Serial music, serial aesthetics

Serial music was one of the most important aesthetic movements to emerge in post-war Europe, but its uncompromising music and modernist aesthetic have often been misunderstood.

This book focuses on the controversial journal *die Reihe*, whose major contributors included Stockhausen, Eimert, Pousseur, Dieter Schnebel and G. M. Koenig, and discusses it in connection with many lesser-known sources in German musicology. It traces serialism's debt to the theories of Klee and Mondrian, and its relationship to developments in concrete art, modern poetry, and the information aesthetics and semiotics of Max Bense and Umberto Eco. M. J. Grant sketches an aesthetic theory of serialism as experimental music, arguing that serial theory's embrace of both rigorous intellectualism and aleatoric processes is not, as many have suggested, a paradox, but the key to serial thought and to its relevance for contemporary theory.

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Compositional theory in post-war Europe

M. J. Grant
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Note on the text

Footnote references to *die Reihe* are abbreviated as *dR* followed by the volume number (Roman numerals) and the edition ((D) or (E) for German or English respectively). A full list of contents for the German edition is included in the Bibliography. Due to problems with the original translations, I have referred almost exclusively to the German text.

Footnote citations include only the relevant author or editor and the date and page of the edition consulted. Where the original date of publication is significant, this has been given in round brackets.

Translations are my own, except where an English translation is cited in the bibliography.

Other abbreviations employed are as follows:

- **AfM** Archiv für Musikwissenschaft
- **CMR** Contemporary Music Review
- **JMT** Journal of Music Theory
- **MGG** Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart
- **MQ** Musical Quarterly
- **MT** Musical Times
- **NZfM** New Zeitschrift für Musik
- **PNM** Perspectives of New Music
- **UE** Universal Edition
- **WDR** Westdeutscher Rundfunk
- **ZfM** Zeitschrift für Musik