
Letters to the Editor

From Finbar O' Súilleabháin

Jörg Stenzl's article on York Höller's new opera *The Master and Margarita* (Tempo 179) is in one area – that of Höller's relationship to his sometime mentor Stockhausen – rather misleading by omission.

Anyone familiar with Stockhausen's later work will be aware that since 1970 – the year before Höller began studies with him, as Prof. Stenzl points out – he has consistently used the term 'formula' (*Formel*) to describe the figurative blueprints on which most works of the intervening period have been exhaustively based. Prof. Stenzl's repeated use of the same designation in connection with Höller's methods might seem reasonable enough given the evident similarities he reveals but omits to mention – the most blatant of which is the identification of *The Master's* three chief characters with their own 'formulas', as in the continuing LICHT cycle on which Stockhausen embarked in 1977. Moreover, Stockhausen himself would seem to look on Höller's path as the sincerest form of flattery, to judge by his acceptance of the dedication of the latter's *Schwarze Halbinseln* (see Vol.6, p.315 of Stockhausen's *Texte*), which as Prof. Stenzl makes clear was the first work based on *The Master's* 'formula'.

Apart from its failure to acknowledge this obvious ancestry – of which he could hardly fail to be aware – there is a potentially more damaging reason why Prof. Stenzl's article cannot be allowed to pass without comment in your pages. It happens that, having appropriated it to refer to a very particular innovation of his own composing, Stockhausen has specifically asked that the word *Formel* (and the term *Formelkomposition*) be reserved, in musical contexts, to his own work. Since Prof. Stenzl quotes York Höller as himself using *Klanggestalt* in referring to his own (after all, perfectly distinct) conception, there seems no reason why this reasonable wish should not be respected.

It is precisely such muddying of the historical waters that have led Stockhausen to be too easily judged as having had little influence, when it would be more accurate to say he has consistently received insufficient acknowledgement.

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(Similar letters on this subject were also received from Anders Beyer of *Dansk Musik Tidsskrift*, Copenhagen; Ralf Sengstock, Freiburg; and Michael Mannion, Oakland CA. To all of whom we extend our thanks and regrets that lack of space precluded the printing of their comments — Ed.)

News Section

Composers

JOHN ADAMS. *El Dorado* (European première)—11 September/Huddersfield/Halle Orchestra c. Kent Nagano.

RICHARD BARRETT. *negatives* (première)—10 May/Melbourne, Australia/Elision Ensemble c. Sandro Gorli.

RICHARD RODNEY BENNETT. *Concerto for Stan Getz* (première)—1 August/London, Royal Albert Hall Prom/John Harle (sax), BBC Concert Orchestra c. Barry Wordworth.

JUDITH BINGHAM. *The Stars above, the Earth below* (première)—7 May/Manchester, RNCM/RNCM Brass Band c. Howard Snell.

PHILIPPE BOESMANS is composing an opera, *Reigen*, after Arthur Schnitzler's *La Ronde*, for performance at the Théâtre de la Monnaie, Brussels in 1993.

JOHN BULLER. *Bakxai* (première)—5 May/London, Coliseum/English National Opera c. Martin André.

DAVID BULLOCK. *Oedipus Tyrannus*, opera after Shelley (première)—26 March/Esch Municipal Theatre, Luxembourg/Pirate Productions dir. and prod. James Reid-Baxter, c. composer.

JOHN CAGE. *Five⁴ – in memory of Stefan Wolpe* (première)—25 April/Witten, Tage für neue Kammermusik/Heinz Holliger (ob).