

# Morton Feldman: The Johannesburg Masterclasses, July 1983

## Session 2: Works by Graham Newcater, John Coulter & Hannes Gerber

Transcribed by Dirk de Klerk

Voices heard: Morton Feldman (MF)  
John Coulter (JC)  
Hannes Gerber (HG)  
Peter Klatzow (PK)  
Jacques de Vos Malan (JdVM)  
Graham Newcater (GN)

MF: For the young composers to tolerate the fact that there is a vast amount of vested interest behind just a few years of working, you know. So I think, if we could handle it very much like the first psychoanalytic conference where Freud opened it up and said, "Let's hopefully tolerate a little reality during these discussions." And I think it's all up to us to decide where we could possibly take it.

One of things that I always found is that, by getting together, really defines oneself. My favourite student actually we refer to, I referred to, as the Barry Goldwater of the department. He was the most conservative of everyone through the years but he defined his conservatism and he defined his whole musical personality so convincingly, so marvellously, that John Cage calls him at least three times a week and has him come over and play chess and have a conversation with this conservative. Actually little by little the conservative is becoming quite radical. As Nils Vigeland is becoming radical, in recent months John Cage is becoming quite conservative.

I wouldn't call it communication, I would say a kind of articulation about... oh, a hell of a lot of things, the way we're programmed as a young person in school, what schooling does to us, what *no* schooling does to us in terms of creating amateurs. Oh, we all know this. I would like to find my own role here. It's just very, very unclear, just very very unclear what I could say if one wanted my advice or my help. It's very very difficult, especially in these years as a teacher.

If I could really be very valuable in terms of my own input and my own insight as a teacher these past twelve years, and the fact that the only two people that ever asked me for advice are the only two people who are now having a career.

There's a story about Baron Rothschild, who, walking in the office every day and all the stockbrokers would get up and stand and then when he would pass they would sit down and evidently he noticed one stockbroker. And one morning he walked over to that stockbroker. Everybody was watching. They didn't know what it was all about and all Rothschild said to him was, "Buy," and it was a certain stock. This man's name was Lauri, he was Belgian and he died about six years ago and all this information came from the New York Times obituary which impressed me tremendously. While Lauri evidently got the day off and got a hold of as much money as he could from family, friends, you can imagine, and he bought the stock and overnight he became a multi-millionaire.

So if I say to a certain composer, "Get out of polyphony, you're too talented for it and it's very fake," half listen to me. You might not become a multi-millionaire but you wouldn't go away poor.

I don't want to step on any toes. I don't know to what degree I should criticise anything but I think I'm going to just be presumptuous. And if I do have something to say about a piece I'm going to say it and hopefully I don't want to hurt anybody's feelings or step on anybody's toes, I see it quite objectively myself.

My whole attitude is: what is a young composer, or a young professional composer? There are many that develop an attitude very much like young psychiatrists, that have to become analysed in order to get their licence and their degree and they assume an attitude that their analysis has nothing to do with *them*, you see. They come and they tell the control doctor, the professor, all these horrendous things and it's all like scientific, it has nothing to do with them. It's as if they don't even need any help, you see, because they're young psychiatrists, they're not human! And I feel that, that with a lot of my PhD's they have that attitude that any kind of insight, anything you could really say that might rock the boat, is something they don't want to get involved with.

Why don't we just play it by ear, everybody would have their say. I'm really kind of like the devil's advocate, I certainly don't want to relate to anybody or anybody as if they're a student or this or that. I'm not really seeing it like that. And certainly a lot of the works that we're going to hear are not student works at all, but that doesn't necessarily mean we can't have a discussion about it.

PK: Three of the works have scores and I'm just going to ask you to spread these around and spread yourselves around as much as possible.

[Music is played]

JdVM: As far as I know that was the National Symphony Orchestra conducted by Anton Hartman, do you remember, Graham?

GN: Yes it was quite soft, I couldn't quite hear if it was Anton or Brian Priestman I don't know. I think it was the earlier one, the late Professor Anton Hartman.

MF: What year was this written?

GN: 1967.

MF: Graham, were you familiar with Carl Ruggles' music?

GN: No, the only American I knew at the time was Roger Sessions.

MF: Yes.

GN: I didn't know Ruggles at all, but I've heard Ruggles since and I think he's very good.

MF: Yeah, because there was certain sections that had a kind of... I wouldn't say it was like Ruggles, it wasn't like Ruggles at all, but it reminded me of discursive lines he would have and the shape of them, in that sense.

GN: Yeah.

MF: Graham, may I just ask one question? What kind of function do you feel percussion have in your work, especially like the timpani? Do you feel that it gives an energy or do you feel that it's dramatic? Just how do you feel about percussion, especially in this piece?

GN: Well, at that particular time I thought, you know, timpani generally are given rather uninteresting parts to play. Rather give them something to do in a thematic way, not just a long trill or a pedal note or something like that, but actually give them thematic material to play and that's why we had worked with tims quite a lot. And all the percussion as well, even the gong is used almost thematically to breach sections. So I used the percussion thematically rather than just emphasising tuttis, long notes, or whatever. But since that... I've done that, and I don't do it any more you know.

MF: No, the use of the gong was beautiful, it was, it was something Berio used many, many years later in the *Sinfonia*. It worked beautifully, structurally in this piece, it's a very elegant piece, beautiful piece.

GN: You know, may I just say something? That could be seen as a kind of concerto, a little concerto for orchestra because, as you notice, each variation, it's not a theme and variations, it's variations of sonorities. And each section is devoted to a given group of timbre. If you notice, sometimes it's xylophones and woodwinds and other times it's brass and piano, or whatever the case may be.

MF: Now when you got this commission, was the orchestration dependent on the fact that there was two, two, two... that they told you, "Don't write for three flutes," you know, and.....

GN: Yes, well I had....

MF: Was that, in other words, was it because of the confines of the orchestra itself?

GN: No I, I don't.....

MF: I mean could you have added instruments? I just want to know how you arrived yourself at this particular, almost a kind of an elaborate chamber style.

GN: Yeah, well I had the basic group that we had here – symphony orchestra - in mind. But I remember at the time I used two sets of bells here, did you notice?

MF: Yes.

GN: And the conductor was a bit dubious about that you know, even one set of bells. Because at that time we didn't have good bell players. Yes, and using two sets of bells where they both played with... each one has two mallets. So in other words four notes. So I was a bit worried about that. So I just wrote what instruments I needed, but basically within the confines of what we had at the time.

MF: Did you have any ideas, any kind of ideas about some kind of middle way between orchestral music and chamber music when you were writing this piece?

GN: Yes that sort of thing. As I say, some are tutti variations as the real sections and others are chamber music sections. So it is a balance between the big symphony orchestra of the old days and the newer concept of smaller orchestras.

MF: I found the isolated streamlining very beautiful. The way you introduce it with the violin one and two and then when it comes back again with the viola. Very, very beautiful.

I was happy to hear it.

GN: Thanks very much.

MF: Can we go to the next piece?

[Music is played]

MF: The problem that I had...It's like sometimes looking at a semi-abstract painting, where it's very hard to see exactly what's being dissected.

I always preferred really abstract painting or a representational painting. I always had problem with semi-abstract painting. So when I would hear, say, the recorders in this piece, I wouldn't exactly really know their function. I was confused about their function.

Is their function to create the arcane atmosphere, was an arcane atmosphere wanted? Perhaps with my orientation a recorder is arcane, you know, in terms of its sound and it does have it, it has that Poussin landscape quality.

So I begin to think of it then again as part of the word painting and I get confused a little bit about that but then if I want to become, get onto more technical ground, I feel that instruments are...essentially, unfortunately...stencils of what we hear.

I wouldn't actually call it a compromise but I would say that one has to work almost like a metaphor and get the right kind of metaphor, the right kind of timbre for the pitch so to speak. And that's the problem that I have with your piece. I was confused in its colouristic metaphor, you see.

And it became almost Wagnerian, in a crazy way. When he said, "The action in the colour," you see. And I was too involved with these recorders and the action and the gestures of this sound in relation to the people. The only thing in a sense that I feel that I could say that might be a little peculiar, is that I felt that the harmonic language was too advanced for the kind of material that you wanted. And if it was in a sense into various changes in this chromatic world, I hear it more akin to say late Satie in his *Nocturnes*. Are you familiar with his late piano *Nocturnes*?

JC: No.

MF: Well, I think you will love it, from what I could see about your piece, not that it has anything to do with Satie. But the right harmonic language for the kind of simplicity you want and at the same time you don't want a completely prosaic tonal language.

And also in the choice of instruments. It's a very big problem the whole idea of writing instruments for *occasion*, piece for four saxes or one has flute students or this or that. I think it's very, very dangerous. It's a fantastic temptation, but, unlike Oscar Wilde, I wouldn't yield to it.

And I think at all times one should take your role. Where given a group of instruments, one then should carve out a kind of particular instrumentation and, well, even though you have a lot of things, you know, available. I'm very wary about the commissioned piece. Actually I don't believe in it, I think it's ruined a lot of reputations.

Also I would think instrumentally, of choices of instruments with much more compositional flexibility. I mean, right off, you are not going to get that much flexibility with four recorders and you could hear it when it started to swing in the last movement, you know, and you want it to do something a little more interesting. It didn't work.

It's hard for us to accept the fact that, like poets, we are dealing with a metaphoric language. We're not used to that kind of terminology in relation to music because music immediately grabs [Bangs table] on a kind of harmonic language, or whatever. And we develop a certain type of truth in the materials of that language, not realising that that language in a sense is really colour dirt in terms of a metaphor of a language which perhaps the work would be better in, you see. And I think if you would think of music and ask the question, Is this the right metaphor? By that: Is this the right harmonic language for it? Again, like in Wagner, where every opera is a different instrumental concept. The way he thought about even, not sitting down with the score and writing another orchestral opera. Every opera was different instrumentally, because

he realised those things. And upgrading the right kind of metaphor instrumentally which was so important for him in terms of his work.

But it has terrific lucidity and fluidity, it was a pleasure to hear.

JdVM: Hannes Gerber's *Psalm 23*.

[Music is played]

JdVM: Hannes, would you like to tell us where you made it and how? And there are a lot of electronic freaks in the audience.

HG: I made it in Los Angeles at the University of Southern California and I've used the first few lines of the Psalm 23 – "The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want." That's all I used. And I used only voice and Moog. Most of the high pitched frequencies that you heard was the voice at high speed and I used Moog only to cultivate the voice.

MF: What do you yourself feel about electronic music?

HG: Well, I find it really interesting and I, you can do much more exact things with it than you can do with many versions of playing that you can't count on always to come with like pitching in the right place. You can be much more exact.

MF: But how about the devices, the repertoire of the devices that one uses in electronic music as opposed to the devices of non-electronic music?

HG: Well, I think I'm a computer freak, that's why it really interests me a lot to work with electronic devices rather than natural instruments.

MF: Well, I don't really mean that. I meant the fact that the language, the kind of material one has on electronic music is already developed into a...it has its own history you know.

HG: Yeah. Well, I think that it's much more unlimited. You can create the songs that I guess you think are wanted and if you are using an instrument you can't use the sound of the instrument or you are limited to the instrument.

MF: When you were in California did you visit Cal Arts and Morton Subotnik?

HG: No.

MF: Well, next time you are there I think you should go. Do you know anything about his ghost box?

HG: No.

MF: Well, when I refused to talk about recent trends in American music, I think that's one of the most interesting electronic music is that Morty developed a kind of ghost box, in which the whole thing just most simple means, just, it's just an incredible thing. Did you go down to La Jolla yeah?

HG: Yeah.

MF: Well, I know it was done professionally with very very clean... excellent. I had a very very humorous... I was on a jury with Berio and Penderecki in Rome for the Rome Prize years ago and there was an electronic music category in which Penderecki and myself disqualified ourselves from judging the electronic music pieces only. Ask Berio, who didn't give us any argument at all to take over this thing. And there were two people up in the control towers, [one] putting one [piece] on, and one to take the other one off. And you continually go like this [Demonstrates gesture to control towers]. After just a half a second, it's out! And the other one would start to go, like this you see. In the whole hour of about three hundred electronic scores you go like this [Repeats gesture] Because of the similarity I thought, I thought because of the similarity it was done in, [but it] wasn't clean you see, it wasn't done professionally, and that was his big criteria.

However there was one piece that started off with a kind of hiccup rhythm like bluah, bluah. Very very interesting, you couldn't catch it's [...] and so he let it run for a little while and then after one [...] it became electronic music and then he went like this [Gesture]. I think he wanted to hear how to get out of it, how the guy got out of it. But I think that could be a terrific discussion, electronic music itself, just *does it have a future?* One of those kind of symposium titles. One of the most... and I really mean it was unfortunate I didn't write any electronic music. I, when I came to my university that had a very sophisticated electronic studio and I noticed that the fact that I wasn't working electronically, the studio was kind of half out of operation and I thought that was unfortunate actually. But actually now we make it compulsory for

the student, not electronic but computer in relation to electronic, we actually made it compulsory that they must go through it, do it.

The problem here is, is what do you do with sounds in a non-functional pitch world? Where do you put them?

Jacques, I have to tell you a funny story about Michael von Biel, maybe some of you know Michael? I haven't seen Michael in years. I just noticed his name again after a long time. Well anyway, Michael von Biel came to study with me in the mid 60's and after he was finished I sent him to Stockhausen which was a disastrous mistake because then he disappeared off again.

Anyway when Michael studied with me, one of his first lessons he wrote a piece and I said "Michael, the piece is too much in the middle. No matter what you do in the middle, it sounds like a chorale." Then he brought a piece, or revision of the same piece, and it was very much in low and I said to Michael, "Be very careful of low." I said, "It sounds very lugubrious."

The following week, the same piece revised again, a lot of it was high and I said, "Michael, be very careful of high, it really is an affectation." Well, those that know Michael, he practically collapsed! He starts screaming, not middle, not on low, not on high, *where?*

I said, "All the registers, Alles zusammen." And I will give you exactly the same advice. I feel that the register similarity does not float the music, that you have to like kill the space, dissect, forget about [...] like a Bach solo line, dissect, learn how to even take one register like Bach and do fantastic thinking of the register. So that, that I feel very faulty in the piece.

Then I also feel that the language is also too complex and not taking into account the beautiful voicing that you could have on the piano, you see. There is no sensitivity to orchestrating. I would say that your sounds are not really orchestrated and I think the piano has to be orchestrated, so I missed that voicing. For that I suggest listen to recordings by Rachmaninoff, how he voices.

Then another terrible problem, one of the worst problems anybody could have, and what really everybody does have, is that if you are in a non-functional sound world, you create an illusion when you have an instrument like the flute and the piano together. The piano immediately becomes background, the flute immediately becomes foreground and it completely defeats your purpose you see. The thing is to find instruments that could really pick up on the piano or descend into the piano, a violin, cello, everything, just shadows you see. The colour here is too, too *much* you see.

This is not a question of balance, it's just a question of too much lipstick, it's a cosmetic problem.

HG: Mr Feldman, what do you mean when you said that [the language is] too complex?

MF: That it's conceptual, it's conceptually clustered, rather than actually hearing, building up each chord in a sense as a more sensitive sound object.

It would be just too many pitches and a little more...you know, very difficult to talk about because it's an *ear* thing essentially, it's not a conceptual thing.

Just as registration is an ear thing and not a conceptual thing, otherwise we would normally have three or four great fugues which that's all we have, you know.

Just where we're going to put that registration, that material, is an ear thing which is in a sense something that one could talk about.

You know when we first heard Boulez in New York, I didn't say to myself what a fantastic *idea*; we had total serialisation three years before, with Milton Babbitt and we all knew Webern. Of course we were excited the way he dissected it, and of course it was important, but the thing that I said to myself when I first heard his *Flute Sonatina* was, *what an ear!* And it's very interesting to try and have a conversation [on] '*What function is the ear in the composer?*' Of course, to a non-composer, one would think that one is always using ones ears. But I'm afraid to disillusion the non-composer. The ear doesn't really play that much of a part in so much music that you hear. I always wondered what part the ear *does* play. Anyway words like that, like perceptual, it's only perceptual if you don't hear it, you see.

What I would really would like to talk about really and I hope that you will join me here is, to what degree do you feel that you are committed to *add* to the knowledge, technically and otherwise of your chosen field of composition and suffer the consequences thereof, or, to what degree one feels that music is so defined and so confined that our duty is to, essentially, *redo* that which has already been done. That because we have technical difficulties in imitating something then it must be like an achievement the fact that we too could do it and that's sufficient. I remember when I was a teenager and we would sit around a room listening to a late Beethoven quartet and there was no inkling that we had to *do* something.

But if we could only do *that*, if we could only arrive at that kind of proficiency to do *that* you see, and that's what it was all about.

It was a very unhappy day for me when I realised that the late Beethoven didn't help. But he helped in a better way in terms of my own life. He helped me realise that I had a lot of work to do.

So essentially you have two problems here. And the problem is to what degree we use history as a safeguard. And I really feel that that's the case.

And if we don't feel that way, then what in heaven's name do we *do* and what in heaven's name is expected of us? And I alluded to that earlier in my talk the other day. About the problems of someone who feels, well, they want to be themselves, they want to search for their own thing in a kind of Proustian composite way.

That is, that the subject is within *themselves* and not in the object. By that I mean, not in history, not in historical models but in *themselves* to, in a sense, try to make *another* model, *another* musical artistic experience.

So given that particular direction, just what does one *do*? How does one develop those *skills*? You just can't sit around philosophically and talk about it, you have to *make* it, you have to *do* it, you see.

And I want to beseech and plead with Graham Newcater to be a little more tolerant of people like John Cage, or whoever, who actually, in a horrendous way, in a twenty-hour-a-day way, *did* something. Tried to *find* something without thinking that he was on some kind of gold rush and he should be rewarded for it. Cage certainly never wanted to be rewarded, and still doesn't want to be rewarded for anything. But he did feel that music had possibilities and I think that his work is actually very, very mild considering the work of his imitators. And that mildness is his own moral and intellectual conscience. He could have gone much further.

I think that having an original idea in music - which is *so* impregnable, it is *so* difficult to be original in music... And all good music was essentially original.

And if I use the word "originality" it's only to pass the message that music is *difficult* and don't be *ashamed* of the fact that it's *difficult*. It is very, very difficult.

And it's difficult to imitate models, it's difficult to write another *Marteau*. But if you write another *Marteau* I mean you're not going to get the French Legion of Honour and I'm not going to kiss you on each cheek. You just wrote another *Marteau*. OK, maybe the world could use two *Marteaus*, especially if one half of the world doesn't know the other *Marteau*. [Laughter]

So that's the most important thing and that's the subject that I am an authority on.

What are the disciplines that one needs to find oneself?

The understanding of music as a metaphor is one thing but to me it was a very important realisation, that in fact these were just metaphors.

And also in a very, very strange way I realised the amount of knowledge one has to have to be a composer.

For that matter I was telling some friends here the other day that it was up to a me and Lejaren Hiller to establish some kind of format at my university for a doctorate. We decided on establishing nothing because we both felt very strongly that a composer is *everything*.

So the *history* cripples them, the *theory* cripples them, *I* cripple them with my non-teaching. And they just have to know it.

It's like Zen. Did anyone of you read about the samurai, that went to study with the master for seven years? And all they did was give him a broom.

And this guy was walking around the house with the broom, and in the seven years he learnt a lot. The Zen master would hide behind doors. So he had that sense that, maybe someone was behind the door. The guy then would come up and give him a whack and he would have to take the broom and defend himself, you see. And after seven years, his degree was, he was given a sword. He was also now a samurai.

And that's my own approach to composition with my own students. They are not told anything, but after seven years they seem to have learned a lot, only because of the questions I would ask and the things that I would ask them to do.

I mean, there is *music* and then there is the *history* of music. It's like *Sophie's Choice*, I mean you might have to kind of say, "Here, take music. It had it's day, it's nice and old anyway. OK take it! Leave me these three notes, maybe we can do something with them."

Yes, it is like *Sophie's Choice*. But as G.B. Shaw told his daughter when she saw that even the Salvation Army could be bought, he said, "Well, don't feel bad, sometimes it gets a little confusing. That feeling of losing something is only because you gained something else."

I don't find anything sacred in the history of music. What I find is just people having a rough time just like we are, trying to put a piece together. And sometimes they can go through their whole life and not duplicate. There's successes of earlier years. I feel that, then I think many people do, that Beethoven essentially never really duplicated the *Eroica Symphony* in his other symphonies. There was just something so special about it. So even Beethoven in a sense had problems.

So I see the history of music just written by people with a lot of problems and occasionally they write a good piece and occasionally they have a startling idea and a lot of times now we don't even know that they are startling ideas. In my orchestral seminars I always like to play that marvellous long flute passage in Brahms' *Fourth* where he goes tripping for an awful long time, you have no idea. All right, flute and strings is obvious. All right, the strings take on a kind of "Gluck" harmonic rhythm. All right, we can criticise them for that, or we can pat Brahms on the back to get into a fantastically long flute trip for absolutely no reason whatsoever and have it work. Startling. So to me history are those startling moments rather than the kind of things that we think are important about it. So the thing is to leave history still loving it.

So the trip is so psychoanalytically as well as compositionally. And musicians, composers find this very, very difficult to do. Painters find it a little easier, how to be themselves and still love history.

I was very close with Jackson Pollock. If you visited Jackson Pollock the only books he had were books on Michelangelo. His work descends or makes a kind of leap insofar as that everything he got or he felt he had in his work essentially came from Michelangelo and he was absolutely right.

The Michelangelo drawings of the *unbroken* line, the *unbroken* rhythm. Also that fantastic expanse in those drawings. Essentially it might seem far-fetched the way he arrived at it. Mark Rothko is someone else that I was very close to and I would always have lunch with him for about two weeks about three years before he died. We saw each other constantly and go to the Met, go to the Frick, look at Rembrandts and that was his greatest influence. A combination of Rembrandt and how Rembrandt just got to the edge so imperceptibly and beautifully. The psychology in Rembrandt as the first great painter who is also the first great painter psychologist. Crazy combination of Rembrandt and a kind of Grecian ideal from the Rembrandts. We're then going to the Greco-Roman Rooms and he'll talk about the perfection of that particular period and then try to find an intuitive perception, an intuitive skill in his own work.

I, on the other hand, throughout my life, was very involved with Bach, in the simultaneity of the vertical and the horizontal and how it balanced out. And, to this day, I would tell my students that nothing could happen in their work unless they understood counterpoint. Just to get a sense of the page, just to get a sense of the design of the page. I don't teach counterpoint but I believe in counterpoint, not because of its historical importance but for another reason. I walked into my classroom once and I offered a thousand dollars if anybody could add to fugues. Is there something else besides contrary motion, oblique motion, parallel motion? I said, stationary; I wrote that piece. I'll give you a thousand dollars. I believe in counterpoint because it's reality, it's the only kind of motion that we have in music, there isn't any other, you see. Not because it's historical.

I tried to find other reality principles in my work. How two instruments sound together. How can I go about adapting to things which are more real than perhaps things that I *like*, or things that sound more *effective*. And I think that the way that one develops those skills in terms of one's own personal work is to develop various reality principles that make it possible to work. And I think that out of that realising that nothing's going to happen outside of contrary motion, parallel motion, oblique motion, and that we're stuck on this earth and we're not going to fly, and we're not going to dream and not have fantasies that we're doing something what we're not doing, then we possibly might be able to do something that we didn't think that we could do.

So we have that particular point of view and then the historical point of view and I think that we always had those two points of view wrestling, like Job, against each other. Really. But you cannot get along, of course, without historical models. But exactly how *literally* one uses those models... Can we make the leap like Jackson Pollock from Michelangelo into an invented imagery? Can we make leaps like that, rather than feeling that we have to do it like Michelangelo?

And I don't even mind a new conservatism. In fact I'm like the blacks in America who trust the Southern whites more than the Northern ones. I'd rather...I kind of seem to trust my more conservative students more than my more radical ones. I usually phase out my radical students, actually, because they are all on ego trips and the conservative person usually wants, really, really wants to do something.

The only problem with the conservative composer is that they develop a lot of delusions. I feel. They develop notions about honest music. Honest music is that if you have a fugue going and if you have a castanet, it's cosmetic. That to them would be a definition of dishonest music. But there is no such a thing as honest music. What good is it if you are not talented, all this honesty? It's just again another safeguard, like talking with 'thou' as if you're talking a kind of biblical English. It does not make you [Laughs]... It doesn't work.

That was something else that developed in music, this whole notion about honest music, honest values. It just doesn't exist. It just doesn't exist at all.

What might have existed is certain composers more than others identifying with perhaps the iconography of the time. That when Bach wrote a tritone and the tritone said, "O God," he really felt it as a kind of iconography, the way they did in Renaissance painting. And usually those that identify with the iconography, whether tonality or whether twelve tone, or like John Cage...Those that really meant it, those that really felt it, it seemed very, very real. And they really *did* it, but that doesn't necessarily make it *right*. So I don't feel that anybody is right and anybody is wrong.

I don't emulate Cage and I really don't emulate Bach, except, what Bach has taught me is a kind of dexterity. How I could move within my own limited world, or what appears to be a limited world. Bach taught me how to move in it. How to get from one corner to another. While *harmony* never taught me how to get from one corner to another.

But we'll see, we'll see in the following week. But I don't think we could do it in a situation like this. I think it's a round table situation and I really...Jacques, I would like to get together with the composers and talk about things in an uncensored way, you know, and have arguments and discussions and....

You see it's tragic...*Hollywood*. You know the world is Hollywood and people are writing for hundreds of years. They are writing honest music and no-one is interested in their honesty. And they keep on writing it and they are still writing it. And then they wonder, "Why doesn't my music travel, why aren't they interested in my music, it's so honest?"

The world doesn't want honesty, that's why they love Wagner. [Laughter] They don't want it. They either want to have a good time, either Steve Reich or Offenbach, or they want something. They don't want the same thing. The world doesn't want honest music, the world doesn't know honest music. The world doesn't go to a university, the world is not going through a degree. But of course one doesn't know what the world wants. But one thing they don't want is honesty. Honesty is something...you put a quarter in a cup, you know, as you pass down the street, you put a quarter in the cup.

But it's not *dishonesty* and I never liked the word like *bandwagon* or this or that. I once gave a...I forgot all the material but I spent a month researching American popular music and what I did was take the various periods until the war and the various periods of Jerome Kern and Gershwin and everything and it just showed that every ten years the music changed, from "Swanny Swanny" to the most sophisticated Ginger Rodgers and Fred Astaire tune – "Wouldn't dance" [Sings]. Who would think that that guy wrote some kind of cornball thing just before.

Now you are not going to say that these people are dishonest, you're not even going to say they are commercial. Things changed, they changed.

A lot of composers did it too. Or they may change. But we always have that feeling, as if we're born with something, we're stuck with something. Like a Bible class. That learning music is some kind of Bible class. And it hasn't worked out.

I mean if you go to a show about painters, look at the way painters change. In fact, look at the way the two great masters of the twentieth century changed. Look at Schoenberg's changes. Look at Stravinsky's changes. Who doesn't change? Milhaud, he doesn't change. Janacek, he doesn't change. Bartók changed for the worse.

But the great masters of the twentieth century changed, changed, changed. The painters changed, changed, changed. But we don't see that any more. You got one thing, you sell that one thing, you're stuck with it.



Where is Steve Reich going to go? I asked Steve, "Where are you going to go?" He went...[Gestures, laughter] "Where are you going to go?"

Then you create a whole propaganda against yourself, and propaganda against yourself is because you had propaganda about someone else and that was Boulez. Boulez always wants to change. Where is Boulez going to go? He tries to change. And by change I don't mean by treating every piece as if it's separate, is a masterpiece, the way Stockhausen tried to do, that didn't work, that doesn't work either.

So again it's a seminar in vested interest and I say back in Buffalo, "Pick your disease!" You like your disease: it's *esoteric*, you got it in the *Amazon*, let's hear about it! And *you*, you just want to die of a heart attack. You want to die like everybody else, have a stroke. [Bangs the table]. Kaput! Pick your disease. That to me is what ideas are. I don't see any virtues in ideas.