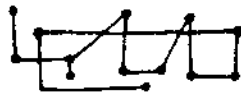


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“this is an important text” - Stockhausen

TO THE INTERNATIONAL MUSIC COUNCIL



KARLHEINZ STOCKHAUSEN

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

YOUR “QUESTIONNAIRE NO. 2” asks questions which suggest that wise answers may lead to a better world. I have answered them after experiencing the *Third Reich*, the restoration of the international music scene since 1945, and a critical period of political and economic vulgarization of all music, knowing that I cannot change the situation. But at least my voice may be remembered as one which refused to agree or collaborate with the leaders in power. I am particularly disgusted by the world’s most famous interpreters who are not serving musical progress—which means performing music born during their lifetimes—but who serve their own fame and wealth.

Please excuse my limited English.

K. Stockhausen, November 21st, 1984

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. *Who is the respondent? Please give the full name of the respondent or the Organization's name and the name of the person representing the Organization.*

Karlheinz Stockhausen: composer, conductor, professor of composition, head of the Stockhausen-Verlag, permanent consultant of the Studio for Electronic Music WDR Köln.

2. *Is the current status of music, in general, satisfactory?*

No. It has never been as bad in the entire history of music.

Has it changed in the last decade? What facts support this opinion?

Yes, global pollution with junk music has increased tremendously. In the last decade New Music has lost most of its previous support for commissions, studio budgets, recordings, and performances. The most important record companies have cancelled their long-time contracts with composers and interpreters of New Music. Important studios for electronic and experimental music have no more staff and equipment. Radio programs have steadily reduced programs of New Music, television as well.

3. *What is the current status of music in comparison with the other arts, in general? What are the causes of this status?*

The other arts are predominantly **modern** and promoted by museums, galleries, publishers, movie companies, etc. Musical life instead has almost completely turned to traditional music or "pop music."

The most famous interpreters, their managers, and the managers of music industries refuse to perform contemporary music because it requires the payment of author rights, performance rights, and mechanical rights. New compositions require far more rehearsals than repertoire music. Their value is not generally established and therefore they "sell less" than traditional music.

4. *In which countries is the current status of music most favorable (please name the countries)? Why is the status there so favorable?*

In West Germany, because there we find the largest number of orchestras, choirs, listener supported radio stations, opera houses, musical amateurs, schools with regular music lessons.

5. *What should the status of music be, in general? How can this view be substantiated?*

The status of music should be **at least** 50% creative production of new music (until the end of the nineteenth century almost all the performed

music was **new** music!) and 50% historical orientation and study through performances of traditional music. In a progressive society the proportion should even be 75% new and 25% old music. Otherwise music is not part of spiritual evolution.

6. *Is the status of music in the given country a product of internal factors or are international factors involved too?*

What are these factors, e.g. social, ideological, political, organizational, economic, fashion, artistic, different scales of evaluation? Examples please.

Internal and international factors are always mixed. But the fact that **progressive** “Western” music is practically forbidden in socialistic countries has more “**internal** factors.” This is also true for all countries where music of “the Western world” **cannot** be performed because of shortage of performance facilities, budgets, etc. Similarly, traditional Indian, Indonesian, Chinese, African, Japanese etc. music cannot be performed properly in the other parts of the world. Yet, the predominance of **the same** mass-produced Western “pop music” in **all** countries is the result of worldwide international commercial powers.

7. *Is control or interference through legal instruments, economic steps or administrative measures, etc., that determine the status of music justified? To what extent and within what range? Examples for and against please.*

Plato thought so, as did Hitler’s cultural advisers.

Today’s French government, and the governments of the USSR, East Germany, and China first support their own national music.

Spiritual progress can only happen if **all people** have access to **all** music, in particular to **New Music!** Therefore, each society should first sacrifice its means to aid spiritual progress, and then, with what remains, support all other interests. Only good examples can help! Unesco could stimulate them.

8. *Which individuals or social groups (classes, layers, professional groups, e.g. music, bureaucratic, social organizations, youth, etc.) currently play an important role in opinion formation as regards the status of music?*

In each country this is different. Most unfortunately the **political parties** decide upon the fate of music. Culture has fallen into the wrong hands.

Our politicians are practically ignorant where culture and music in particular are concerned.

9. *Which individuals and social groups should play a significant role in opinion formation and determining the status of music?*

In music, certainly the composers should play a significant role, because **all** music consumed (even so-called “folklore”) has been composed by composers.

10. *What currently contributes to raising the prestige of music in society?*

What has **always** contributed the most to raising the prestige of music is the quality of certain compositions, from the earliest to the most refined, challenging works of composers of our time. Certain “Superstars” also raise the “prestige of music,” but unfortunately in a decadent, reactionary way.

11. *What currently contributes to lowering the prestige of music in society?*

All propaganda that music should be politically committed, or that it is only “entertainment.”

12. *What is the dignity currently assigned to the particular types of music (ancient, classical, contemporary, chamber, symphonic, opera, popular, dance, jazz, songs, rock, folk, European and non-European, national, etc.)? What arguments can be given?*

“Dignity” is no general criterion anymore. “Big names” decide: some, because they please ideological interests; the others, because they please big companies (Deutsche Grammophon keeps telling me, that a record **MUST** sell at least 50,000 per year because DGG **MUST** pay 15,000 employees per month).

Your “types of music” are “big names of interpreters.”

13. *What types of music dominate the current “soundscape”?*

Mass music (“pop” and “classical”) dominates.

Is the quantitative representation of the types of music in the “soundscape” of today significant for the status of music? Why?

Yes: quantity can drown, even kill quality, if the most famous interpreters obey the principle of pleasing the largest number of consumers.

14. *What would be the optimal hierarchy of the types of music? Is there an optimal hierarchy? How can such a hierarchy be justified?*

There is only one hierarchy: **degrees** of consciousness, sensibility, willpower, spirituality, openness for the future. These degrees correspond to the different “types of music” and their quality.

15. *Should the proposed optimal hierarchy of the types of music correspond to the relative proportions of society’s perception?*

How can this be justified and achieved?

The optimal hierarchy makes available the most spiritual, refined, futuristic music as well as “Muzak” and everything in between.

Who has the arrogance to establish “the relative proportion of society’s perception,” if it is impossible to count the people who might be moved by the music of Webern? I come from the bottom of the planetarian crew and did not even know any other music than the most banal music until I was about eighteen years old. Which sociological survey would have recognized me? The people around me hated “opus music,” they liked junk music. “Society’s perception” will evolve through visionary new compositions performed by the finest musicians.

16. *What is the current status assigned to different forms of music practice (amateur, professional, private, concert, stage, etc.) and different forms of reception (live, cassettes, records, tapes, video cassettes, radio and TV) and does this status correspond to the quantitative representation of these forms in society’s reception?*

Because of political and economic propaganda “the people” want to belong to those who identify with the securely established values: “masterworks” of the past (where “serious music” is concerned) and “hits” of the pop scene (where “light music” is concerned).

17. *What, in particular, is the role of live music in the status of music? Why?*

One should personally experience the mastership of interpreters and music in space.

The controllable quality of outstanding masters playing live, best stimulates personal growth, and only listening to music with adequate spacing of the musicians in adequate auditoriums gives the right feeling for the four-dimensional quality of music.

18. *What, in particular, is the role of the different means of mass communication (press, radio, TV, records, tapes, cassettes and videocassettes) for the status of music— Why?*

They deliver “postcards” as reminders or for studies of music already experienced or expected in live performances.

In the case of **original** radiophonic or television productions (experimental “tape music” and “film theater,” etc.) these media should become creative, not just be delivery systems of substitutes for the real thing.

19. *What is the role of school education in the shaping of the state of music? Why?*

School education should clarify that music is the most subtle medium of spiritual and intellectual self education, and it should teach how to choose one’s music and where to find it.

20. *What is the place of music in national, regional and local cultural policies? Do they contribute to the raising of music's prestige?*

Below the full stomach!

No, they vulgarize music by emphasizing that public subsidies should be allowed only for entertainment which "pleases the taxpayers."

21. *What is the highest position in the hierarchy of the state administration that deals exclusively with music?*

I do not know. Why should the state have something to do with life and death of music, as long as our politicians are musical ignoramuses? Why do we never see the highest people of the political hierarchy at a New Music Festival, in public concerts of new music, or at premieres of new operas?

"Society" has no good examples anymore, neither in "the state" nor at the top of the hierarchy of famous interpreters. Maybe there is no spiritual hierarchy anymore existing in "the state," just pedagogy and "entertainment."

22. *Can the current attitude of the state and social organization administrations be seen in the level of the subsidies given to music?*

The Dutch "ministry of culture, recreation and social work" has recently been changed into the "ministry of *welzijn*," which means well-being . . .

Figures of state subsidies for culture and music in particular are published (at the moment all German musicians are surprised by the large French cultural budget, whereas until fifteen years ago composers of all countries had their world premieres in Western Germany). In all countries, state support of music is completely to the disadvantage of contemporary music, in particular of experimental new music, whereas advanced technology, industry, medicine, sports, warfare, etc. are heavily subsidized. Sending the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra with a traditional program to Japan is official state policy. The state does not even consider supporting music, for example, in the following way:

- a) Allowing people to spend any amount of money **tax free** for concerts, scores, and records of New Music, and free the interpreters of New Music from paying tax on their fees (in this context "New Music" can only mean music which is full of invention and discovery and which brings interpreters as well as listeners a good step further in their development, not just any "contemporary music" full of clichés).
- b) Building and supporting (with permanent budgets) auditoriums, studios for New Music and New Musical Theatre.
- c) Building experimental music centres like the Max Planck Institute for New Music, which was planned during the sixties, and unfortunately cancelled in 1968, and which turned—on a much smaller scale—into IRCAM (Centre Pompidou) in Paris.

23. *Have any legal acts been passed recently that effect the status of music? Please discuss them.*

I have read that our government is going to pass laws which de facto will allow any thief to steal printed or recorded music (by copying it) and exploit it without paying the composers or interpreters. This will lead to a situation where only first exploitation (high fees for interpreters) can preserve the freedom for study and artistic independence, and—as many augurs have said and printed—where “the composer” is going to die out and “Muzak” will be mass produced, mainly by means of robots.

24. *What can be done to raise the prestige of music? What role, in particular, can the International Member Organizations and National Music Committees, and the IMC play?*

What can be done: Shake up the leading interpreters of the world, ask them to refuse to serve any longer the machinery of composer-stripping, financial exploitation of dead composers through established gangs of cultural manipulation and “music marketing”; insist that they *serve* musical evolution: help vulnerable new musical organisms rather than living from a three-hundred-year-old bank account of musical literature; spend at least 50% of their time rehearsing and performing *new* works; fight for progress and refuse to continue this ugly game of idolizing the past.

The International Member Organizations and the National Music Committees can print, broadcast ideas as the ones which I have formulated: “Wake up, Man! Sing a new song!”

25. *Are there any other questions that deserve attention in connection with the status of music?*

Has it been stressed enough, that the kind of music and the amount of music one has heard during one’s life-time, is decisive for the soul’s state and decisions after death?

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