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## The Historiography of Minimal Music and the Challenge of Andriessen to Narratives of American Exceptionalism (2)

Ian Pace

### Part 4: Critical perspectives on Andriessen and his relationship to American minimal music

Critical writing on Andriessen has developed a range of perspectives on his relationship to minimal music. A 1976 issue of *Key Notes* featured interviews with Andriessen, Reinbert de Leeuw and Misha Mengelberg on the occasion of a concert tour by Philip Glass and argued that the formal processes of Andriessen's *De Volharding* resembled those of minimal music.<sup>1</sup> De Leeuw attempted to distinguish *De Volharding* from Reich and others, despite some surface similarities,<sup>2</sup> but recognised a common purpose in looking beyond traditional European approaches to music, a view echoed by Andriessen, who stressed the difference between *Workers' Union* and American minimal music, and clearly had something of a love/hate relationship towards Glass.<sup>3</sup> In the same issue, Elmer Schönberger wrote that Andriessen 'composes minimal music for his group [De Volharding] (a highly authentic, tough variant of American minimal music)' but that this was 'hardly attributable to aesthetic considerations.'<sup>4</sup>

These writings set the framework for much subsequent discourse on Andriessen. In one of the first significant articles on Andriessen in English,<sup>5</sup> Keith Potter noted how both he and his teacher Berio had come to question the very nature and importance of 'style,' and identified in this context the key importance of Stravinsky. He framed *Hoketus* as a 'dialectical critique of minimalism' and especially *In C*, through its use of dissonance and the hocketing technique.<sup>6</sup> Potter concluded that Andriessen had somehow found a way of combining a European historicist approach with American models. On the other hand, in a 1985 profile, Reinhard Oehlschlägel drastically played down the 'minimal' element of Andriessen's music, while in the same journal issue, Hermann Sabbe (looking at *Hoketus*) and Nicolaus A. Huber (on *De Tijd* and *De Snelheid*) approached Andriessen's works in primarily immanent, formal terms.<sup>7</sup>

### Andriessen's background and American music and culture in the Netherlands

A range of writings by and about, and interviews with, Andriessen, leave one in little doubt about the extent of his early enthusiasm for American music and culture in general. His own thought in this respect mirrors wider Dutch perceptions of many things American, ranging from a mixed following for American jazz and other culture in the 1920s and 1930s, through a more fulsome interest in American film, television, music and fashion following the liberation of Western Europe, Marshall Plan and

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<sup>1</sup> (Braas nd.); 'Interviews with Louis Andriessen, Reinbert de Leeuw and Misha Mengelberg on the occasion of a concert tour by Phil Glass,' *Key Notes* 4/2 (1976): 34.

<sup>2</sup> (Ibid.: 35).

<sup>3</sup> (Ibid.: 35-6).

<sup>4</sup> (Schönberger 1976: 38).

<sup>5</sup> (Potter 1981: 16-22).

<sup>6</sup> (Ibid.: 18-19). Potter's view here clearly draws upon Andriessen's own sentiments.

<sup>7</sup> (Oehlschlägel 1985: 16-18); (Sabbe 1985: 22-4); (Huber 1985: 24-8).

Dutch participation in the founding of NATO in 1949, especially in the 1960s, with greater opportunities for travel, but then left-wing opposition to US-Dutch military cooperation and anticommunism and the Vietnam War.<sup>8</sup> Andriessen's passion for jazz and improvisational music was shared by many others in the Netherlands, though he does not seem to have been so deeply affected by the popularity of rock 'n' roll and other popular musics from the mid-1950s.<sup>9</sup> He would later underline the importance to him of the big-band culture of Stan Kenton and others, early be-bop and cool jazz,<sup>10</sup> and this is evidenced not only in works such as *On Jimmy Yancey* (1973), but also in his preferred instrumentation and performing techniques.<sup>11</sup> Alongside many new musical discoveries from the mid-1950s onwards, Andriessen was drawn to the indeterminate work of Americans Cage, Feldman and Brown, using notations similar to those of Feldman and Brown in *Registers* (1963) for piano.<sup>12</sup> He also became interested in the music of Henry Brant and Harry Partch<sup>13</sup> and discovered Fluxus through the participation of colleagues in Dutch Fluxus festivals.<sup>14</sup>

### **Andriessen's first minimalist engagements**

Andriessen attended, and may have participated in, a Dutch performance of *In C* in November 1969.<sup>15</sup> By 1971, he had heard Reich's *Piano Phase*, *Pendulum Music*, and *Four Organs* and met him in Amsterdam, and heard Glass's *Music in Changing Parts* in New York, finding it more radical.<sup>16</sup> The role of these composers in their own ensembles inspired the formation of De Volharding. *In C* was in the group's repertoire from 1972,<sup>17</sup> and that year, Andriessen wrote of the influence upon the piece *De Volharding* of Reich and Riley.<sup>18</sup> Reviews of the premiere in Dutch papers drew attention to the connection with Riley,<sup>19</sup> while another article devoted to Riley's work also cited Andriessen's piece.<sup>20</sup>

However, others have drawn attention to the equally important influence of Rzewski, whom Andriessen had first met in Berlin in 1964, and his *Les moutons de panurge* (1968) in particular.<sup>21</sup> The types of unisons found in the Rzewski (and in later works such as *Coming Together* (1971) and *Attica* (1972)) were also used by Diderik

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<sup>8</sup> For a range of detailed historical examinations of these trends, see (Van Minnen 2009: 431-5); (Wouters 2009: 497-508), (Inklaar 2009: 761-72), (Hellema 2009: 579-89), (Kennedy 2009: 931-40), and (Mutsaers 2009: 1049-59), all in (Krabbendam, Van Minnen and Scott-Smith 2009); and (Toebes 1996: 24-42), (Dierikx 1996: 114-32), (Zuijdam 1996: 652-7), (Van der Maar 1996: 683-9), all in (Bosscher, Roholl and Van Elteren 1996). Andriessen himself attributes the strength of the American cultural influence to the liberation of the Netherlands by Canadian and American troops (Andriessen and Cross 2003: 257).

<sup>9</sup> (Mutsaers 2009: 1049-59).

<sup>10</sup> (Andriessen and Dreier 2002: 153); (Andriessen and Trochimeczyk 2002a: 20).

<sup>11</sup> See (Adlington 2004b: 32-41) for a more detailed consideration of Andriessen's relationship to jazz.

<sup>12</sup> (Ibid.: 44-5).

<sup>13</sup> (Andriessen and Trochimeczyk 2002a: 19).

<sup>14</sup> Artist Willem de Ridder and pianist and composer Misha Mengelberg participated in Fluxus festivals in Amsterdam and Rotterdam in 1963 and 1964 (Adlington 2004b: 6).

<sup>15</sup> (Adlington 2013: 286-7).

<sup>16</sup> (Adlington 2004b: 41-2); (Andriessen and Dreier 2002: 152).

<sup>17</sup> (Koopmans 1982: 20). I am grateful to Robert Adlington for supplying this reference and giving some other pointers on this subject, including to online databanks of Dutch newspapers.

<sup>18</sup> (Andriessen 2002d: 131).

<sup>19</sup> See (Degens 1972); (Heg 1972).

<sup>20</sup> (Koopmans 1972).

<sup>21</sup> (Adlington 2004b: 42-3).

Wagenaar in the last section of his *Kaleidofonen I* for alto saxophone and piano (1969),<sup>22</sup> before Andriessen's first employment of them in *Volkslied* (1971), *Melodie* for recorder and piano (1974) and in *Workers Union* (1975).

Andriessen's engagement with American minimal music is clearest in *De Staat* (1976). Robert Adlington has argued that different sections can be heard as homages to different American minimal composers, through the use of subtly altered repetitions, close canons, repeated phrases with instruments joining gradually, diatonic material, regular metre, and passages with reduced dynamic levels. If some of the links suggested by Adlington are somewhat tenuous (as with the connection of bars 105-264 to the harmony of *Four Organs*), nonetheless the general case is made convincingly.<sup>23</sup>

*Hoketus* grew out of a project on minimal music taught by Andriessen at the Hague Conservatory in early 1976 while he was working on *De Staat*. The project included performances of Reich and talks about Dada, Satie, Cage, kinetic art and Fluxus.<sup>24</sup> While Andriessen's structural techniques in this piece clearly resemble those of Reich, and the relationship of the opening to *Drumming* (1971) is self-evident,<sup>25</sup> the work also features techniques such as uneven time signatures and regular changes of metres which Reich would not use until *Tehillim* (1981).<sup>26</sup>

Andriessen's askew relationship to American minimal music has also been noted. Adlington reads *Il Duce* (1973) as a riposte to Reich's *It's Gonna Rain* and *Come Out*, because Andriessen uses repetition as a means to obscure rather than illuminate meaning.<sup>27</sup> His programme note for *Hoketus* makes clear an intent to criticise the style of minimal music and its continuous tonal sound-masses<sup>28</sup> and in interview with Kevin Whitehead, Andriessen argued that the extremely loud, banging sounds were an attempt to avoid associations with 'TV advertising'<sup>29</sup> (a diametrically opposed view to that of Fink). More generally, Andriessen has expressed scepticism towards Reich's aestheticizing tendencies and the proximity of Glass to commercial pop.<sup>30</sup>

The traffic between Andriessen and American minimal music has moved in both directions. Trochimczyk has demonstrated that Adams' claim in 2001 to have introduced 'jazzy' voices and strong bass ostinato into classical music was false:

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<sup>22</sup> On the influence of Wagenaar and his use of unisons, see (Van der Waa 2002: 36) and (Trochimczyk 2002b: 93-5).

<sup>23</sup> (Adlington 2004b: 69-71). Andriessen claimed that there was 'much more Terry Riley, some *In C*' than Reich in the work (Andriessen and Dreier 2002: 152), though Yayoi Uno Everett also notes the use of Reichian phase-shifting at rehearsal number C (Everett 2006: 72).

<sup>24</sup> See (Hiu 1993: 74-75); (Adlington 2004b: 45). See also (Andriessen 2002e: 139).

<sup>25</sup> As noted in (Trochimczyk 2002b: 100).

<sup>26</sup> (Adlington 2004b: 46-7).

<sup>27</sup> (Ibid.: 44-5).

<sup>28</sup> Louis Andriessen, programme note to *Hoketus*, Muziekgroep Nederland archive, cited in (Adlington 2004b: 46), also available at <https://www.boosey.com/cr/music/Louis-Andriessen-Hoketus/1542> (accessed 26 March 2019). See also (Trochimczyk 2002b: 100), and (Everett 2006: 94), both of whom essentially reiterate Andriessen's view of this work.

<sup>29</sup> (Whitehead 1999: 245-6). The 'hard-edged' aesthetic, linked to subsequent works such as Diderik Wagenaar's *Tam Tam* (1978) and Cornelis de Bondt's *Bindt* (1980), is explored in (Everett 2006: 73-6).

<sup>30</sup> (Adlington 2004b: 45). See also (Ibid.: 33-4), and (Andriessen and Trochimczyk 2002a: 21) on Andriessen's suspicion of pop music.

Andriessen had already done so in *De Staat*, widely disseminated after its premiere in 1976, winning first prize in UNESCO Rostrum of Composers in Paris in June 1977. Adams' first mature works date from 1978 onwards: *Shaker Loops* (which Trochimeczyk also compares to Andriessen's *Symphony for Open Strings*, composed earlier that year), *Phrygian Gates* (whose opening resembles that of *De Volharding*, and whose Phrygian/Lydian modal opposition was prefigured in *De Staat*), *Common Tones in Simple Time* (1979), *Harmonium* (1981) (whose configurations of voices and instruments singing ostinato are clearly indebted to *De Staat*), *Harmonielehre* (1985) and *Short Ride in a Fast Machine* (1986) (whose resemblance to Andriessen's *De Snelheid*, premiered in San Francisco when Adams was living there, is noted by both Trochimeczyk and Everett).<sup>31</sup>

### **Situating Andriessen's output in musical history**

While various of the techniques employed in Andriessen's 1970s works, such as the use of amplified solo voices, loud and strongly accentuated rapid notes, unison melodies, gradual increases or decreases of tempi, shifts of basic rhythmic units, or widely spaced brass writing, re-appear in his later output,<sup>32</sup> these usually become localised details, or are absorbed into a different type of compositional language or grammar. I have limited my attention to Andriessen's works up to around 1980, as this body of work brings ample historical challenges.

Aural evidence and documentation of compositional activity overwhelmingly show the importance to Andriessen of the music of Satie, Stravinsky, Ives and Hanns Eisler.<sup>33</sup> The most important of these for Andriessen is undoubtedly Stravinsky, whose work he knew from a young age. Scholars have discerned connections between various Stravinsky works and Andriessen's String Quartet (1957), *Canzone 3 (Utinam)* (1962), *Contra Tempus* (1969), *On Jimmy Yancey* (1973), *In principe* (1974), *Symfonieën der Nederlanden* (1974), *De Staat*, *Mattheus passie* (1976), *Hoketus* and *Mausoleum* (1979) among earlier works.<sup>34</sup> These include many melodic, harmonic and rhythmic elements (Andriessen holds the heterodox view that in *Le sacre* the former two are more important the latter),<sup>35</sup> uses of block juxtapositions and a key chord, strident non-vibrato female voices, a 'restarting technique' for interrupting a motive by a dissonant chord, or shift in texture or pause, chorale textures, and more.<sup>36</sup>

One should not underestimate the influence of Andriessen's teacher Berio, who he studied with in Milan and Berlin between 1962 and 1965.<sup>37</sup> Berio's addition of Webernian elements into an idiom inherited from late-Dallapiccola can be heard in

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<sup>31</sup> (Trochimeczyk 2002b: 108); (Everett 2006: 244-5).

<sup>32</sup> See (Trochimeczyk 2002b: 107-8) for some examples of these.

<sup>33</sup> On Andriessen and Satie, see (Andriessen 2002f: 97-8) and (Andriessen 2002g: 126-7); (Andriessen and Trochimeczyk 2002c: 173-4); (Everett 2006: 49-50); on Andriessen and Ives, see (Andriessen and Trochimeczyk 2002a: 10-11); (Andriessen and Trochimeczyk 2002c: 174-5); (Van der Waa 2002: 34); (Everett 2006: 63, 77-9); (De Leeuw and Trochimeczyk 2002: 209); on Andriessen and Eisler, see (Everett 2006: 67-9, 76).

<sup>34</sup> (Van der Waa 2002: 33); (Adlington 2004b: 47-52); (Everett 2006: 47, 50-51, 56-7, 76); (Schönberger 1993: 210-37); (Trochimeczyk 2002b: 93); (Trochimeczyk 2002c: 51).

<sup>35</sup> (Everett 2006: 76).

<sup>36</sup> See (Trochimeczyk 2002d: 285).

<sup>37</sup> (Andriessen 2002h: 33-5).

*Nones* (1954) or *Allelujah II* (1958) (a piece highly regarded by Andriessen).<sup>38</sup> Stylistic eclecticism can also be observed at least as far back as *Opus Number Zoo* (1950). These elements, as well as interactions between speech and music, cross-cutting and overlaying techniques, enable lines to be drawn connecting *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)* (1958), *Visage* (1961), *Passaggio* (1963), *Folk Songs* (1964), *Laborintus II* (1965) and *Wasserklavier* (1965) to the concerns of the *Sinfonia* (1969). As with Stockhausen or Nono, Berio's stylistic trajectory can be viewed as a career model for Andriessen himself. Andriessen may also have influenced Berio: he claims to have introduced Berio to the Swingle Singers through a record:<sup>39</sup> they would of course be fundamental to the *Sinfonia*. Furthermore, Andriessen's first 'collage' works, *Souvenirs d'enfance* (1966) and *Anachronie I* (1966-7), predate the first four movement version of Berio's *Sinfonia* (1968), although there are other precedents for musical borrowing in the works of B.A. Zimmermann, Kagel, Ligeti, Henri Pousseur, Peter Schat, Hans Otte.<sup>40</sup>

To position Andriessen in diametric opposition to other composers associated with European serial music is thus simplistic. Andriessen took an early interest in Boulez, Stockhausen, Pousseur and Kagel<sup>41</sup> and this interest never wholly disappeared. In a 2002 interview he claimed that one 'cannot condemn serial music or minimal music as a whole . . . There are good ways of using compositional techniques, and there are bad ones,'<sup>42</sup> while in 2003 he called Schoenberg and Webern 'geniuses,' Boulez and Stockhausen 'very important composers,' and argued that serial thinking provided a way out from 'silly optimistic music' written before and after World War Two.<sup>43</sup> On the other hand there can be little doubt of Andriessen's antipathy to nineteenth-century German traditions: it permeates many of his writings and interviews and he has been quite explicit about his break with Germanic chromaticism and dodecaphony,<sup>44</sup> even claiming that Berio, Boulez and Stockhausen were only interested in Schoenberg, Berg and Webern because they were banned by the Nazis.<sup>45</sup> But these prejudices are primarily anti-*Germanic* and like those of some American minimal composers, should be viewed as a wider part of the modernist project (driven by Boulez, Pousseur, Goeyvaerts, Nono and Maderna as much as Stockhausen) rather than in opposition to it.

There are other modernist precedents for Andriessen's work from the 1970s: Maja Trochimczyk links the massive climax of repeated chords in rhythmic unison of *De Staat* to Xenakis's *Terretektorh* (1966), *Cendrées* (1974) and Górecki's Symphony No. 2 (1972).<sup>46</sup> Everett views it as a form of transcendence of Stravinsky and minimal music to create 'a powerful gesture of rebellion: the rising succession of chords cycles through the same notes over and over as if to simulate the act of shouting a slogan

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<sup>38</sup> (Ibid.: 33).

<sup>39</sup> (Andriessen and Trochimczyk 2002a: 18).

<sup>40</sup> For early theorisations of borrowing in contemporary music, including these and other examples, (Noé 1963a: 134-7); (Noé 1963b: 330-4); and (Lissa 1966: 364-78); (Budde 1972: 26-38); (Kühn 1972).

<sup>41</sup> See (Andriessen and Trochimczyk 2002a: 13).

<sup>42</sup> (Andriessen and Trochimczyk 2002b: 82-3).

<sup>43</sup> (Andriessen and Cross 2003: 252-3).

<sup>44</sup> (Andriessen 2002a: 132).

<sup>45</sup> (Ibid.: 134).

<sup>46</sup> (Trochimczyk 2002b: 103-6).

repeatedly in a political demonstration,<sup>47</sup> though she does not note that this type of effect had been attempted, albeit using somewhat different musical means, by Xenakis in *Kraanerg* (1968).<sup>48</sup> Clearly what Andriessen was attempting overlapped significantly with a plurality of tendencies in post-war European music.

To account for Andriessen's earlier music alone requires more sophisticated historical models than those which consider him as an appendage to the work of four American 'great men.' But this requires a move away from the nationalistic and exceptionalist assumptions which underpin the dominant narrative on minimal music. Maarten Beirens has critiqued 'the reduction of the core history of musical minimalism to a nucleus of mainly four composers and two music scenes in the 1960s and 1970s (on the West Coast and in downtown New York City),'<sup>49</sup> but ultimately his model is still founded upon dichotomous ideas of 'Europe' and 'America' and a central role for the American composers. He explores parallels (rather than necessarily influences) and dialectical relationships between American minimalist composers and the work of Goeyvaerts and Andriessen, noting the greater influence of para-minimalist European traditions upon the latter, but is still bound by an opposition of 'modernism' and 'minimalism,' mapped onto 'Europe' and 'America':<sup>50</sup> only by rethinking these wider historical paradigms can we escape this bind.

### **Part 5: Towards transnational historical models: from minimal music to suspended time**

Most polarised dichotomies in music history and aesthetics are problematic: they imply permanent antagonisms, often as if they are ontological givens. Examples include tonal vs atonal, Stravinsky vs Schoenberg, 'uptown' vs 'downtown,' 'European' vs 'American' and not least 'modern' vs 'postmodern.' 'Postmodern' used to separate radical tendencies before and after 1945,<sup>51</sup> but in more recent times has been used to mark out separate different periods of post-1945 musical activity, often with 1968 as a dividing point. Whether or not one associates minimal music with a 'postmodern turn,' there are problems with the assumption that this entails a major break with existing traditions, not least because many postmodern attributes can be shown to have much longer histories, featuring in the work of many composers conventionally associated with modernism, not least Ives and Stravinsky.

Yet the majority of writers on minimal music since Schwarz still subscribe to the idea that such music constitutes a 'break' with earlier post-war traditions, or with the entirety of 'European modernism,' and construct it as a specifically *American* movement. It is notable, for example, that the composers associated with *Bang on a Can* came to omit any mention of Andriessen in their promotional literature, despite several having studied with him and clear resemblances between their early compositions and his. Trochimczyk describes the problem exactly: 'That American composers may have been stimulated in their growth by works written in Europe

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<sup>47</sup> (Everett 2006: 72).

<sup>48</sup> Xenakis was explicit about his work's allusion to the student demonstrations in Paris of May 1968, See (Harley 2015: 45-6).

<sup>49</sup> (Beirens 2013: 61).

<sup>50</sup> (Ibid.: 61-81).

<sup>51</sup> This is the case in (Lodge 1977) and (Butler 1980).

might be uncomfortable for those who wish to write music history from a “nationalist” and “isolationist” perspective.’<sup>52</sup>

At the heart of much writing about minimal music lie deeper assumptions about ‘American exceptionalism.’ This ideology harks back to the Puritan voyages to America in the seventeenth-century and the idea that Americans had a unique destiny to create a new society as a model to the world.<sup>53</sup> As Seymour Lipset has shown, a simple conception of exception as difference, as recognised not least by Tocqueville, led to a stronger value judgement of superiority.<sup>54</sup> This fed into the ‘frontier myth’ which came out of the great migration West in the nineteenth century. The publication in 1893 of Frederick Jackson Taylor’s essay *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* consolidated the idea that the frontier had shaped the collective mentality of the nation, making America exceptional and quite distinct from Europe.<sup>55</sup> The myth may have declined during Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal in the 1930s, but it returned in the post-war era, when America’s political and military power was at its height, and informed discourse on occupation of Europe, wars in Korea, Vietnam and elsewhere.<sup>56</sup> Ideas of America as an exceptional nation with a Manifest Destiny towards the rest of the world are mirrored in rhetoric about the redeeming role of minimal music with respect to European modernism.<sup>57</sup>

Before going on to sketch alternative historical models, I wish to consider the limits of those based upon simple linear chains of influence, through an example from Andriessen. His *In principe* (1974) is linked by Adlington to the chanting style of Stravinsky’s choral works.<sup>58</sup> This was taken up in many works of Orff, as well as in Ernst Toch’s *Gesprochene Musik* (1930) for radio, in Werner Egk and Boris Blacher’s *Abstrakte Oper Nr. 1* (1953), then in compositions of the *Sprache als Musik* movement, including Stockhausen’s *Gesang der Jünglinge* (1956), Hans G. Helms’ *Fa:m’ Aniesgwow* (1958), Mauricio Kagel’s *Anagrama* (1958), Dieter Schnebel’s *glossolalie* (1959) and György Ligeti’s *Aventures* (1962).<sup>59</sup> Chanting with percussion can also be found in different works such as Luigi Nono’s *Epitaffio per Federico García Lorca No. 1 “España en el corazón”* (1951) or Krzysztof Penderecki’s *Passio et mors Domini nostril Jesu Christi secundum Lucam (St Luke’s Passion)* (1966).

Other parallels can be discerned which appear to have developed independently, such as Darius Milhaud’s exclusive use of speech and percussion in *Les choéphores*, op. 24 (1915), *L’Ours et la lune* (1917), and *Christophe Colomb* (1928), inspired by the thought of poet Paul Claudel.<sup>60</sup> John Cage connected the work of Milhaud and Toch with Stravinsky and Varèse’s use of percussion, in the context of what he was trying

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<sup>52</sup> (Trochimezyk 2002b: 108-9). The two-piano version of *De Staat* was performed at the first Bang on a Can festival in 1987, then in 1989, 1992. This was followed by *De Tijd* in 1991, *Symphony for Open Strings* in 1992, and *M is for Man, Music, Mozart and Hout* in 1995. In his 1996 profile of Andriessen, K. Robert Schwarz described Lang, Wolfe and Gordon as ‘all Andriessen disciples.’ See (Schwarz 1996b).

<sup>53</sup> See (Madsen 1998: 1-81) for an in-depth exploration of the development of this concept.

<sup>54</sup> (Lipset 1996). As cited in (Söderlin 2011 3).

<sup>55</sup> For a variety of critical perspectives on Taylor’s essay, and the original text, see (Etulian 1999).

<sup>56</sup> (Wrobel 1993: 145); (Madsen 1998: 157-66); (Madsen 2011: 20).

<sup>57</sup> For an analysis of Manifest Destiny, see (Ceaser 2012: 3-27).

<sup>58</sup> (Adlington 2004b: 52).

<sup>59</sup> See (Klüppelholz 1995: 11-38).

<sup>60</sup> See (Kelly 2003: 45-73).



to achieve around 1940.<sup>61</sup> Milhaud's later use of speaking chorus and percussion in *La mort d'un tyran* (1932) was heard by Luciano Berio who, according to David Osmond-Smith, drew upon this later in *Passaggio*.

Stravinsky's own chant-based music represented part of a wider trend, which itself can be related to earlier experiments with speech-based operatic writing by Aleksander Dargomizhsky and Modest Musorgsky, or some of the more prosaic forms of song by a variety of late-nineteenth-century French composers. So, from at least the mid-nineteenth century, multiple lines of development of vocal writing embrace idioms closer to speech than stylised song: Andriessen's *Il principe*, and before this Reich's *It's Gonna Rain* and *Come Out*, represent manifestations of these various plural tendencies.

A similarly pluralist historical model dates back to the late nineteenth century and encompasses a wide range of composers from Europe and North America. This is not to discount or marginalise significant influences of composers and musical traditions from elsewhere, of interactions with popular idioms, or influences from other art forms, philosophy, science and elsewhere, those are for a longer piece of writing. This discussion will be limited until 1980, in line with the usual dating of 'classic' minimalism.

If one concept above all is a valuable tool for investigating a range of aesthetic tendencies which gave birth to what has been categorised as minimal music, it is that of the 'spatialization of temporal movement' (*Verräumlichung des Zeitverlaufs*), as identified by Adorno, especially in the music of Debussy and Stravinsky.<sup>62</sup> For Adorno this was music which lacked any clear *telos*, characterised by juxtaposition of different materials, with stasis in place of motivic or other development. Adorno viewed this pejoratively, but this is not a necessary attitude to take. As the term 'spatialization' has come to be used widely in electroacoustic music, *Raum-Musik* and elsewhere, I will substitute here the term 'temporal suspension,' not least as Adorno goes on straight afterwards to use the term 'suspension of musical time consciousness' (*Suspension des musikalischen Zeitbewußtseins*).<sup>63</sup> The work of Satie and Stravinsky embodies this tendency, while the work of the Second Viennese School opened up other related possibilities.

### **Temporal Suspension 1: Satie**

Andriessen and Schönberger, in their book on Stravinsky, cite Satie's *Danses gothiques* (1893) as 'the first modern example of music without any structural development,' and list *Vexations* (1893) and *Socrate* (1918) as major predecessors of minimal music.<sup>64</sup> I would endorse this identification of Satie as the most radical early

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<sup>61</sup> See John Cage to Peter Yates, 14 December 1940, in (Kuhn 2016: 45-6).

<sup>62</sup> (Adorno 2006: 140). For a pre-history of this concept, see also (Harley 1994 78-9).

<sup>63</sup> (Adorno 2006:140). Much earlier, Adorno wrote of 'mere pseudo-motion in the static structure of this "dynamic" music in which nothing that occurs is forced to change' in the work of unnamed contemporary composers, and compared it to 'running on the spot like soldiers on the parade-ground.' See (Adorno 1992: 14). Adorno went on to speak disparagingly about 'the expression "static music" propagated by neo-classicism,' which he differentiated from works of Palestrina, Bach, Beethoven, a Debussy prelude, or a quartet movement by Webern. (Adorno 2002: 143).

<sup>64</sup> (Andriessen and Schönberger 2006: 140).

exponent of temporal suspension.<sup>65</sup> His early pieces lacked many other elements – chromaticism, directed harmonic motion, modulation, extravagant expansion of orchestral and vocal resources – which were associated with subjective expression. His *Ogives* (1886), *Trois mélodies* (1887), *Sarabandes* (1887), *Gymnopédies* (1888), *Gnossiennes* (1890-97), *Le fils des étoiles* (1891), *Uspud* (1892), *Trois sonneries de la Rose + Croix* (1892), the *Quatre Préludes* (1892-3) and especially the *Danses gothiques* variously feature allusions to pre-Renaissance music, non-functional use of seventh and ninth chords, avoidance of modulations and clear cadential progressions, chords concluding phrases simply through duration,<sup>66</sup> repetition with simple harmonisation in root-position chords, removal of barring, and juxtaposition of contrasting materials.

All of these pave the way for the total rejection of development in favour of repetition that is *Vexations* (1893). Radical temporal suspension also informs later conceptions such as the symphonic drama *Socrate* (1918), the various pieces of *Musique d'ameublement* (1919-23),<sup>67</sup> and the ballet *Relâche* (1924). Satie's direct influence is clear: on Debussy, for example, through the use of non-functional chords from the latter's *Sarabande* (1894) onwards. The composers of *Les six* responded more to the lighter and later Satie,<sup>68</sup> as did the American composer Virgil Thomson. It was John Cage, however, who set the centrality of duration in Satie (and Webern) against that of harmony in Beethoven in his 1948 lecture 'Defense of Satie,'<sup>69</sup> and perceived the radical potential of Satie's work.

Satie's music, with recitations, was played by Suzanne Peronnet at Zürich Dada in April 1919,<sup>70</sup> and later featured in a Paris Dada event in 1923,<sup>71</sup> while the film *Entra'cte*, which formed a central part of *Relâche*, was made by Satie, René Clair and Francis Picabia, who strongly aligned himself with Dada.<sup>72</sup> Picabia had praised the *Musique d'ameublement* in the journal *Der Dada* in April 1920,<sup>73</sup> and composed *La nourrice américaine* (1920), consisting of three notes repeated indefinitely (possibly inspired by Satie), for the Festival Dada that year, where it was first performed on 26 May.<sup>74</sup> Satie was also introduced to Marcel Duchamp by Henri-Pierre Roché in 1919.<sup>75</sup> Duchamp, who employed chance techniques in the composition *Erratum Musical* (1913), was of course another major point of contact for Cage,<sup>76</sup> who met the artist in 1942.<sup>77</sup> It is not too fanciful to argue that Duchamp's negation of artistic 'depth', psychology and figuration, especially in his 'readymades' from *Bicycle Wheel* (1913) onwards, mirrors Satie's relationship to time in his early music, and both phenomena come together in the work of Cage.

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<sup>65</sup> I would like to thank Caroline Potter for some remarks and suggestions on this section.

<sup>66</sup> See (Orledge 1990: 185-92).

<sup>67</sup> See (Potter 2016: 144-76).

<sup>68</sup> For one view on this influence, see (Volta 2014: 270-74).

<sup>69</sup> (Cage 1991: 77-84).

<sup>70</sup> (Tzara 1983: 30).

<sup>71</sup> (Ingram 2017: 19-21).

<sup>72</sup> (Potter 2016: 228-9).

<sup>73</sup> (Picabia 1920: back page).

<sup>74</sup> Liner notes for *Par Hasard: Chance Composition 1913-1951* (2014) [CD].

<sup>75</sup> (Satie 2000: 351. My thanks to Caroline Potter for this pointer.

<sup>76</sup> See (Shultis 2002: 27-8).

<sup>77</sup> (Silverman 2010: 53).

## Temporal Suspension 2: Stravinsky

Stravinsky, from *Petrushka* (1911) onwards, created a musical language out of repetition and sometimes extension of self-contained small motifs, as well as superimposition, textural layering, diatonic saturation and static harmony, in place of discursive writing and chromatic harmony. In *Le sacre du printemps* (1913), he employed ostinati and textural accumulation in the latter section of ‘Danses des adolescents,’ ‘Cortège du sage’ and ‘Danse de la terre,’ while in ‘Glorification de l’élue’ and the final ‘Danse sacrée’ in particular, he generated short-range linear motion through expansion or contraction of small motivic cells. *Les noces* (1923) and the *Symphonies d’instruments à vent* (1920) intensified and extended this range of techniques, and also the principle of *drobnost*, involving juxtapositions of disjunct, static fields of activity without any type of transition,<sup>78</sup> akin to early cinematic montage. The passages of repetition or linear accumulation amounted to another major form of temporal suspension, as pioneering an innovation as Satie’s, and more influential in the short term.

Stravinsky’s innovations fed into the work of composers seeking alternatives to the twin forces of chromatic harmony (epitomised by Wagner) and motivic development (epitomised by Brahms) which were such prominent aspects of late German romanticism. Edgard Varèse, from *Amérique* (1921) onwards, continued the use of blocks of static or minutely varied material, but with an increased degree of layering and overlap of material.<sup>79</sup> Olivier Messiaen, heavily influenced by Stravinsky’s *Le sacre*, also used block forms as well as his own principles for additive and subtractive rhythms. George Antheil, in early works culminating in his *Ballet mécanique* (1925), used blocks of ostinati or other repetitions, with a strict rhythmic pulse, executed in a machine-like manner (originally with sixteen player-pianos), echoing Satie and Stravinsky’s interest in mechanisation.<sup>80</sup> Ostinato-based development, prefigured in Stravinsky, are also found in such works as Ravel’s *Boléro* (1928), Henry Cowell’s *Ostinato Pianissimo* for percussion (1934) and the central section of the first movement of Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 7 (1941).

Composers associated with the *Neue Sachlichkeit* in Germany, including Hindemith in his *Kammermusik* series (1924-27), adopted static harmonies and ostinato to a more limited extent, although Hindemith was equally inclined to a *rapprochement* with traditional and contrapuntal pre-romantic models.<sup>81</sup> But others responded more fully to the possibility of an objectivised, mechanical music that eschewed the expressive potential of temporal development. Stefan Wolpe, in *Stehende Musik* (1925), featured an especially brutalist rendition of the block forms of Stravinsky and Antheil. Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt issued a series of polemics in favour of musical mechanisation,<sup>82</sup> while Hindemith steered the festivals at Donaueschingen and Baden-Baden in 1926-7 to feature mechanical composition.<sup>83</sup> Carl Orff found a continuum

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<sup>78</sup> See (Taruskin 1996: 1451-5) on Stravinsky’s use of *drobnost*.

<sup>79</sup> See (Cross 1998: 39-46); and for more detail (Bernard 1987: 134-52).

<sup>80</sup> (Potter 2016: 91-7).

<sup>81</sup> See (Kemp 1970: 7-27).

<sup>82</sup> This began with Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt’s essay ‘Die Mechanisierung der Musik,’ in *Pult und Takstock* 2/1 (January 1925), reprinted in (Stuckenschmidt 1976: 9-15). Then special issues of *Der Auftakt* 6/8 (1926) and *Musikblätter der Anbruch* 8/8-9 (October-November 1926) were devoted to the subject.

<sup>83</sup> Hindemith’s views can be found in ‘Zu unserem Programm’ (1926), in (Hindemith 1994: 16-18).

between his *Schulwerk* (1930-35), with their extremely static harmonies and simple folk-like melodies, and a simplified Stravinskian idiom (shorn of angular contours, rhythms, and chromatic melodic inflections) in his series of cantatas from *Carmina Burana* (1937) to *Trionfo di Afrodite* (1953) and in the mostly pitchless opera *Astutuli* (1948, rev. 1953). Werner Egk applied radical reduction of harmonic motion in his opera *Die Zauberflöte* (1935) and related developments can be found in the work of the younger figures Wolfgang Fortner and Boris Blacher.

Later Pierre Schaeffer, from his *Cinq études de bruits* (1948) onwards, reduced block forms to a micro-level, with a music made up of an interplay between recorded small-scale elements which remain themselves static. At this point the link with temporal suspension becomes more tenuous, as the elements, and the manifold strategies used to combine them, become more akin to basic musical particles rather than ‘themes.’

### **Temporal Suspension 3: Post-Webern Serialism**

Schoenberg’s ‘free atonal’ works from around 1908 onwards, whilst eschewing both long- and short-range tonal organisation, nonetheless maintain a high level of motivic development and dialectical interaction between thematic materials. It is only in ‘Farben,’ op. 16, no. 3 (1909), and the last of the *Klavierstücke*, op. 19 (1911) that Schoenberg create a genuinely static music. His dodecaphonic works from the Suite for piano, op. 25 (1923) onwards re-appropriate classical forms, rendered disjunct by the non-tonal musical material employed. Only with his major late works, in particular the String Trio, op. 45 (1946) and *Phantasy* for violin and piano, op. 47 (1949) did Schoenberg effect a reintegration of form and content. Webern maintained aspects of the discursive language of Schoenberg and Austro-German tradition in his early dodecaphonic works, such as the *Drei Lieder*, op. 18 (1925) and *Zwei Lieder*, op. 19 (1926). But in the String Trio, op. 20 (1927), Symphony, op. 21 (1928), Quartet for violin, clarinet, tenor saxophone and piano, op. 22 (1932) and Concerto, op. 23 (1934), he achieved a new range of micro-motivic interactions, through intense permutation of small cells from within rows, creating a myriad range of internal symmetries.

To follow a familiar narrative: in 1949, Messiaen went further towards temporal suspension in his *Mode de valeurs et d’intensités*, assigning fixed durations, dynamics and articulations to an extended mode of pitches: the dominant impression is of a static constellation of atomised notes. The following year, Karel Goeyvaerts, in his Sonata for Two Pianos (1951) combined Messiaen’s parametric determination with serial techniques, in a work combining different degrees of determination and density of utterance.<sup>84</sup> Stockhausen’s *Kreuzspiel* (1951) refines some of Goeyvaerts’ achievements in a pointillistic composition made up of a series of tableaux containing a limited amount of linear motion. But it was Boulez, in *Structures Ia* (1952), who achieved the highest degree of stasis, applying serial ordering principles to multiple parameters, whilst using a selection of the pitches and durations used by Messiaen, to create a series of short static sections. While the interrelationships between successive sections add a dynamic element to the piece (a quality in many block-form pieces), there is no perceptible thematic or motivic development or subjective expression.

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<sup>84</sup> See (Toop 1974: 141-69).

Berio's *Variazioni* for chamber orchestra (1953-4) has a static opening passage of sustained overlapping individual pitches, but from *Nones* for orchestra (1954), through such works as *Serenata I* for flute and fourteen instruments (1957) and *Allelujah II* for five groups of instruments (1958), he arrived at an integrated musical language in which he could mediate between points and gestures (not to mention *Klangfarbenmelodien*) for dramatic and expressive effect.

Stockhausen did something similar from *Kontra-Punkte* (1953) through to *Gruppen* (1957) although through more complex structural means, as did Henri Pousseur in works from *Symphonies à quinze solistes* (1955) onwards, while Luigi Nono mixed a post-Schoenbergian discursive motivic language with a variant of *Klangfarbenmelodien*, not least in *Il canto sospeso* (1956). All were finding new expressive means towards a form of subjective composition in which temporal suspension – an important aspect of Boulez's Mallarmé-inspired poetic forms and Stockhausen's 'moment' forms – was one expressive device amongst various others.

Goeyvaerts drew different conclusions from the achievements of 1950-51. In his *Opus 2* for thirteen instruments (1951) and *Opus 3 met gestreken en geslagen tonen* (1952) he maintained a relentlessly pointillistic idiom, in which fragments of gestural formations dissolve as quickly as they appear. But then with his *Compositie no. 4 met dode tonen* (sketched in 1952, realised in the 1980s) and *Compositie no. 5 met zuivere tonen* (1953), Goeyvaerts reduced his materials to just a few sounds generated in the studio: four in the first piece, permuted and repeated using serial processes for durations; everything coming from a single sound in the second.<sup>85</sup> La Monte Young's *Trio for Strings* (1958), in its expansion of Webernian material over longer durations, can be seen as an extension of Goeyvaerts' *Opus 3* or even the opening of Berio's *Variazioni*. Whether or not Young had heard these works is not the issue; each of these composers arrived at their own conclusion about how to develop a Webernian idiom.

## Consequences

If most of the composers above, except Goeyvaerts, retreated from the a-temporal constellations provided by post-Webernian serialism, other lines of development can be drawn from the tendencies outlined above. John Cage's early works avoided practically all harmonic motion in his early works, using rhythmic structures instead, while motivic developments were limited to a few instances of additive techniques, as in the second movement of *The Perilous Night* (1944).<sup>86</sup> In *The Music of Changes* (1951), rhythmic structures were only obliquely related to the sounding result, and the only temporal motion is a vague linearity caused by the removal of some elements from the 'gamut' of musical material and introduction of others. Practically all of his subsequent output is one of thoroughgoing temporal suspension in different forms; the only exceptions are pieces such as the Satie-derived *Cheap Imitation* (1969).

Morton Feldman moved from a motiveless and pitch-indeterminate idiom in the *Projections* (1951) and *Intersections* (1953) series, but from *Extensions 3* (1952) or *Intermission 5* (1952), fundamentally static and pointillistic material occasionally

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<sup>85</sup> See (Sabbe 1995: 194-5).

<sup>86</sup> As pointed out in (Beirens 2005: 50).

coheres into gestural units which are repeated or permuted, anticipating the Satiesque qualities of his output from *Why Patterns?* (1978) onward. Elsewhere, in *Piece for Four Pianos* (1959) he had the four players all playing the same material simultaneously, but at different speeds, anticipating *In C* without the tonality or periodicity.

Another line of development involves drastic reduction of pitch content, as found in Christian Wolff's *Duo for Violins* (1950), *Serenade for flute, clarinet and violin* (1950) and *For Piano I* (1951) then in a freer and improvisatory manner in works by Giacinto Scelsi, from the Suite No. 8 "*Bot-Ba*" for piano (1952) onwards, and especially in the *Quattro pezzi su una nota sola* for orchestra (1959). Here the reduction to a single pitch class in each piece, refocused attention on other parameters, especially timbre. Similar principles were employed in Ernst Albrecht Stiebler's *Extension I* for string trio (1963), built primarily around two pitches (g and c#), Nicolaus A. Huber's *Improvisationen über die Töne e-f* (1966),<sup>87</sup> Stockhausen's *Stimmung* (1967), Tomas Marco's string quartet *Aura* (1968), and Per Nørgård's *Voyage into the Golden Screen* (1968). Scelsi's achievements also point towards Horatiu Radulescu's *Credo* (1969), Gérard Grisey's *Périodes* (1974) and *Partiels* (1976) or Tristan Murail's *Sables* (1974-5) and *Ethers* (1978) onwards, with their exhaustive explorations of partials derived from single sonorities.<sup>88</sup>

Another line of development extended the block forms of Stravinsky and Varèse. Iannis Xenakis, in his first period of work from *Metastasis* (1954) onwards, used 'sound masses,' globally organised, gradually transforming sonic entities. His stochastic methods, continued through to the mid-1960s, generated textures from the 'top down,' with detail generalised, precluding anything other than basic linear motion within sections characterised by texture. György Ligeti, in *Apparitions* (1959) and *Atmosphères* (1961) employed a similar strategy to Xenakis, although with much greater conscious control over the micro-material within individual blocks, while Krzysztof Penderecki used a similar approach with added extended instrumental techniques in his *Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima* (1960).

### **'Minimal' Works in Context**

A small handful of works can be singled out as representing extremes of temporal suspension, several of them associated with Dada or Fluxus: Satie's *Vexations*, Picabia's *La nourrice americane*, Yves Klein's *Symphonie monoton-silence* (written some time between 1947 and 1957), Cage's *4'33"* (1952), Young's *Composition 1960 #7* and *Arabic Numeral (Any Integer) for Henry Flint*, Ligeti's *Poème symphonique* for 100 metronomes (1962), Mengelberg's *In memoriam Hans van Sweeden* (1964),<sup>89</sup> and Reich's *Pendulum Music* (1968).

But most other 'minimal' works can be linked to wider tendencies. Tape looping, as pioneered by Schaeffer and Stockhausen, was fundamental to Riley's *Mescaline Mix*

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<sup>87</sup> Huber would return to this idiom, with a greater emphasis on pulse and rhythm, in *Darabukka* for piano (1976) and *Dasselbe ist nicht dasselbe* for small drum (1978).

<sup>88</sup> A thorough exploration of the origins and emergence of this musical movement can be found in (Cagney 2015).

<sup>89</sup> This piece, which repeats just a few notes, was cited in 'Interviews with Louis Andriessen, Reinbert de Leeuw and Misha Mengelberg,' 34.

(1961) and *Music for The Gift* (1963), Reich's *It's Gonna Rain* (1965) and *Come Out* (1966), and Pauline Oliveros's *Bye Bye Butterfly* (1965), or the early works by Eliane Radigue. Very slowly mutating sonorities or materials, as in works of Reich, Oliveros and Radigue, or Alvin Lucier's *I Am Sitting in a Room* (1969), Gavin Bryars' *Jesus' Blood Never Failed Me Yet* (1971) and Andriessen's *Il duce* (1973), also resemble Ligeti's *Harmonies* for organ (1967), consisting of a long sustained harmony changing just one pitch at a time. Young's drone-based works can be linked to the Scelsi-Stiebler-Huber-etc tradition outlined above.

Riley's *In C* (1964) also evolves from tape looping techniques, and can be compared to the second section, 'Next Point,' of Henning Christiansen's *Perceptive Constructions*, op. 28 (also 1964); the rest of Christiansen's cycle, and subsequent works up to 1970 employ a range of techniques for temporal suspension with Satiean roots, directional repetitions or small modifications of fragments of tonal materials. Riley's *Dorian Reeds* (1965), *Olson III* (1967) and *A Rainbow in Curved Air* (1968) extend the principles of *In C* more freely, incorporating improvised elements.

The phasing techniques of Reich's early works were also a feature of Ligeti's *Poème symphonique* (1962), mentioned above, while *Continuum* for harpsichord (1968) uses phasing techniques between repeated short cells of unequal length (Ligeti was unaware of Reich's *Violin Phase* and *Piano Phase* from the previous year). Ligeti also achieved a similar effect on a more localised level in the third movement of his String Quartet No. 2 (1968), through pizzicati repeated notes in multiple simultaneous polymeters. In *Monument – Selbstportrait - Bewegung* for two pianos (1976), Ligeti constructed movements out of, respectively, incremental extension of cells, phasing between rapid chromatic figurations with varying accents, and similar processes using more measured ascending and descending figurations with a wider range of pitch content. If Ligeti is considered secondary to American minimal composers, because repetitive processes constitute just a part of his compositional idiom, then one would have to marginalise many of Reich and Glass's later works, and much of Riley and Young from the 1960s and 1970s onwards.

Nonetheless, it was Reich who combined static modality and regular periodic pulses (both already present in Riley's work) with phasing and then constructive/reductive processes (in which notes are added to a basic figure), from *Piano Phase* through to *Drumming* (1971). Glass's works from *Music in Contrary Motion* (1969) to *Music in Twelve Parts* (1971-4) distil and extend the additive and subtractive principles found in Stravinsky and his followers, and some early Cage, although Glass learned them through his study of Indian music.

The reduction of resources and modality of works associated with 'holy minimalism' also have wider precedents. From the mid-1950s up until the late 1980s, Galina Ustvolskaya pursued a progressively sparser idiom, with increasing incidences of obsessive repeated notes, chords and clusters, and a decrease in harmonic motion. Modal and static material can be found in Henryk Górecki's *Trzy tance w dawnym stylu* (1963), Arvo Pärt's *Solfeggio* (1964) and some passages in Penderecki's *St Luke Passion* (1966), while Górecki used repetitive patterns derived from just a few pitches in his *Old Polish Music*, op. 24 (1969).<sup>90</sup> Pärt began to explore his 'tintinnabuli'

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<sup>90</sup> See (Thomas 1997: 55-68) on these and other transitional works of the composer from the 1960s.

principles in *Für Alina* (1976), ‘minimal’ only because of the sparseness of its material and the use of a bass drone. *Fratres, Cantus in Memoriam Benjamin Britten Tabula Rasa* (1977) and later works employ repeated figurations with gradually changing pitches as in many earlier *études*, and chordal and melodic passages use additive processes, sometimes in a freer Stravinskian fashion, sometimes more like the work of Glass.<sup>91</sup> Górecki, in his Symphony No. 3, ‘*Symfonia pieśni żalonych*’ (1976), writes a slow, calm, modal canon around a modal theme, long drones and slowly extended melodic fragments, and slowly evolving variations,<sup>92</sup> recalling elements of Satie, Stravinsky and Scelsi.

Amongst other, diffuse tendencies in the 1970s, the British composers most relevant to this narrative are those using drone techniques, memorably mixed with a Satie-esque melody in Skempton’s *Waltz* (1970), for example. Skempton would maintain the Satie-esque flame in his subsequent music. Nyman’s *Bell Set No. 1* (1972) filters Cage’s early percussion work through the sensibility of Young or Scelsi, while his *I-100* (1975) applied the same principle as in Feldman’s *Piece for Four Pianos* to a set of diatonic chords. *In Re Don Giovanni* (1977) reconfigures a Mozart accompaniment and its driving pulse and unchanging harmonic loops naturally lead to comparisons with Riley and Reich.<sup>93</sup>

The multiple provenance of Andriessen’s music – Satie’s temporal suspension, Stravinsky, Ives and Eisler, the objectivism of 1950s modernism – are brought together with the unison instrumental writing of Wagenaar, Rzewski and Palestine in *Volkslied Melodie* and *Workers’ Union*. In *De Staat*, Stravinskian block forms and anti-Wagnerian instrumental writing converge with repetitive processes and canons from Riley and Reich, the interplay of eclectic material from Berio, and perhaps aspects of texture from Xenakis and Górecki, as well as many different jazz styles. From this totality Andriessen’s idiom moved on, eventually to a more incidental relationship with American minimal music after exorcising it in *Hoketus*.

Andriessen’s brashness could not be further away from Simeon ten Holt’s gentle *Canto ostinato* (1979), yet this piece, with its continuous ostinato around a quintuplet figuration and continuous but slow and modest harmonic motion, is also founded on the repetition of short or medium-length figures in the manner of *In C*. Similar approaches can be found in Hans Otte’s *Das Buch der Klänge* (1982), while traces of Ten Holt’s style can be found in the later music of Jacob ter Veldhuis, such as his String Quartet No. 2, ‘Postnuclear Winterscenario’ (1991).

## Conclusion

In summary, there are three primary sources of temporal suspension: the Satie tradition, transmitted through Dada and Cage; the Stravinskian tradition leading to Varèse, Messiaen, Orff and others; and 1950s serialism as a consequence of the Second Viennese School. Out of these branches Cage’s most radical temporal

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<sup>91</sup> Paul Hillier links the ‘rich legacy’ of minimalism to Pärt on the grounds of ‘non-narrative process structures and a general sense of harmonic stasis’ as well as ‘the uses of repetitive, though often asymmetric, rhythms, complexly interwoven’ in the work of younger generations (at the time of writing). See (Hillier 1997: 2).

<sup>92</sup> See (Thomas 1997: 81-94) on this piece in general.

<sup>93</sup> See (Ap Siôn 2007: 9-14).



suspension, Goeyvaerts' shift from integral serialism to limitation of material and repetition, and Young's slowed-down Webern. Wolff and Scelsi found different ways of permutating and varying limited numbers of pitches, influencing Stiebler, Stockhausen, Nørgård, and then Radulescu, Grisey and Murail. Xenakis turned the Stravinsky/Varèse/Messiaen model towards textural composition, followed by Ligeti and Penderecki. Schaeffer's tape loops led to early Riley and Reich, Oliveros and Radigue. Riley and Christiansen introduced new types of repetition, Ligeti and Reich forms of phasing. Ustvolskaya, Górecki and Pärt pared down musical resources to a minimum. Nyman learned from Riley and Reich but also neo-classical Stravinsky. Andriessen is the most Stravinskian of all but can be situated within several of these lines of development.

The various musicological taxonomies of the defining elements of minimal music – repetition of phrases, phasing, additive processes, constructive/reductive processes, steady pulse, etc.<sup>94</sup> – vary in appropriateness, even for the American big four. Uncompromising engagement with minimalist composition lasted from roughly 1964-8 for Riley, 1965-73 for Reich, 1969-74 for Glass, after which each introduced other musical ideas and concerns. 1976 is often cited as a key year for minimal music, with the first London performance of *Music for 18 Musicians*, the premieres of *Einstein on the Beach* in France, *De Staat*, Nyman's *I-100*, Ligeti's *Monument*, Pärt *Für Alina* and Górecki's *Symphony No. 3*, and the completion of Simeon ten Holt *Canto Ostinato*.<sup>95</sup> But the Pärt and Górecki have only slight connections with the four Americans, Andriessen's work combined multiple strands which would subsequently be dismantled and reassembled, Ligeti and Ten Holt were initiating new idioms probably better termed 'postminimal,' and Reich, Glass and Nyman were concluding a phase in their work: the year marked a swansong.

Ultimately, fruitful exploration of the interrelation of all these different composers is limited by the persistence of the concept of 'American minimal music' and an insistence on a European/American divide. There were and are deeply heterogeneous schools of composition across the USA, and equally so in Europe, some sharing as much in common with their transatlantic counterparts as with composers closer to home. I will conclude by suggesting we at least relax the term 'minimal music' (and 'process music,' 'repetitive music,' etc.) and instead view these composers as different manifestations of transnational musical temporal suspension and extra-harmonic, extra-motivic forms of musical organisation. This opens up the possibility of constructing a richer, multi-faceted, transnational history, benefitting significantly our understanding of composers such as Ten Holt, Nyman, Otte, Radigue and Louis Andriessen.

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<sup>94</sup> I am drawing here in particular on taxonomies of minimal music of Dan Warburton (1988: 135-59) (phasing; linear additive process; block additive process, overlapping pattern work, splicing/dovetailing; and textural additive process, in 'A Working Terminology for Minimal Music'), Kyle Gann (2002) in 'Ausgangspunkt für einen neuen Weg,' *Musiktexte* 94 (August): 67, cited in (Beirens 2005: 34) and (Beirens 2005. 67-104).

<sup>95</sup> (Moore 2016).

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Liner notes for *Par Hasard: Chance Composition 1913-1951*. LTMCD 2583 (2014)

The embrace of American exceptionalism allowed our first black president to use his personal success as a way to present this history in more palatable terms, as a story of progress toward a more perfect union—my entire career has been a testimony to American exceptionalism, he once said—while at the same time signaling to an unsettled electorate that he would seek. But starting around late 2002, with the war in Afghanistan under way and the Bush administration making its case for invading Iraq, American exceptionalism became the property of neoconservatives: the idea that Washington, with boots on the ground and bombs, could force what it called a democratic revolution on the Greater Middle East. A British author, surveying American historiography since 1890, was quite critical of Channing's major contribution, the six-volume *History of the United States*, contending that it "won only a contemporary reputation which is not wearing well." Referring specifically to the second volume of the *History*, this writer stated his feeling that it "added little of substance to what was to be found in earlier works," and that it "was so partisan as sometimes to be quite misleading." This book provides both a narrative of the historical background behind the publication of the *Cursus* and an analysis of the major philosophical and educational issues addressed by its seven volumes. Modern relativism and postmodern thought in culture and language challenge the 'truth' of history. Through the historiographical lens of the frontier, Turner sought to explain the process of Americanization—and the creation of a uniquely American culture: The wilderness masters the colonist. This consensus space became the socio-political symbol of American identity and history as a nation. In America, the limitlessness of the frontier myth functioned as the intelligible mask of that enigma called—the national character.—27 According to Smith, through the national myth, the character of the American empire was defined between American man and the American West.—28 Therefore, every American was imbued with the attributes of the West—namely an ideology that stressed the coexistence rather.