical reasons rather than more experimentally.

The percussion section uses bass drum, tenor drum, glockenspiel, marimba, xylophone, piano and synthesiser: it is notable that most of this percussion is tuned, and there is no emulation of the kit commonly found in PRD and jazz styles. The tenor drum has associations with military bands, although it has been used in orchestral

contexts. It can therefore be argued that suggestions of jazz and popular styles in *CUD* do not arise from the percussion instruments chosen, but rather from the rhythmic patterns they play, since they are able to reinforce the pulse, while also providing strongly syncopated motifs. Their role is rhythmic rather than simply harmonic or melodic (one could argue that this is also the case with the wind instruments); duration and rhythmic interplay plays a much more dominant role than is typical of classical music.

The use of electric guitar is not typical of the PRD with which it is commonly associated. Its role in *CUD* is primarily to support the harmony of the piece. There are no solo flourishes to suggest a lead guitar role, nor is there the strumming of rhythm guitar; rather single, sustained chords are played. The bass guitar's role of bubbling syncopated figures is far more soloistic; its patterns are often undoubled, and the playing style is far more what one would expect of a jazz or PRD musician (particularly one adept in a funk style, given the spiky syncopation).

The role the guitar might be expected to fill, namely the provision of riffs (fragments or motifs repeated to build a distinctive pattern, similar in concept to the classical ostinato), is transferred over to the saxophones, who have figures such as those in figure 6.10:

The image shows musical notation for two saxophone parts. The top part is for the alto saxophone, and the bottom part is for the tenor saxophone. Each part has two staves labeled '1' and '2'. The notation consists of rhythmic patterns with notes and rests, starting with a forte (f) dynamic marking. The pieces end with 'etc.' indicating they are part of a larger, repeating motif.

Figure 6.10: *CUD*, theme 1(bar 8)

This theme will be referred to subsequently as theme 1. There are relatively few 'themes' in *CUD*, and these are varied to provide additional material. Figure 6.11

shows theme 2, while figure 6.12 shows a variant of it. Figure 6.13, theme 3, is clearly based on theme 1, with the semiquaver figure delayed a beat by firm bass chords, creating a dialogue between bass and treble to develop the riff figure. Theme 4, distinctive 6th patterns, is shown in figure 14, with figures 6.15 to 6.19 showing motifs based on it. Figure 6.20 shows a keyboard motif.

2 trumpets
2 trombones

Figure 6.11: CUD, theme 2 (6 bars before cue C)

2 clarinets
2 alto saxes

Figure 6.12: CUD, variant on theme 2 (cue E)

2 alto saxes
2 tenor saxes
trumpet
2 trombones
bass trombone/
bar. sax

etc.

Figure 6.13: CUD, theme 3 (11 bars after cue D)

2 clarinets

Figure 6.14: CUD, theme 4 (5 bars after cue F)

2 flutes

Figure 6.15: CUD, variant of theme 4 (cue G)

2 flutes, each
doubled by a
clarinet



Figure 6.16: CUD, variant of theme 4
(syncopation into bar 7 after cue H)

2 clarinets

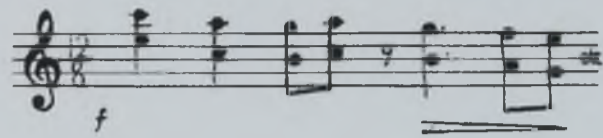


Figure 6.17: CUD, variant of theme 4
(3 bars before cue I)



2 flutes

2 clarinets
both parts doubled by synthesiser

Figure 6.18: CUD, variant of theme 4 (cue L)



Figure 6.19: variant of theme 4
(2nd bar of cue O)
(instrumentation as fig. 7.18)

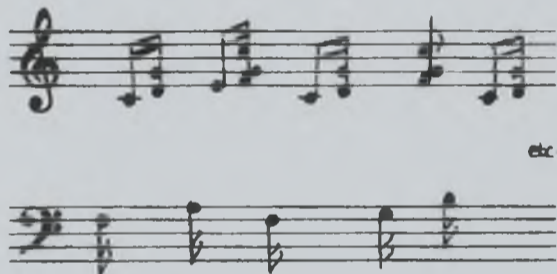
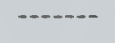



Figure 6.20: CUD, piano and synthesiser play keyboard motif
(bar 6 of opening)

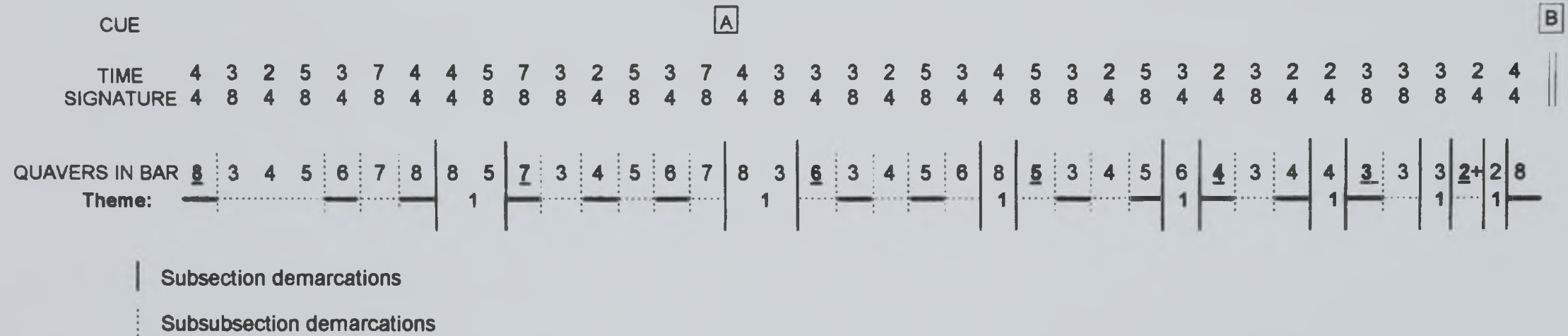
This use of limited material has obvious connections with Mike Oldfield's techniques, particularly in *Incantations*, and is considered integral to classical compositional methods. PRD music, though dependent on variation, tends to achieve its effects by slight rhythmic inflections or changing instrumentation on repeats, whereas the development of thematic material in *CUD* and *Incantations* treats themes far more as building blocks for new material, taking fragments and phrases from them and altering them into distinctly different, though related, patterns. In theme 4, for example, it can be seen that the original motif is very brief, but that some of the variants form

much longer, melodic phrases. There are also two distinctive motifs, one consisting of stabbing chords, the other of sustained chords.

The tables in figures 6.21 to 6.25 (pages 262 to 266) show the structures of the different sections of *CUD*, demonstrating the numerical patterns governing the structure and the way in which strict patterns are not completely adhered to, but nevertheless form the backbone of the piece. The diagrams show firstly the cue taken from the score, and secondly a bar-by-bar representation of time-signature written vertically as in a score (for example, the first section begins with a bar of 4/4, followed by a bar of 3/8, followed by a bar of 2/4). The line below the time signatures summarises the number of quavers per bar, which clarifies certain patterns (the opening of section one shows the 4/4 bar as having the duration of 8 quaver beats, the 3/8 bar being 3 quaver beats in length and so on). Below this themes are represented either by numbers referring to the patterns on the previous few pages, being the theme numbered the same or a derivative of it; also shown are motifs of stabbing chords (graphically represented by ) or sustained chords (). Subsection divisions are shown by a bold vertical line and subsubsections by a dotted vertical line, subsections depending primarily on changing thematic material.

The structure of *CUD* is on a larger scale, based on the pattern of ratios 1:2:3:4:5. The first section is 188 quavers long, the second 376 (exactly twice the length of the first). The total length of the piece is 2819 quavers, which divided by 15 (1+2+3+4+5, in order to calculate lengths of sections with regard to the ratios) equals 187.9. The logical pattern to follow subsequently would be 564, 753 and 940 quavers in length for the third, fourth and fifth sections respectively. This is not, however, adhered to, but twisted slightly to 555, 725 and 975 respectively, still within 5% of the 'correct' lengths. The significance of 555 in a 5-based structure is obvious, although the reasons for the subsequent differences are not clear.

Figure 6-21: Structure of first section of CUD

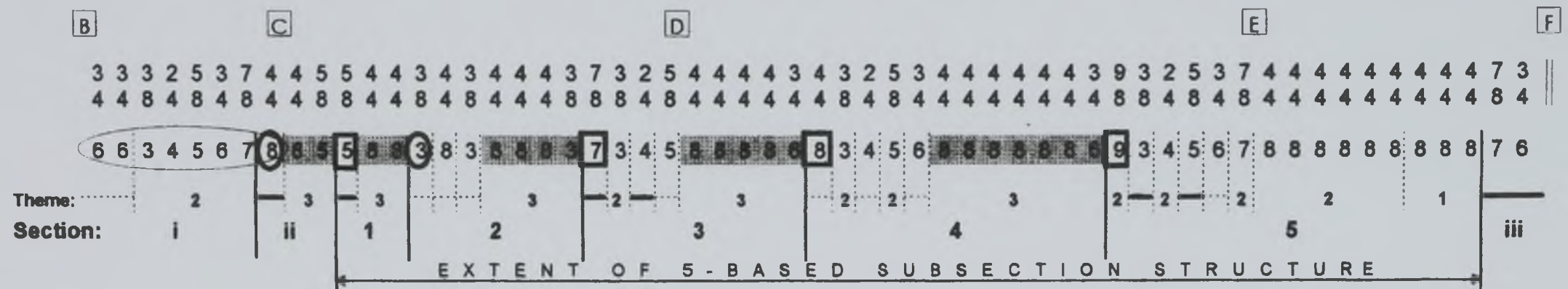


The above shows the changing time signatures of the first section of CUD. There are three patterns discernable: sections decreasing in length featuring theme 1 (labelled 1), a pattern of the sequence of bar-lengths of 3,4,5,6,7 and 8 quavers, reduced each time by one bar (3-4-5-6-7, 3-4-5-6 etc.), and a single decreasing bar-length (emboldened and underlined). There is no consistency over the material used in these latter two, which varies between sustained notes (—) and 'stabbing' chords (.....). There is a rippling piano accompaniment often present, particularly underneath the 'stabs'. The increasing bar lengths

are discernable to an extent through the constant changes between sustained notes and stabs occurring at the beginning of each bar. However, far more distinctive is the *decreasing* length of each subsection, particularly as this becomes more marked towards the end of the section.

There are key ideas here moving closer and closer together, therefore being heard in increasingly rapid alternation. This effectively accelerates the music towards the cue B, which is the beginning of the second section.

Figure 6.22: Structure of second section of CUD



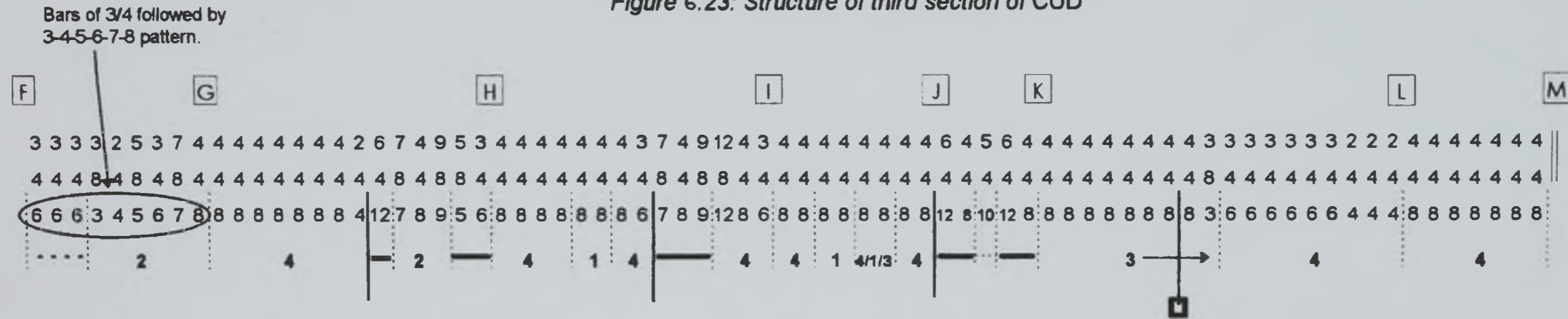
Sections 2-5 all begin with several bars of 3/4 followed by the 3-4-5-6-7-8 pattern, although the content of these measures varies considerably between sections

- shows metre lengths forming sequence
- shows metre lengths which should be part of this sequence, but the bar before C is twice the appropriate length, the 3/8 bar half the appropriate length.

There appears to be a 5-based structure present in this section, but it is treated flexibly. The passage can be divided into sections on the basis of where the theme above appears and where metre forming a sequence appears. This sequence is, however, distorted, and there is an extra section before 1 that does not correspond, although it is very similar in terms of content and identical in length to 1, so that 1 could be an elaboration on the pattern by repetition. The most significant pattern is one found on various levels in the piece: the use of sections with a ratio of lengths roughly corresponding to each other to form a 1:2:3:4:5 pattern

(21:41:57:80:106), although this never appears 'perfectly' — it often seems to have been used as a basis which has then been corrupted slightly, but it forms the basis for the whole piece as well as appearing within. The table above demonstrates the approximate proportions. Thematically subsection ii forms a sixth section; however, since the other subsections display the 1:2:3:4:5 pattern, it has been treated as part of the opening subsection. Another alternative would be to treat subsection 1 as a repeat of ii, corrupting the structure in a way typical of Fitkin's flexible application of it.

Figure 6.23: Structure of third section of CUD

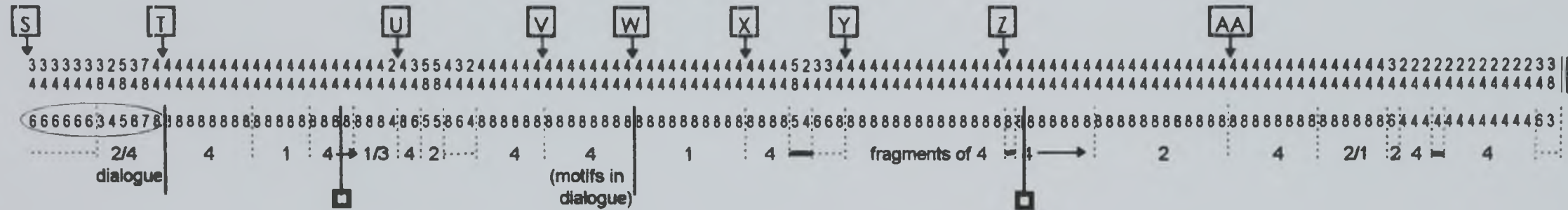


□ denotes that the division calculated does not seem to correspond to a change in the music

The length of this section, 555 quavers, suggests preplanned significance. The section divides into 5 approximately equal sections with the borders (marked by vertical dotted lines) coinciding, in 3 out of 4 cases, with a change of section preceded by theme 4. The division between K and L does not fit this pattern so neatly, falling 7 quavers (11 with rounding to the nearest barline) before the end of the section and followed by theme 4 rather than preceded by it. The first four sections also all begin with stabbing or sustained motifs then move on into themes, and the fifth section again differs, using themes and variants throughout. There is still some logic to the structure if

the end section is treated as a final statement of the section's most prominent theme, and the discrepancy in section size is proportionately very small, especially taking into account the general approximate nature of the numerical pattern-based structures. The way the patterns generally correspond is too precise to be merely coincidental: experimentation with other possible patterns during analysis showed far more random results, whereas the correct analysis tied in to ends of themes, and also demonstrated a thematic structure such as that above with clear patterns in the recurrence of theme 4.

Figure 6-25: Structure of fifth section of CUD



This section again begins with the bars of 3/4, followed by the 3-4-5-6-7-8 pattern. The subsections correspond loosely to the ratio pattern 1:2:3:4:5, although as can be seen, this is treated quite flexibly (the vertical dotted lines correspond less to clear breaks between sections, although they match in two cases and are close to changes in the remaining two). Breaks are in all cases preceded by one or more bars of theme 4 or variants based on it, although the break shortly after Z could be described as preceding theme 4, as it occurs just one bar into the section. This may also be an

example of the flexibility of the structure, suggesting a tie-in with the changes at point Z, which take place slightly early within the structure. The break shortly before U seems to fall awkwardly, but these four bars are effectively a two bar motif which is then repeated, so if structure was adhered to strictly half the repetition would be missed, and so there are clear artistic reasons for the structure varying at this point. In terms of the length of the entire section, the discrepancies are still small.

Sections 3, 4 and 5 are subdivided in logical patterns based on the number 5. This is not the case with the first two sections, although the central section of 2 displays elements of a pattern.

The composer has suggested that within all the sections and subsections are further divisions into 5, and that the 5 idea is carried on down to the level of single notes. No evidence has borne this out, but there are sub-divisions which are highly logical while not following 5-based patterns.

Typical of Fitkin are patterns increasing or decreasing by one unit on each repetition. This is to some extent represented in the first section where the bar length at the beginning of each subsection decreases by a quaver with each appearance. However, this is less obvious to the listener, because of distance between the decreasing bars and the inconsistency of material within them, than, for example, the patterns at P (figure 6.26).

The brass stabs occur in a group of two, then three then four stabs (the last bar of the page reproduced in 6.26 is followed by a bar with a quaver stab on the second crotchet). The pattern continues, with some of the crotchet/double quaver rests altered to quaver rests, with additional stabs being placed at the end of the pattern (in the reproduced excerpt they are added at the beginning). The synthesiser chords at P represent a similar idea to the brass stabs: the first chord, at P, lasts for 8 crotchets, the second for $7\frac{1}{2}$, the third continues over the page to a total length of 7 crotchets, and the pattern continues until Q, with a chord four crotchets in length leading to the cue. This is quite typical of certain sections and parts in *CUD*, although not widespread enough to suggest a specific substructure which might be present instead of the 5-based concept, put forward by the composer as governing the structure down to the level of individual notes. On examination of the piece, this does not seem either to be adhered to strictly, or even appear at some levels.

The musical score consists of 13 staves, each representing a different instrument. The staves are labeled as follows from top to bottom: Fl (Flute), Cl (Clarinet), Pic (Piccolo), Trp (Trumpet), Trom (Trombone), Eb (E-flat Trombone), Bb (B-flat Trombone), Bar (Baritone), Sn (Snare Drum), and Dr (Drum). The score begins with a 'P' cue on the Flute staff. The music is written in a standard staff notation with various notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The Flute part starts with a series of notes, followed by a rest. The Clarinet part has a similar pattern. The Piccolo part has a series of notes. The Trumpet part has a series of notes. The Trombone parts have a series of notes. The Baritone part has a series of notes. The Snare Drum part has a series of notes. The Drum part has a series of notes. The score is written in a standard staff notation with various notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The Flute part starts with a series of notes, followed by a rest. The Clarinet part has a similar pattern. The Piccolo part has a series of notes. The Trumpet part has a series of notes. The Trombone parts have a series of notes. The Baritone part has a series of notes. The Snare Drum part has a series of notes. The Drum part has a series of notes.

Figure 6.26: CUD, cue P

Within the structure, much of the content is fairly typical of Fitkin. The harmony is tonal, but with chromatic notes used often as passing notes or grace notes, colouring the tonality, creating chromatic ornamentation rather than a more pronounced dissonance. Figure 6.27 shows this kind of harmony. There is a sense of dominant preparation, particularly from the strong bass G starting each baritone saxophone and bass guitar pattern, yet at the same time the $A\flat$ is prominent, colouring the harmony. There is not a resolution onto C, the tonic, until much later in the piece, shortly after S (at the beginning of the final section). This means the sense of unresolved harmony is maintained; the device is typical of functional harmony.

But although the baritone saxophone clearly bases its pattern around the dominant G, which is emphasised by the marimba and clarinets' stabs on G and D, the $A\flat$ contradicts this. The note F appears in a number of the parts, and in this context its role is ambiguous: is it supporting the sense of dominant preparation, giving the emphasised G the role of root of the dominant seventh rather than a simple dominant, and thus more unstable, or is it simply coloration? The use of the F in the baritone sax/bass guitar motif is significant in that it is a fairly noticeable note, which does not resolve but moves to the D in a manner reminiscent of a PRD bass pattern, where sevenths are often prominent. As the passage continues, increased use of accidentals adds to the ambiguity while the bass G-F-D motif is repeated right through until Q, then interjecting stabs are re-established and elaborated slightly for eight bars, with E and A added to the pattern confusing its function further.

This passage is significant in that at the beginning there is a sense of functional harmony coloured by the flattened ninth ($A\flat$), but as the passage progresses, becoming harmonically more ambiguous with further accidentals and seemingly less sense of preparation for a perfect cadence, the functional harmony seems lost, and because of the other stylistic pointers (the syncopation and the instrumentation, for example) suggesting jazz, there is a sense of breaking free from classical harmonic structures.

The musical score is organized into systems for different instruments. The first system includes parts for Trumpet (Tr), Trombone (Tbn), and Bass (Bsn). The second system includes parts for Alto Saxophone (Alto), Tenor Saxophone (Ten), and Baritone Saxophone (Bar). The third system includes parts for E♭ Saxophone (E♭), B♭ Saxophone (B♭), and Baritone Saxophone (Bar). The fourth system includes parts for Soprano Saxophone (Sopr) and Baritone Saxophone (Bar). The notation features complex rhythmic patterns with many beamed notes, characteristic of chromatic ornamentation. Dynamics such as *f*, *mp*, and *mf* are indicated throughout the score.

Figure 6.27: Chromatic ornamentation, CUD, 6-11 bars after cue P
(see figure 6.26 for bass guitar and baritone sax patterns)

Yet as this situation is reached, the piece launches into stabs of G with added 7th, 9th and 11th at cue S, which resolve onto C after six bars, twisting the harmonic identity again, and perhaps retrospectively suggesting the previous passage was, after all, an elaborate form of dominant preparation. Yet there is a sense of 'break' at cue S and patterns occurring at the beginning of sections are brought in as if the piece has developed in one direction, and is being stopped in its tracks, and restarted with an altered harmonic aesthetic.

Taking *CUD* as an example of cross-influence, this use of harmony demonstrates subtle interplay of styles. With the many influences present, the composer is able to utilise a wide variety of devices and techniques in a manner far more integrated than, for example, a simple dialogue – compare this to Jon Lord's *Concerto for Group and Orchestra*, for example, where the orchestra and band participate in a dialogue underlining contrasts between the genres represented. The sense of musical identity can be shifted on a variety of levels; adding accidentals and then returning to a far less chromatic style can perhaps affect the way in which other devices are heard.

Syncopation is prominent in *CUD* – it is also typically Fitkinesque. The anticipatory syncopation, where a 'weak' beat is tied to a strong beat, effectively bringing it forward, is typical of PRD timing, trying to subvert the pulse but ultimately only creating patterns around it – the pulse continues steadily. This kind of syncopation is exemplified by theme 6.1 where the second crotchet is brought forward a semiquaver.

As with many of Fitkin's pieces, *CUD* is marked that tempo should be maintained at a constant crotchet=108 throughout. But there is nevertheless something of a 'hiccup' effect in *CUD* when bars of 3/8, 5/8 or 9/8 appear, since they have 'half' a pulse. This kind of effect, as will be seen, appears to some degree in *ARACT*, but since the crotchet pulse there is able to continue behind the music – all bars consist of complete crotchet beats – the effect is not pronounced and the piece is hence very much smoother. The appearance of such a constant pulse can be compared to the

steady pulse of much PRD music, with classical traditionally using considerably more rubato.

CUD demonstrates a level of arithmetical organisation often present in Fitkin's work, alongside tonality and rhythmic devices that are also typically reflect the composer's eclectic musical interests. Tightly-controlled structures are not universal to Fitkin's music, and the piano pieces tend to reflect less such organisation. *CUD*, at fifteen minutes, requires some kind of framework: "It's a way of controlling it, otherwise I wouldn't know where I was going".⁷ However, Fitkin's comments on the way his structures function reveal possible explanations for the flexibility with which the *CUD* structural basis seems to be treated:

Sometimes the problem is that it doesn't fit, and that's where the problems occur; the music might have been perfectly fine, the structuring might have been fine and together they didn't work . . . There has to be a reason for something happening — for instance, why is this [section of *Sciosophy*] 10 and not 11, and the reason is the way it's structured within, 4-3-2-1 going towards that point.⁸

These comments suggest some kind of hierarchy, with a superstructure (the 5 sections in *CUD*) controlling a structure of subsections (the divisions within *CUD*'s 5 sections, again often 5-based) and subsubsections (the increasing or decreasing patterns, for example, within *CUD*'s subsections, which are less 5-based). The musical sense made by the content of the sub- and subsubsections appears, from the evidence in *CUD*, to take precedence over the 5-based logic, not so much as to override it completely but sufficiently to result in a flexible treatment. This means a structure utilising changing lengths is still perceptibly underlying the piece.

It is clear from the analyses of *Sciosophy* and *CUD* that PRD- and classical-influenced characteristics, along with some inspiration taken from jazz, are interacting in

⁷ Fitkin (1997)

a complex manner. This is, in some respects, similar to the approach seen in Talk Talk's music, where it was concluded that the ambiguity of identity in the music was caused not simply by transplanting classical instrumentation into a PRD context, which is the most noticeable trait, but by the way the material was controlled, and by the subversion of PRD elements in the original style. Fitkin differs from Talk Talk in that, although his style clearly develops – and there are examples of this given in the analyses here – it is ambiguous even at the early stages of his career, and presentation of a style which is subsequently subverted is not a particularly prominent element. There are devices which are subverted (the ending of *ARACT*, as will be seen in the next section, is an example of this).

Perhaps the most striking aspect of Fitkin's style is the use of jazz and PRD influenced motifs in a structure which is reminiscent of post-Webernian classical approaches to form (Stockhausen being an example of a composer particularly interested in proportions not only of duration but also of pitch), yet to reduce pieces such as *CUD* and *Sciosophy* to such a simple summary overlooks the many other stylistic traits which interact in these pieces, and indeed many other Fitkin works.

6.3 *ARACT*: cross-influences and musical identity

Having established an understanding of Fitkin's style, *ARACT* provides a base from which to explore stylistic identity as it occurs on the esthetic level, referring back to both text and the composer's situation and approach.

On a number of occasions, I have played *ARACT* to individuals without giving them any information about what they might be hearing. Two responses, which reflect the variety of reactions, are particularly interesting to take as a starting point. One is the suggestion made that *ARACT* was the backing for a Sting song, and the accompanying

⁸ Ibid.

criticism that it was, for this listener, “irritating without the vocals”. Another listener, however, thought the piece might be a Britten Piano Concerto. Stylistically there seems little to link *ARACT* with Britten’s work, and the lack of orchestra raises doubts about any concerto status: the labelling suggests an assumption of twentieth-century classical style from a listener not overly familiar with this area.

The categorisation of Fitkin by the music industry is firmly classical, which seems to stem largely from his background and the routes he has taken in order to promote his music. The academic studies are clearly typical of an classical composer, and the market targeted on his return from Holland is also classical-related. He wrote to a number of venues, eventually securing a residency at Stockton-on-Tees which resulted in various commissions. Although actively performing, the focus seems to have been on composition, and on performance groups as a vehicle so that the compositions were played. Of a group started in Holland, with four people on two pianos, Fitkin said “the reason I started it was that nobody played my music and I wanted some performances”.⁹ This route is acknowledged as relating to classical practice by the composer:

I suppose it’s because of my education and conditioning — that’s how I started off, through the classical tradition, rather than through the jazz or rock tradition perhaps playing clubs.¹⁰

Releases of recorded material have been on classical labels. As mentioned earlier, Factory Classical was the classical wing of Factory, best known for associations with New Order and Happy Mondays. Alan Erasmus, a director of Factory, was considering a potential classical project in 1985:

⁹ Fitkin (1997)

¹⁰ Ibid.

There is some incredibly beautiful classical music around at the moment. What's more, it is in desperate need of release.¹¹

Tony Wilson, founder of Factory, speaking retrospectively, describes the ideology behind Factory Classical:

Throughout our history we have packaged pop music as if it is classical music . . . as if it is a work of art. With Factory Classical . . . we decided to package classical music as pop music.¹²

Although Factory Classical was developed to deal with classical music, its attitude appears to have gone against the cultural norms associated with the style. Classical is a highly ritualised culture which tends to play down or not recognise these rituals. Packaging is obviously a concern for any label with a commercial interest in classical music, but it is normally understated and relatively simple compared to design concepts used with PRD releases. It is also interesting to note Wilson's reference to packaging pop as *if* it is a work of art, with the implication that it is not. The above comments demonstrate a differentiation of classical and PRD, despite Fitkin's ambiguity.

Factory Classical was not a commercial success, and Factory went into receivership in 1992 – this was primarily due to New Order and Happy Mondays massively exceeding budgets for recording albums, rather than a direct result of poor classical sales.

Fitkin's most recent releases have been on a classical label, Decca's Argo, which aims to "reflect the trend towards greater accessibility".¹³ Again there is an element of classical culture here, but also the suggestion of contradiction. There is a certain rift between those composers based within the classical culture who reject accessibility, perceiving it as a compromise, and those whose aesthetic results in music

¹¹ In Middles (1996) p. 198

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Short Cuts (Argo Sampler, 1994) sleeve notes

which audiences find 'easier', because of, for example, greater consonance. Brian Ferneyhough, for example, has adopted an aesthetic of extreme complexity based on serialism. He recognises that certain elements of his music may, for performers, be "either not literally realisable ... or else lead to complex, partly unpredictable results";¹⁴ Ferneyhough intends the performer to make a thorough preparation of the piece, with any inaccuracies then occurring to be considered part of the composer's intention. This kind of approach is increasingly rejected:

He [Ferneyhough] is definitely swimming against the tide of recent musical developments, however, at least as represented by other composers of his own generation, most of whom have avoided the textural and formal complexities engendered by integral serialism in favour of a simpler and more direct music.¹⁵

Yet, as has been seen (for example, in the quote from Lumsdaine in section 3.5) there is still very much a core of composers and critics who argue against accessibility. The cult of the 'Great Composer', which developed particularly during the last century, supports the concept of the composer as creator, who may or may not be appreciated for his genius but nevertheless will not compromise his art.

This leaves certain elements of music composed by musicians with a classical background but not conforming to that tradition in a complex position. In one instance such music might be seen as subverting the cultural norms of the classical tradition as it has developed over the last century, and hence peripheral to that culture. Simultaneously, although composers such as Reich, Glass and Nyman particularly are absorbing and being absorbed by popular culture, they are still relatively peripheral to this culture. Further complicating the issue is the somewhat hegemonic relationship between popular music (the term 'popular' is used here to denote a very much broader

¹⁴ Remarks on score of *Cassandra's Dream Song* for solo flute (1971), Morgan (1991) p. 386

¹⁵ Morgan (1991) p. 386

field than PRD suggests) and classical; although classical music is relatively unfamiliar to many who listen frequently to popular music, and is commercially weak, for example often requiring subsidies and grants to exist, it is still perceived as an artistic ideal and retains a status within music culture. Fitkin is integrating concepts from the different genres, yet for many composers and audiences, there is clearly a separation between these points.

Fitkin's music's relative accessibility is not a compromise, but a reflection of the composer's sense of identity, and the idea that, although his background is consistent with a musician based in an classical culture, there are certain aspects of this which he does not relate to:

I'm often sent brochures and programmes for festivals for contemporary music and I know that increasingly I'm thinking it's just so removed from the world that I live in.¹⁶

This seems to correlate with Fitkin's comments on the concert tradition:

I would prefer people to be in a more informal atmosphere where they feel they can tap their foot, and they don't have to sit down in a straight line and watch.¹⁷

There is a certain discomfort with the classical centres which is reflected in these comments. However, venues such as bars and clubs may present a different dilemma: "The problem of course is that I still want people to really listen to the music rather than just chat over it".¹⁸

Not only are there contradictions resulting from the ambiguities in the musical content, but also issues to consider relating to whether this creates a more accessible music. Although Argo stables a number of composers with PRD and jazz influences in


¹⁶ Fitkin (1997)

¹⁷ Ibid.

their music, it does not necessarily follow that such influences lead to greater accessibility. Nevertheless, there may be certain aspects of such styles, such as tonality and modality, that audiences find themselves, because of issues of familiarity, more able to 'latch on' and they thus find the listening experience more rewarding.

It is quite possible that, had the individual suggesting *ARACT* was by Sting been supplied with the *Hard Fairy* CD case before listening, the response would have been quite different, and the piece would possibly have been assumed to be classical before it was even heard. Typical is the relatively plain design and lettering: PRD packaging tends to feature more decorative effects. The names of the performers are prominent: they are listed on the spine of the CD as well as on the front cover. On the back they are listed alongside the instruments they play, with a note that pianos are "supplied by Steinway and Sons"; this information would be contained inside the booklet with a PRD CD, if mentioned at all. Inside the *Hard Fairy* booklet are texts on Fitkin "the composer", his "works", with some analytical detail. This text is translated into French, German and Italian. Rarely would a PRD CD feature descriptions of the music and translations: it is more usual to find photos, song lyrics and credits to musicians in the CD booklet.¹⁹

Although the background to Fitkin's work, and context in which it is heard, are classical-orientated, the content is often suggestive of popular styles in a number of ways, and in *ARACT* this is particularly the case. Perhaps an appropriate starting place is an overview of the structure.

Structurally the piece is summarised in figure 6.28 in terms of time signatures: the double lines are Fitkin's between some of the sections. The numbers represent time signatures (for example, the piece opens with a bar of 4/4 followed by a bar of 2/4) and the brackets over the time signatures denote that these two bars together form a short phrase. The double bar-lines are the composer's, and the symbol  denotes that the

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ The Martland *Glad Day* inlay features lyrics, photos of the composer and vocalist, and relatively discreet credits.

two lines form a pair (the last three lines are actually one line which the performers are instructed to repeat twice). The modality is also represented in this diagram; most of *ARACT* is in C aeolian, but there is a shift to E \flat aeolian for a contrasting middle section.

There is clearly an emphasis on four-groupings, and within this form there is a significant amount of repetition, and use of motifs being expanded and layered rather than contrasted with each other. If we compare the first four bars of the piece (figure 6.29) which are relatively sparse, with bars 33-36 (figure 6.30), by which time the texture has become more dense, the two extracts are clearly related, with the right hand part of piano 2 behaving much like a guitar 'riff' in PRD music.



Figure 6.28: Structure of *ARACT*

The image shows the opening of the piece ARACT. It consists of two piano parts, Piano 1 and Piano 2. Piano 1 is written for a grand piano with a treble and bass staff. The music begins with a forte (ff) dynamic. Piano 2 also has a treble and bass staff, starting with a forte (ff) dynamic. There are 'v' markings below the bass staff of Piano 2, indicating vibrato. The score is divided into four measures.

Figure 6.29: Opening of ARACT

The image shows bars 33-36 of the piece ARACT. It consists of two piano parts, Piano 1 and Piano 2. Piano 1 is written for a grand piano with a treble and bass staff. A 'B' marking is placed above the first measure of Piano 1. Piano 2 has a treble and bass staff. There are 'v' markings below the bass staff of Piano 2, indicating vibrato. The score is divided into four measures.

Figure 6.30: Bars 33-36 of ARACT

The contrasting section beginning at bar 49 (figure 6.31) sees only a slight variation of this.

Figure 6.31: Bars 49-51, ARACT

Despite the irregularity of the metre, the four-groupings are regular and the pulse a steady crotchet throughout, and these counteract the metre. The opening rhythm of each two-bar motif is the same: the accented crotchet in the bass on the first beat followed by two quaver chords on the second, the second quaver tied, forms a syncopation. The piece is built entirely around these motifs; in only one instance is there a variation, at bar 65 where the syncopated quaver chords become crotchets – the bass, however, ensures the syncopation is still present with a 3 + 3 + 2 subdivision of the eight quavers of the 4/4 bar. The bass crotchet / treble quavers fragment is so distinctive that variations towards the end of each motif (the quaver is tied to a dotted crotchet for the first three motifs and to a crotchet for the fourth) have the effect of pushing on or holding back the music rather than distorting the idiomatic syncopation in the first part of each motif. It is as if the piece, at every opportunity it sees to escape the rigid pulse, is pulled back on course by the motif. In the contrasting section of bars 49-64, bars of 5/4 and 6/4 present the two-bar motif in one bar: in this respect they behave like a 4/4 + 1/4 or 4/4 + 2/4 grouping.

Every repetition of the motif opens with the tonic of the section (C, or E \flat for the contrasting passage of bars 49-64): the strong sense of tonic is retained throughout the piece. Harmonic interest is generated by ambiguities regarding the mode to which the

tonic belongs; the juxtaposition of G natural and G \flat in the E \flat section questions the major/minor status of the mode, and is a typical PRD device. Harmonic progressions are typically PRD, based heavily around aeolian I, VI and VII, with harmonic colour achieved with accidentals (the major/minor ambiguities for example) and added notes, typically 9ths.

Structurally, the piece suggests PRD: development consists of layering additional material over the fundamental motif. Sections generally consist of one passage played twice, and the contrasting section leads back into three repetitions much like a middle eight followed by several repeats of the chorus. This final section is largely based on the section running from bars 33–48; classical recapitulation would more normally refer to material earlier in the piece. The structure is therefore similar to introduction - theme, repeated and developed - middle eight - theme repeated. This is not typical of PRD – one would expect alternating verse and refrain prior to the middle eight in pop or rock, whereas dance is more dependent on layering and less on contrast. Nevertheless, neither is the structure typical of classical. Bars 33–48 can be differentiated from earlier sections since, although the same motif is used as a basis throughout, Piano 1 supplies a passage much more distinctive than the fragmented chords used up to this point.

Considering the traits present which suggest PRD influences, it is perhaps surprising that *ARACT* should be identified by listeners as relating to the classical tradition. The use of piano is somewhat ambiguous; as an instrument found in a range of genres it is not linked with any particular style in terms of timbre. Performance style is more important. *ARACT* uses the whole range of the keyboard, and the dense, powerful chords are perhaps reminiscent of Rachmaninov and therefore have virtuosic classical pianist associations. Yet the arrangement also suggests a rock line-up of strong bass (bass guitar), chords representing guitar or keyboards, and the repeated quavers towards the end of the piece (see figure 6.32) suggest a ride cymbal. This has been acknowledged by the composer:

I'm aware that that crashing dum-dum-dum-dum-dum at the end could be a ride cymbal, could be a drum, could be a whole percussion group . . . sometimes I think it works with it as a ride cymbal would work with things, sometimes I think it should be something which is so loud it just starts to obliterate everything else.²⁰

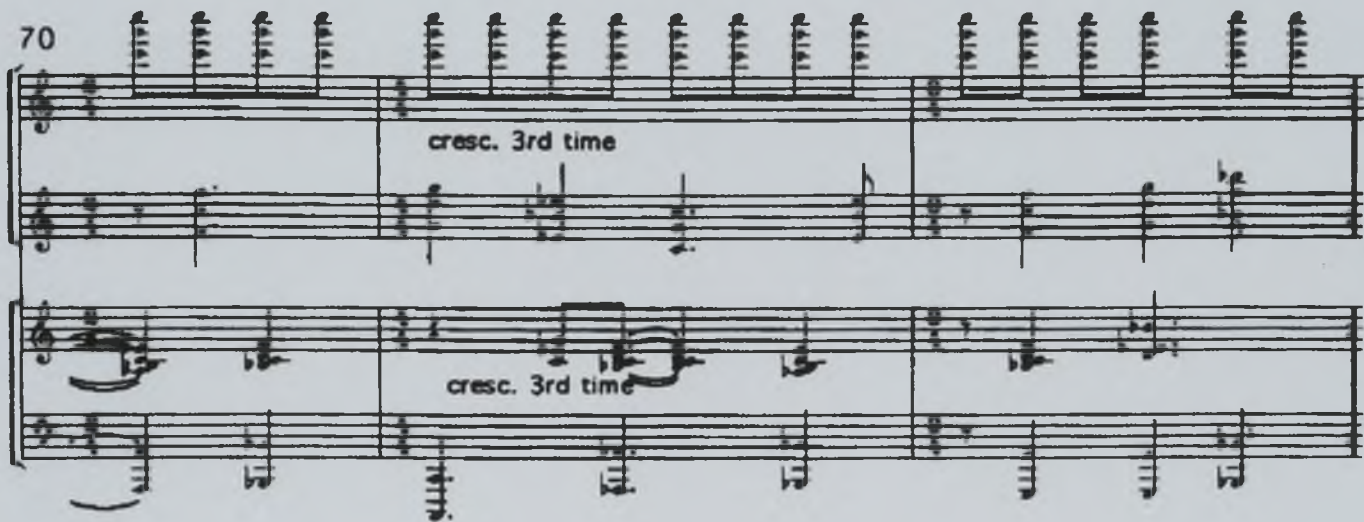


Figure 6.32: Closing section of ARACT

It is, however, probably fair to say that the high pitch of the quavers, and the relatively weak tone of the piano in this register limit the effectiveness of the motif as an obliterating effect. An interest in percussion runs through a great deal of Fitkin's music, not only in terms of rhythm, but with his use of a variety of percussion instruments, and the 'ride' effect carries this into Fitkin's piano music.

Vocal style can be very distinctive and thus influential on perception; an unaccompanied bel canto singing voice, for example, can still be associated with classical music with no additional 'clues'. *ARACT* does not offer a vocal timbre clue to stylistic identity. The listener associating the piece with Sting clearly experienced a sense of missing vocal, which diminished the effect of the piece as an example of PRD ("irritating without the vocals"). Alternatively, the lack of vocals could be a factor which points listeners towards labelling *ARACT* as a piece of classical music.

²⁰ Fitkin (1997)

This raises other questions: it may well be that listeners consider not only traits present, but those not present also. As far as PRD influences are concerned, there is a lack of electronics, guitars and drums. There is extensive use of dynamic contrasts, and the PRD 'repeat to fade' device is subverted, with the close consisting of a crescendo towards a sudden cut-off.

It should, however, be mentioned that the Sting comment came from a PRD fan, while the Britten comment was made by an individual preferring "folk and classical", and disliking "modern pop". This suggests both listeners were identifying *ARACT* with music they liked and were familiar with, rather than rejecting it as alien to their preferences. The logic of this perhaps goes against the 'absent traits' concept, and this in turn suggests that Fitkin's writing incorporates idiomatic usage of both classical and PRD influences, which adds support to the earlier comparison of Fitkin and Martland.

Sting's album *The Soul Cages* features a track which is similar to *ARACT*: 'St Agnes and the Burning Train'. The piece is a guitar instrumental in an AABA structure, and is, literally, a Sting song without words. While there is some contrast with the rest of the album, which consists of songs, there are also consistencies because of the fingerpicked guitar and background string harmonies, features which characterise a number of the other tracks. There are characteristics that suggest classical music: the ornamentation, rubato, vibrato and dynamics emphasising the sense of melody and accompaniment. Within the context of a Sting album, the track does not seem out of place. Yet, given the characteristics which point away from Sting's rock style – classical traits, lack of vocals – it is quite probable that an audience listening to it in isolation, without any background information, would be as inconsistent in labelling the piece as those responding to *ARACT*.

It is possible that labelling a piece of music is dependent on the way the individual constructs a hierarchy of elements. *ARACT* suggests PRD influences in terms of rhythm (particularly the syncopation), harmony, repetition and structure; classical signifiers are limited to the use of the piano, itself open to various

interpretations, and perhaps the way in which different motif lengths suggest a pause or rubato effect (this suggests parallels with Talk Talk's 'Chameleon Day', discussed in Chapter 4, where the central piano and vocal arrangement suggests PRD, particularly with regard to vocal timbre, but has a rhythmic looseness for which it is hard to find a comparison in any other PRD music).

In *ARACT* the approach is not simply to import influences, but to subvert certain traits, questioning these influences, and to omit what might be considered key elements normally found in those styles or genres. The analyses of *CUD*, *Sciosophy*, and Talk Talk's music also revealed elements of arithmetical organisation and phasing; *ARACT* is of less relevance to this. Perhaps most significant for composers is the example *ARACT* provides for both analytical consideration and examination of how music drawing on different influences is perceived by an audience.

6.4 Summary

Graham Fitkin's music reflects his environment. With full classical credentials, having followed a traditional course of music study, Fitkin combines a fluency in popular styles that stems from childhood interest. Fully conversant in a variety of musical languages, Fitkin is a product of an eclectic cultural environment. This could initially be perceived as postmodern: his music is ambiguous stylistically and full of diverse influences. yet there is a strong concern with control of musical elements: rather than influences appearing superficially, the material is tightly organised into arithmetical structures. This suggests an approach allied to modernism in some respects: forms have external controls with a highly developed logic, an approach widely found in post-1945 classical music including that of Stockhausen, Messiaen and Xenakis. Yet the material used features popular tonal and rhythmic devices. As far as classical expression is concerned, this is something novel (if not necessarily new) presented in an established form – an end-of-the-century Schoenberg.

Is there a 'postmodern spirit' present in Fitkin's work? Although the eclecticism might suggest so, the organisation does not. Additionally, there is no sense of play through distortion, although some traits are distorted (the reversal of the fade-out ending in *ARACT*, for example). The impression one is given by the music and by speaking to the composer is that of an individual confident of his personal musical style and adept in it, with an astute awareness that the segregation of PRD and classical creates problems relating to context rather than context – where, for example, can one find an informal venue where music will still be listened to rather than treated as background noise?

The festivals Fitkin finds irrelevant to his own outlook again seem to connect with Schoenberg. The Society for Private Musical Performance arose largely through dissatisfaction with the constraints placed on new music by performing it with the ritual of a traditional concert: Fitkin also has clear ideas on ideal performance situations. This emphasises the poietic level of the text and contradicts the post-structural ideas of Barthes discussed in Chapter 3.

Fitkin's aesthetic hence has something of the 'modern spirit' about it, with a composer more versatile than many of his predecessors negotiating a path through the contemporary environment in order for his music to be received in a way he feels is appropriate to its constructs and background.

7 CONCLUSION

This final chapter brings together the findings of the research and considers their implications. There will be a consideration of what the study has achieved and how research might be developed.

7.1 Contribution of study

There are two main areas of contribution to research. Firstly, the thesis has developed concepts of postmodern theory as it might apply to music. Secondly, original research on the music of Talk Talk, Fitkin and Oldfield has revealed how contemporary musicians bring together different musical styles and integrate them, taking the study of cross-influences beyond the frequent focus on unsubtle juxtaposition of styles drawing attention to contrast rather than integrating (works of the Moody Blues and Jon Lord in Chapter 2 are examples).

7.1.1 *Contribution to postmodern theory*

Previous research has tended to deem music modern or postmodern according only to inherent traits (the examples from Potter in Chapter 3 demonstrate this). The idea of the 'postmodern spirit' present governing the general aesthetic behind the work takes such analysis further, considering the context of the characteristics, looking at how they are used, what it might have been the intention to achieve and way the results might be heard. This links to Nattiez's arguments for analysis on poietic, neutral and esthetic levels.

Such an approach contradicts postmodernism. A focus on the intention, and on the aesthetic lying behind the compositional process, prioritises the poietic level – which, according to Barthes, is no longer relevant:

The birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author¹

Yet it could be argued that if I sense a 'postmodern spirit', it is not being articulated by the creator of the text, but is instead a reflection of my sense of self and cultural position as I perceive it. If this is the case, then the esthetic level is the priority, correlating with Barthes and demanding further investigation. Nattiez argues that subjects tend to give guarded answers to ethnomusicologists interviewing them (see Chapter 4), and Stefani's theories, although not without problems (see Chapter 1), suggest that many types of listener would not perceive 'postmodern spirit'.

The reasons for this can be explained with reference to Stefani's five-legged model and list of various kinds of listeners reproduced in Appendix 1, and the different types of competence. It can be argued that a particular type of listening is required to recognise the 'postmodern spirit'. Firstly, one must have competence at the style level (St) in order to recognise and place the elements present, and musical techniques (MT) must also be appreciated so that the devices within the style, when manipulated, can be read in relation to that style and context. The MT competence is insufficient on its own - while the inherent characteristics could be recognised, the St competence is vital in order to contextualise them. Competence at the Opus (Op) level could also be useful when specific works are referred to.

If we now look at the list of examples of types of listeners, then, assuming the St/Op knowledge covers the relevant material, Adorno's ideal hearer is perfectly placed to recognise 'postmodern spirit', as could theorist, critic and to some extent the 'resentful' listener (who could also be alienated by the social context of the piece). The professional practitioner is predisposed to recognition, although Berio and Verdi less so.

¹ Barthes (1977) p. 148

Considering Berio's strong connection with Milan intelligentsia including figures such as Umberto Eco, an individual who has contributed to postmodern theory, this raises some questions over whether Stefani's model is quite so simplistic. The emotive hearer and amateur practitioner hear in a way that would theoretically bypass the 'postmodern spirit'.

This all points to a high competence level in the musical field appropriate to the work in question. Yet for cross-influenced music, a competence across several fields is required, suggesting the 'postmodern spirit' is recognisable by only a select few. On the other hand, such high competence is surely not required to gain a sense of the postmodern in Oldfield's *Amarok*. Anyone with knowledge of English colloquialisms would recognise the occurrence of something unusual on the repetition of the word 'bugger', and some awareness of British politics in the 1980s would recognise the Margaret Thatcher references and surely consider its manipulation of sound effects and, indeed, its appearance in the piece as somewhat bizarre.

The traits mentioned above require competence in basic general knowledge. It could be the case that an adequate level of musical competence may be present for many listeners – does one need to be thoroughly acquainted with style to recognise that different musics are juxtaposed in contrasting sections in *Amarok*? In certain cases, an individual can appreciate the sense of 'postmodern spirit' without the well-developed high competence suggested previously.

The level of musical competence required depends on how the postmodern spirit manifests itself within a work and knowledge in the relevant fields can be gauged as sufficient if the manipulation of material can be recognised as such.

The concept of the 'postmodern spirit', according to application of Stefani's models of competence, can be recognised by those competent in MT and St levels, which should include musicologists, and this is a key trait of the theory and a pointer to its use for specialists in this field. Furthermore, it has been suggested that high competence is not necessarily a prerequisite for recognising the 'postmodern spirit', with the implication that application may be broader than might initially appear.

7.1.2 *Contribution to study of music*

The main findings of the research into the various pieces of music were that fusion does not necessarily reflect postmodernism, despite the focus by theorists on the postmodern reflecting cultural diversity. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 cover music which is a reflection of this diversity, but in the examples studied it became apparent that the more the music corresponded to the concept of fusion outlined in Chapter 1 (that is, the more integrated the influences are), the less likely the work is to appear postmodern. This may be logical given that the more integrated a work, the more control and organisation is required and the different influences cannot be so superficial. This control and organisation, which builds a plan or metanarrative into the music, is more typical of a modernist approach. Yet all three artists showed levels of organisation of their material that went beyond the simple – Oldfield's extensive thematic transformation, Fitkin's structures based on mathematical patterns and Talk Talk's palindrome. The music in question would still show the influence of a variety of styles even if these devices were not used. That they were shows the artists to have a particular concern with structural parameters and the ways in which the material is controlled: this is a reflection of modernist preoccupations rather than of any 'postmodern spirit.'

Beyond the additions to ideas of the postmodern in music, the study contributes to music analysis with original work on the three main artists covered in the context of fusion. It is simpler to write on straightforward cross-influences where different styles are clearly audible and relatively superficial, but this detailed examination of three very different artists demonstrates the complexity that can be found when PRD and classical influences are combined, and also reveals that patterns of multi-parameter integration and subversion contribute to this complexity in all the cases that were examined. The use of tables in Chapters 4 and 5 develops a new method to compare structure, harmony and tonality with more ease. While limited in its use to these parameters,

tables assist with understanding by visualising aspects which are perhaps not straightforward to describe.

There is potential to develop the format for some parameters: annotations of melody and rhythm would need to be brief synopses in order to keep the diagram a realistic size. Instrumental texture could be explored if the ensemble was relatively small by using coloured stripes, perhaps with different shades of blue for wind, red for strings, and green for brass and thicker lines for the main part - for example:

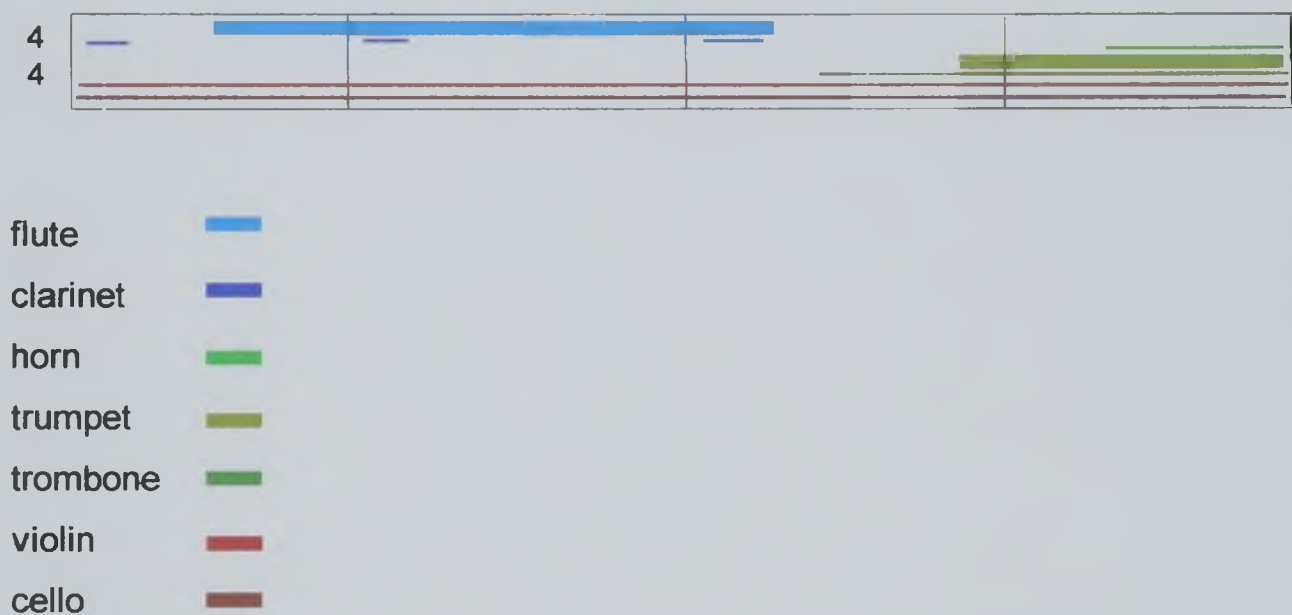


Figure 7.1: Possible use of table to outline instrumentation

Here violin and cello provide a constant backing. The first part of the excerpt features a flute melody with clarinet interjections, while in the latter part a trumpet has the theme with other brass providing background. This sort of diagram would allow easy comparisons of sparse and rich textures, and pointillistic and block instrumentation. For more complex arrangements, its scope would perhaps be limited, but the outline here demonstrates that there is potential in using tables for applications beyond those demonstrated in Chapters 4 and 5.

Fusion, as demonstrated, seems to contradict postmodernism, yet at the same time the pieces under discussion have many traits which could be described as postmodern: the sensuous surface of Talk Talk's instrumentation, Oldfield's

juxtaposition of styles (in, for example, *Tubular Bells*) and Fitkin's ambiguity are all examples.

These contradictions point to an instability and it could be argued this stems from the spread of postmodernism from one discipline to another, ultimately reaching music and prompting commentators to argue over pieces of music as representing postmodernist or modernist aesthetics.

7.1.3 Music and postmodernism

Postmodernism demands an accessibility : cultures available to all to take from them what they will. Docherty argues that:

Dislocation and re-engagement between 'high art' and 'popular culture' is of central importance to aesthetic and cultural practices within the postmodern.²

Music, among the arts, stands out as a different entity, and it is perhaps partly for these reasons – particularly the relationship between 'high' and 'low' – that application of postmodern theory in music is so complex:

- 1 Music is thoroughly dependent on metalanguage – beyond a highly developed specialist terminology, much of it has its own code in the form of notation: not just classical, but popular styles too with their tabulation and guitar chord symbols. For sheet music publishers, revenues are greatest not in the market of Bach, Beethoven or Mozart, but for Oasis: visual representations of music may not be integral to popular music, but by no means are they restricted to classical. This restricts accessibility to those who understand the metalanguage.

- 2 Beyond appreciation of the code, musicians in the classical field are expected to have a relevant background – private instrumental studies followed by a degree or diploma. Without such qualifications, a composer may well face the criticism directed at Mike Oldfield (see Chapter 5) when there is an attempt to incorporate a strong classical element. For Talk Talk, there are routes around this – the use of improvisation and a personal approach to structure, and the use of musicians able to contribute, working with the band. Again, the situation can restrict scope for expression: criteria are applied according to the critic's position rather than the work's, and the music pushed in directions where the cultural coding fails to correspond, resulting in alienation for the work rather than it being able to cross boundaries in the way postmodern theory might envisage.
- 3 The high-low division discussed in Chapter 3 is more intensely articulated in music. The classical concert is one of the most ritualised events in our culture: popular music concerts have some elements of ritual (particularly with regard to dress codes) but certainly not with the prescribed narrow range of acceptable response.³ We can read literary classics on our own terms: with music, the ritual must be followed and the impulse to tap a toe be overridden. Again, this can alienate, hindering cross-cultural assimilation.
- 4 Classical music must be articulated through a medium. Access is restricted to concerts, radio or CD: if there is no recorded version or performance available, then the work is inaccessible beyond its written form. The only individuals to hear it are those with highly developed ability to reproduce the sound in their heads. Imagine only being able to enjoy a book once it had been made into a film.

² Docherty (ed.) (1993) p.

³ That is, applause at the end of the piece. Anyone clapping at the end of a movement is considered ignorant.

5 Music is highly connotative: we connect pieces of music to periods, events and relationships in our lives: musical devices are used to create atmosphere – for example, an accordion may provoke an association with France, even for those who have not been to France and heard the instrument played there. This makes it difficult to use musical references in a superficial manner, contradiction postmodernism's emphasis on surface. Eclecticism focusing on superficiality is a component of postmodern artistic expression, yet musical representations are problematic. Because musical styles are imbued with connotation, the surface is always threatened by the deeper meaning that may be behind it.

It has already been suggested in Chapter 6 that there is a sense of the erratic in the way that Mike Oldfield juxtaposes styles, and it is notable that he frequently uses references which are strongly identifiable with particular cultures – Irish pipes and Spanish guitar, for example. The 'orchestra versus band' works (for example, Lord and The Moody Blues, discussed in previous chapters) emphasise contrasting genres rather than adapting them into a more fused work, and again, this seems to be less successful. It is surely no coincidence that Talk Talk and Fitkin use elements of style which are less evocative, allowing them greater freedom to express a personal aesthetic while maintaining a contemporary relevance, integrating material into a cohesive style with great artistry.

Oldfield's work, in some respects, is postmodern in its fragmentation, but there is no sense of play or pastiche in works like *Tubular Bells*, only the impression of an artist with many interesting ideas but these ideas being beyond his control. Oldfield provides various examples of why postmodernism in music is problematic: his most successful postmodern work is carried largely by its parody (which Jameson argues is modern anyway), creating a sense of play and the surreal – and is not fusion.

Talk Talk and Fitkin are promoted as PRD and classical artists respectively. Although their music has a strong sense of stylistic ambiguity, it will normally be heard in

a context relating to this categorisation. Looking beyond that, we can appreciate that this is music transcending boundaries and renegotiating the scope of the composer.

7.2 Summary

To summarise, postmodern theory can be applied to music, looking at inherent traits and the pervading aesthetic or 'spirit', although music, because of established practices, may seem to resist it. Yet fusion, which is supposedly postmodern in its multi-cultural reflection on musical style, requires a modernist approach – one of integration and control: without this it is not fusion, but rather polystylism or some other unintegrated form of cross-influence. This kind of contradiction permeates this study and leads to a final conclusion.

Fusion implies modernism rather than postmodernism. There is much that is of interest to the musicologist both in fusion music and postmodern theory. Any attempt, however, to link the two as entitles pertaining to one another is at best tenuous and at worst, fundamentally flawed.

APPENDIX

Stefani's Theory of Musical Competence

Excerpts reproduced from Semiotica 66-1/3 (1987), 7-22

[Summary of levels]

Our Model of Musical Competence (MMC) consists of a set of code levels articulated as follows:

General codes (GC): perceptual and mental schemes, anthropological attitudes and motivations, basic conventions through which we perceive or construct or interpret every experience (and therefore every sound experience).

Social Practices (SP): projects and modes of both material and symbolic production within a certain society; in other words, cultural institutions such as language, religion, industrial work, technology, sciences, etcetera, including musical practices (concert, ballet, opera, criticism).

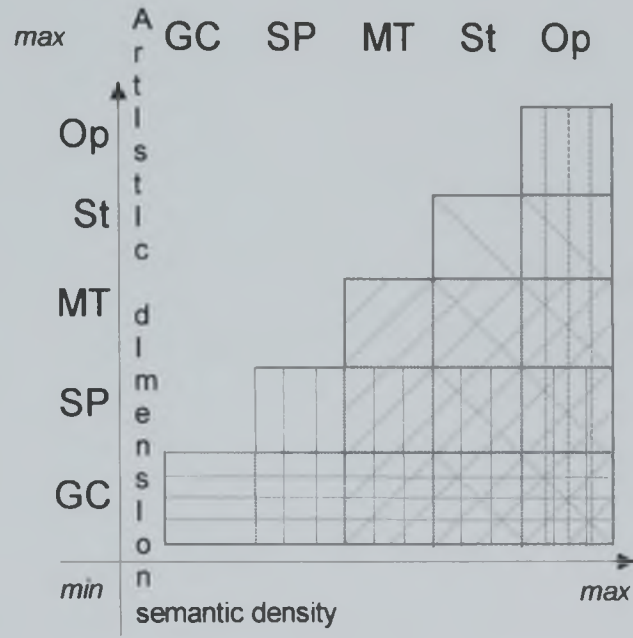
Musical Techniques (MT): theories, methods, and devices which are more or less specific and exclusive to musical practices, such as instrumental techniques, scales, composition forms, etcetera.

Styles (St): historical periods, cultural movements, authors or groups of works; that is, the particular ways in which MT, SP and GC are concretely realised.

Opus(Op): single musical works or events in their concrete individuality.

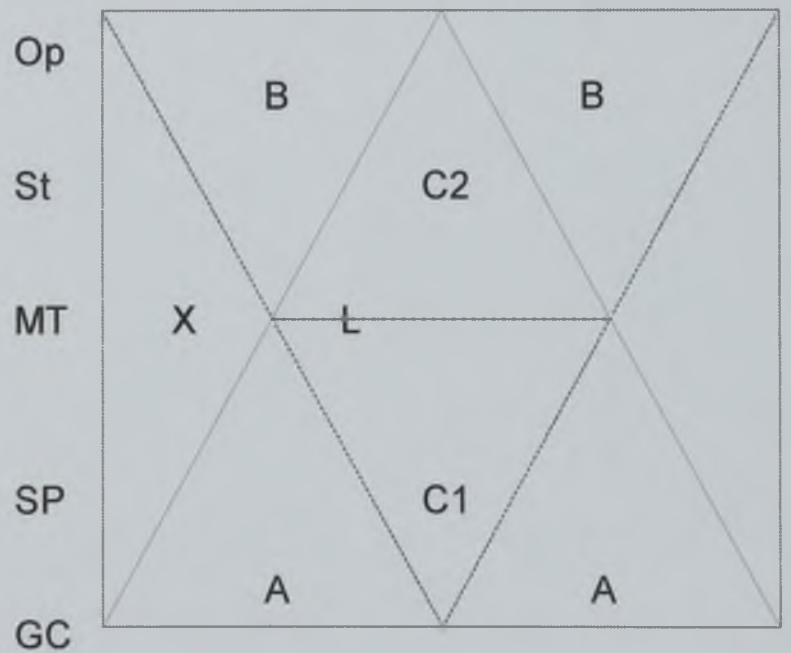
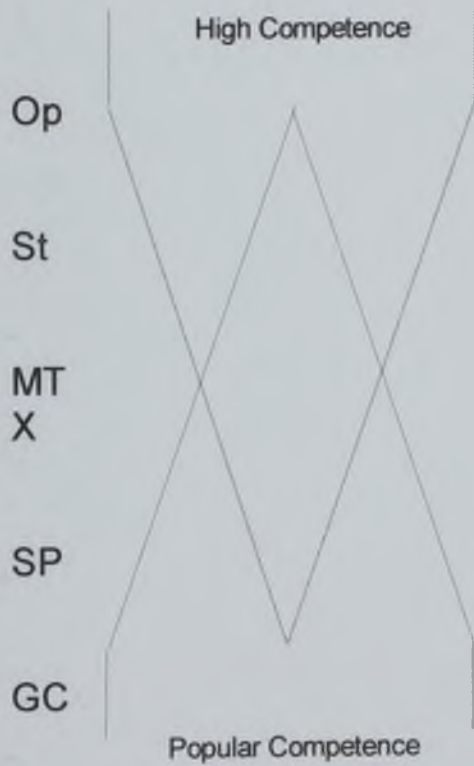
[...]

[Relationships between levels]



[...]

[High and popular competence]



[The right hand diagram expands on the summary given by the left hand diagram: key overleaf]

A: Basic zone of popular competence, not pertinent to the high

B: basic zone of high competence, not pertinent to the popular

L: Line or limit (presumed) between the two competences

C: common zone sub-divided into:

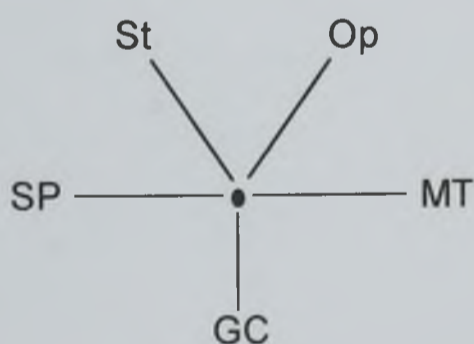
C1: a space in the general competence which is considered of no interest by high competence ('roots' either ignored or hidden)

C2: a space which is considered to be forbidden for popular competence and reserved for the experts

X: potential field of sense production not yet saturated with actual competences and open to both directions

[...]

[Model where all forms may move freely to form all kinds of combination and hierarchy]



Let us superimpose upon this diagram some approaches and projects.

1. Adorno's ideal hearer realises the model 'continuity and hierarchy' according to high competence . . . thus forming a triangle St-MT-Op (vertex).
2. A 'resentful' hearer or the fan of a certain musical genre (baroque, jazz, opera, etcetera) points to St surrounded by SP and MT.

3. An 'emotive' hearer operates a short circuit between GC and Op, bypassing all cultural codes. The same happens in music therapy centred on the hearing of musical work (Guilhot et al. 1964).
4. Amateur practice attracts GC (customs and motivations for playing) as well as MT into a project which is based on the SP level (i.e., 'playing' without any reference to the MT quality of performance).
5. On the contrary, professional practice is centred on MT, with reference to St quality too, and sometimes original creation (op). As for composition, authors in the traditional sense trace the same diagram as the ideal highbrow hearer (see 1). But this is not always the case; for example, Verdi or Berio (1981) seem often to start from a platform where SP and MT are equally important; hence they aim toward Op; in their 'gestural' poetics the St level is overlooked, becoming pertinent only afterward, for critics and highbrow public.
7. Other compositional poetics overlook MT mediation. So it is for certain *total* improvisation, informal ways of playing instruments, repetitive 'minimal' music, stochastic composition, etcetera/. Here musical experience results from applying to sound material some principles or models drawn from GC and SP levels (psychophysiological behaviours or logical processes, mathematical or physical models, etcetera). In the most 'experimental' projects, the resulting Op may not be relevant.
8. Our basic model can encompass even the most radical and elementary projects on music, for example, Cage's project according to which musical experience or competence is reduced to 'opening your ears', that is to sensorial-perceptive schemes at GC level; or Pynter's projects of 'composition for everybody', based upon the observation of all kinds of everyday events (at GC and SP level).
9. Case 8 is also the basic reference for a competence exercised by musical psychology, when centred on music perception at GC levels. Various branches of this

discipline then build various paths of sense between this basic level and the 'upper' ones, for example:

GC-MT: psychological contents of musical systems (Kurth 1969; Wellek 1963; Meyer 1956 and Francès 1958);

GC-Op: effects of works on subjects (music-therapy) and subjective meaning of works (experimental semantics);

GC-St: style psychology

10. In a similar way, sense production by the sociology of music consists in correlating to a privileged SP level first of all practices and institutions followed by St, and more rarely MT (Weber 1921; Blaukopf 1972; Lowinsky 1941 and Marothy 1974).
11. Theory of music obviously takes MT as its point of reference and special group of codes; the more it applies the other codes to these, the more technical competence acquires cultural density. The favourite correlations are MT-St and MT-Op, which ordinarily constitute music analysis. The MT-GC and MT-Sp paths tend to coincide (although from opposite starting points) respectively with the psychology and sociology of musical systems.
12. As for musical criticism, it favours St and Op. Reference to other levels occurs subsequently in order to characterise its special trends (psycho-sociological, formal analytic or 'structural' criticism).
13. In terms of the present theory, a 'historical competence' in music appears to be the ability of the 'upper' levels (SP, MT, St, Op) to correlate and/or structure each other with reference to the whole span of Western culture or to some of its points, sometimes including a diachronic look at the levels themselves and their correlations. Describing the manifold activity which goes under the name of 'history of music' on the basis of this model would no doubt be a very interesting if very time-consuming task.

14. Finally, semiotics of music is the discipline whose object is musical competence as we have defined it. It is, therefore, the discipline which formulated the above theory and should also criticise it.

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