

1 Pierre Boulez: Composer, Traveller, Correspondent

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Pierre Boulez was, particularly in his early years, a great letter-writer and a frequent correspondent. Among the many letters that have been preserved and are now available for study in the Paul Sacher Foundation in Basel and elsewhere, are some extended correspondences that provide invaluable insight into his development as a composer, conductor and theorist. Perhaps surprisingly, the only correspondence published to date in English is his well-known exchange with John Cage, a series of fifty letters and other documents dating, for the most part, from between 1949 and 1954.¹ His correspondence with musicologist and ethnomusicologist André Schaeffner was published in France in 1998, covering their communications between 1954 and 1970.² In the main, this constitutes the totality of Boulez's correspondence currently in the public domain, its limited scope giving no real indication of the extent of his activity.

Among the correspondence held at the Paul Sacher Foundation, Boulez's lengthy exchange with Karlheinz Stockhausen is one of the richest, with almost 200 items. It is unfortunate that this correspondence has not yet been published, as it contains many points of great interest as the two young composers exchange ideas, discuss the state of their compositions and comment on the work and ideas of the other.³ One reason for the lack of publication is the incompleteness of the correspondence as it stands. As Robert Piencikowski has pointed out, there is a serious gap in our knowledge of the letters Boulez 'received between 1954 and 1959, the date of his relocation to Germany'.⁴ The whereabouts of these letters is unknown and, following information received from Boulez, Piencikowski relates that 'the letters were mislaid' during the composer's change of domicile from Paris to Baden-Baden in January 1959.

For those wishing to follow the trail of Boulez the letter-writer, also of great interest is the correspondence between him and the Belgian composer Henri Pousseur, probably the most prolific letter-writer of the post-war

¹ Boulez and Cage, *Correspondance et documents*.

² Boulez and Schaeffner, *Correspondance*.

³ The original copies of Boulez's letters to Stockhausen are held in the Stockhausen Foundation in Kürten.

⁴ Piencikowski, '... iacta est', p. 42.

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generation. There are correspondences with Edgard Varèse from 1952 to 1965, with Igor Stravinsky between 1956 and 1966 and an extended correspondence with poet René Char, mostly between 1948 and 1957. Beyond the Sacher Foundation, Boulez's letters to André Souris are held in Brussels, while those to Sir William Glock are housed in the British Library. One of the largest collections and, to my mind, one of the most important, is Boulez's correspondence with Pierre Souvtchinsky. Over 100 of Boulez's letters to Souvtchinsky dating from between 1947 and 1984 are held in the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris while a smaller number of Souvtchinsky's letters are held in Basel.⁵

Three Tours of South America with the Compagnie Renaud-Barrault

Acknowledging the importance of Boulez's correspondence, this chapter focuses on the three tours of South America the composer undertook with the Renaud-Barrault theatre company in 1950, 1954 and 1956.⁶ While a number of scholars have covered aspects of these journeys, no study to date has made them the principal focus of attention. In the current chapter, while information is gathered from a range of sources, from contemporaneous documents and from later writings, Boulez's letters are of the greatest importance: the letters to Cage and Souvtchinsky in 1950, to Cage, Souvtchinsky and Stockhausen in 1954 and to Stockhausen and Souvtchinsky in 1956. Placing these letters side by side enables us to form a vivid picture of the composer's emerging preoccupations and concerns during three finite and discrete moments of his early career.

Arriving in Paris in the autumn of 1943 to become a musician, Boulez studied counterpoint with Andrée Vaurabourg, the wife of Arthur Honneger, until 1945. He was a member of Olivier Messiaen's harmony class in 1944–5, graduating with a first prize in harmony. He attended classes with René Leibowitz in 1945–6. Having done with formal study, and needing to find paid employment, he was offered the position of musical director with the newly formed Renaud-Barrault theatre company, a position he held between 1946 and 1956, and in which his job consisted of conducting theatre scores by composers such as Auric, Honneger, Milhaud, Poulenc and Sauguet.⁷

⁵ The frequency of Boulez's letters to Souvtchinsky tails off at the end of the 1960s and there are only three written communications from Boulez from 1972 onwards.

⁶ First tour, 24 April to 28 July 1950; second tour, 23 April to 16 August 1954; third tour, from 11 April to 23 June 1956 (dates recorded in Bassetto, 'Orient-accident?', p. 103).

⁷ Jameux, *Pierre Boulez*, 1991, pp. 17–18, 82.

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Not only did the Compagnie Renaud-Barrault perform in Paris, it also undertook a great number of international tours. In the aftermath of World War II, the Comédie-Française, the Théâtre National Populaire of Jean Vilar and the Compagnie Renaud-Barrault were encouraged to undertake a number of international tours as part of a cultural foreign policy that used artistic productions, and in particular theatrical tours, to propagate French culture and language. In a post-war and later Cold War context, it seems that the most prestigious places to disseminate French culture were the United States, the Soviet Union and Latin America.⁸ While the Compagnie Renaud-Barrault made visits to North America in 1952 and 1957 with Boulez as musical director, the main focus of this chapter concerns the three tours of South America they made together in 1950, 1954 and 1956.

The First Tour of South America

Undertaken before the easy availability of long-distance air travel, the first tour of South America commenced with the lengthy voyage across the Atlantic. Setting sail on *Le Florida* from Marseilles, the company spent fourteen days on board ship before arriving in Rio de Janeiro. A group of thirty in all, including Boulez, travelled, taking with them eleven plays which would be the basis of nine discrete theatrical programmes.⁹ In this first tour of South America, which ran from 28 April to 28 July 1950, the company visited Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina. The full itinerary can be seen in Figure 1.1.

In a letter to Cage, sent from Rio de Janeiro sometime in May, Boulez describes Brazil as ‘amazingly beautiful’ before going on to say: ‘in the midst of all these distractions, I have a hard battle to safeguard my own work and not submit to complete dispersal’.¹⁰ He regrets that he has ‘not met any young musicians’, since the company has been ‘mainly moving in society circles’. In his next letter, sent from São Paulo sometime in June, he tells Cage: ‘we may have to extend our travels to Chile (we would cross the Andes cordillera by plane, which would be wonderful!!) and thus extend the length of the tour by a fortnight’.¹¹ This possibility did not in fact come to fruition. He reflects: ‘it is very nice to empty oneself completely and live in the midst of a fog of words which one can’t understand – and that brings unexpected meetings’.¹² Things,

⁸ See Falcon, *Théâtres en voyage*.

⁹ Barrault, *Memories for Tomorrow*, pp. 212–13.

¹⁰ Nattiez, *Boulez–Cage Correspondence*, p. 58. Letter from Boulez to Cage, May 1950.

¹¹ Nattiez, *Boulez–Cage Correspondence*, p. 62.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 64.

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Itinéraire

28 Avril: Départ Gare de Lyon
 29 Avril: Embarquement à Marseille à bord du 'FLORIDA' des Transports Maritimes
 14 Mai: Arrivée à Rio de Janeiro
 17 Mai: Début à Rio au Théâtre Municipal
 4 Juin: Fin de la saison à Rio
 4.06. *Malborough s'en va-t-en Guerre*
 On purge Bébé
 5 Juin: Voyage Rio – São-Paulo
 7 au 17 Juin: Saison à São-Paulo
 18.06. *Hamlet*
 20.06. *Baptiste*
 18 Juin: Embarquement à Santos pour Montevideo à bord du 'CAMPANA' des Transports Maritimes
 21 Juin: Arrivée à Montevideo
 22 au 28 Juin: Saison à Montevideo au Théâtre SOLIS
 29 Juin: Départ de Montevideo pour Buenos-Aires
 30 Juin: Arrivée à Buenos-Aires
 30 Juin au 17 Juillet: Saison à Buenos-Aires au Théâtre ODEON
 12.07. *Partage de midi*
 18 au 28 Juillet: soit prolongation en République Argentine soit saison à Santiago du Chili au Théâtre Municipal
 Le 29 Juillet embarquement à Buenos-Aires à bord du 'FLORIDA' des Transports Maritimes
 Le 15 Août arrivée à Marseille

Fig. 1.1 Itinerary for the Renaud-Barrault tour to South America in 1950¹³

however, were not going so well with composition and he adds: 'with this atmosphere of travelling, work has slowed right up. I am mainly orchestrating old things. A task, after all, which requires less concentration than composition proper. Nevertheless, I am not moving an inch away from my Mallarmé!' By this, he is referring to the projected and later abandoned setting of *Un coup de dés*, which he mentions elsewhere in the correspondence with Cage during this period.¹⁴

Much of the discussion in the Boulez–Cage correspondence from the time of the 1950 tour concerns Boulez's hopes that he can accept an invitation from Cage to visit the United States immediately after the tour, to participate in a conference in Vermont. This additional trip was not however to be realised, for the lack of a visa.¹⁵ Despite Cage securing a grant for Boulez, and making strenuous efforts to contact him by letter and telephone, Boulez's next letter to him was written from the boat on the way back to Paris.¹⁶ Explaining his failed efforts to secure a visa in Buenos Aires, he tells Cage:

¹³ I am grateful to Peter O'Hagan for this itinerary. Christina Richter-Ibáñez provides more exact dates for the stay in Argentina which suggest that the itinerary as shown in Figure 1.1 was not final. The company arrived in Buenos Aires on 28 June and gave the closing performance on 25 July. See Richter-Ibáñez, *Mauricio Kagels Buenos Aires*, p. 94.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

¹⁵ See Cage's letters to Boulez, 21 June 1950, June 1950 (undated), 2 July 1950, 26 July 1950; also Boulez's letter to Cage from late June/early July 1950 and Cage's letter to Souvtchinsky from after 18 July 1950. Nattiez, *Boulez–Cage Correspondence*, pp. 65–70.

¹⁶ Undated. Estimated date July or August 1950. Nattiez, *Boulez–Cage Correspondence*, pp. 71–2.

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'I am going straight back to Paris to work. I have a month or two ahead of me to work quietly in the Rue Beautreillis. That will be an antivoyage!'

We have three letters from Boulez to Souvchinsky dating from this period, two of which were sent from Buenos Aires at the end of the tour. In the first, he apologises for a silence of more than two months and tells his friend that throughout the South American trip he has ignored all invitations to embassies and consulates where his 'presence [was] not indispensable'.¹⁷ He was not terribly interested in the musicians he met in Brazil who, while very kind, were too interested in folklore and Brazilian rhythms. He continues:

Some very beautiful promenades for Rio is a magnificent city in a setting that is no less extraordinary. São Paulo is a city where you cannot take a step without running into a skyscraper being built – of Montevideo a privileged city ['privilégiée'] . . . the impression is of a provincial city, very pleasant, very conventional and as static as possible. But for São Paulo and Montevideo, these are only fleeting impressions for with work, we have scarcely the time to visit.¹⁸

Consonant with his earlier letter to Cage, he stresses that whenever he sets himself to complete a task for himself, he finds that he cannot get back to it for two or three weeks. He has managed to complete a few pages of orchestration and has been working on the structure of the *Coup de dés*, but other than that 'these continual changes of hotel room are not favourable to withdrawing oneself completely'.¹⁹

He finishes the letter noting that he had seen a Brazilian macumba, something which Barrault also remembered in his account of the tour. Boulez writes:

some impressive hysterical states, but the rites and cults that are addressed to God, to the devil, to the phallus or to the virgin, are always ineffectual rites and cults for their own ends; I am more and more convinced that Artaud was on completely the wrong track and that the *Coup de dés* contains the true magic, which leaves no room, even for hysteria, hysteria being one of the most passive states, despite the paradox that implies.²⁰

To understand this statement it is important to recall that in the article 'Propositions' ['Proposals'] from 1948, Boulez had called for a music that is 'collective hysteria and magic, violently modern – along the lines of Antonin

¹⁷ Undated. Estimated date, after 28 June/early July 1950 (BNF: NLA 393 (6) 40–2). See Steinegger, *Pierre Boulez et le théâtre*, pp. 45–6.

¹⁸ Undated. Estimated date, after 28 June/early July 1950 (BNF: NLA 393 (6) 40–2).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Undated. Estimated date, after 28 June/early July 1950 (BNF: NLA 393 (6) 40–2).

Barrault notes in his account of the 1950 tour that 'with guides, we went deep into the forest to witness macumbas', and he mentions arriving back 'at 5am from an excursion in the forest. Our breastbones were still resounding from the tom-toms that had beaten at us all through the night.' (Barrault, *Memories for Tomorrow*, p. 214.)

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Artaud'.²¹ Further, in 1958, in 'Son et verbe' ['Sound and Word'], he identified the organisation of delirium, again specifically related to Artaud, as an imperative for 'effective art'.²²

In the second letter to Souvtchinsky from Buenos Aires, Boulez notes the intensity of the company's work on tour with '8 to 9 performances per week not counting rehearsals'.²³ He mentions having found 'some interesting people who direct a critical review, on painting, sculpture, architecture, which is well made, well presented and inexpensive'. One of the young people he met in the Argentine capital was the composer Mauricio Kagel, who was involved as an extra, in the role of a rabbi in Kafka's *The Trial* and as a soldier at the end of the performance of *Hamlet*.²⁴ Noting that Boulez played the piano and celeste, operated the tape and conducted the music for the performance, Kagel recalls that he already knew Boulez by name and that they became friends. They would meet again in 1954.

While on tour, Boulez missed a performance in Paris of his Second Sonata for piano and the first performance of *Le Soleil des eaux* on 18 June.²⁵ In the letter of 22 July, he thanks Souvtchinsky for the work he had done in preparation for the première. He asks for news concerning 'the rehearsals, if the orchestra sounded well', and writes: 'send me your criticisms of the work (above all on orchestral sonority). Were the three voices suitable? What did our friends say about it?'²⁶

Boulez is more open in stating his immediate aims to Souvtchinsky and, as the tour draws to a close, the only thing he desires is 'to get back as soon as possible and to work on the *Coup de dés*'. He continues: 'I'm thinking of spending the end of August and the month of September in peace and quiet in Paris, working in a very intense way. Ideas are coming to me in a very precise way and I don't want to let go of such capricious and delicate fruits.' On the prospective trip to North America, he reacts with 'Damn the conference and damn the discovery of the New World. If I haven't had a response [in]²⁷ three days, I'm giving up on it.' In addition he notes: 'I don't regret the voyage. I simply regret having seen almost nothing of the countries where we played – in any case, nothing very authentic.' In the third letter to Souvtchinsky, he announces that they are taking their leave of South America on the evening of 28 [July] and he expects they will be making stopovers in Casablanca and Cadiz, noting that he is looking forward to seeing Spain.²⁸

²¹ Boulez, *Stocktakings*, p. 54.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 43.

²³ Undated. Postmark dated 22 July 1950 (BNF: NLA 393 (3) f19).

²⁴ Richter-Ibáñez, *Mauricio Kagels Buenos Aires*, p. 98.

²⁵ *Le Soleil des eaux* was conducted by Roger Désormière and the soloist was Irène Jacob.

²⁶ Undated. Postmark dated 22 July 1950 (BNF: NLA 393 (3) f19).

²⁷ Word is illegible in the text.

²⁸ Undated. Estimated date, late July 1950 (BNF: NLA 393 (6) f5).

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The Second Tour of South America

A second tour of South America was undertaken from 23 April to 16 August 1954. Where Souvtchinsky's continued place in Boulez's life is attested to by the seven letters he received during this time, we only have two letters addressed to Cage, but five to Stockhausen. Boulez wrote to Stockhausen around 22 April, the eve of the voyage, lamenting the great amount of work he had to do at the time,²⁹ and he also summarised this workload succinctly in a later letter to Cage:

if you knew the work I have had this year! Arranging the four Petit Marigny concerts was no small task. For I did absolutely everything from arranging the programmes to hiring the instruments (not to mention such things as contacting artists or taking care of lodgings). . . I don't mind telling you that I am not keen to lose all my time as I have done this year. Practically speaking, I have been able to do absolutely nothing from December to April. At the end of April we went on tour. You can easily imagine this season's disastrous history as far as my work goes.³⁰

Concerts apart, Boulez was also editing two journals, a volume of the *Cahiers de la Compagnie Madeleine Renaud-Jean-Louis Barrault* and the sole published number of the journal *Domaine Musical*.³¹ With all of this activity, it is no surprise that he writes to Stockhausen on the eve of the tour:

I have been able to do practically nothing for myself; which makes me more than nervous at the moment. And I have no great pleasure with the prospect of this voyage to South America. Given that I've satisfied my curiosity *a propos* these countries, I would prefer now to have some peace and quiet, to work – I hope to pinch as much time as possible from the performances to finish the work for Donaueschingen which has not moved forward since February.³²

The work he is referring to is *Le Marteau sans maître*, and references to it are threaded throughout the letters from this trip. He tells Stockhausen: 'during the voyage, I'm going to work very seriously on *Le Marteau sans maître*, which [conductor Hans] Rosbaud must give on 16 October in Donaueschingen'. He also informs Stockhausen that he is 'taking some extracts from the concert, on tape to present them in South America in universities and various cultural organisations – as one says – with a little preparatory lecture'. He complains, 'I'm royally fed up with having practically no time to write', adding with a barb, 'Let's hope that Brazil will inspire me to the heights of Villa-Lobos and Milhaud.' The mention of Milhaud

²⁹ Undated. Date estimated by Robert Piencikowski, 22 April 1954 (Paul Sacher Stiftung, Sammlung Pierre Boulez, hereinafter 'PSS').

³⁰ Undated. Nattiez, *Boulez–Cage Correspondence*, pp. 147–8.

³¹ A number of references to the *Domaine Musical* review are found in the letters to Souvtchinsky, Stockhausen and Cage from the time of this tour.

³² Undated. Date estimated by Robert Piencikowski, 22 April 1954 (PSS).

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refers not only to the time Milhaud spent in Brazil as secretary to Paul Claudel,³³ but also to the fact that Claudel's play *Christophe Colomb* was one of the works being performed, with music by Milhaud.

Most importantly in this letter, Boulez gives Stockhausen dates and destinations for the tour.

5 May – 24 May	Teatro Municipal	Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)
24 May – 4 June	Teatro Santana	São Paolo (Brazil)
7 June – 24 June	Teatro Solis	Montevideo (Uruguay)
24 June – 14 July	Teatro Odeon Esmeralda 367	Buenos Aires (Argentina)
15 July – 27 July	Teatro Municipal	Santiago (Chile)

The first extant letter from the tour was sent to Souvtchinsky from Rio de Janeiro around 14 May,³⁴ and Boulez notes that the tour commenced with Molière's comedy *Amphitryon* with music by Poulenc. In an undated letter from São Paolo he writes of beginning rehearsals for Claudel's *Christophe Colomb*.³⁵ Both letters are very much concerned with the review *Domaine Musical*.

In a five-page letter written on 3 June from the Hotel Nogaro, Montevideo, Boulez informs Souvtchinsky of the company's arrival there two days previously. Describing the city as 'ugly as can be imagined [laide au possible] and in the middle of winter. Rain, dead leaves, cold and tutti frutti!', he reflects nevertheless:

Fortunately, I'm going to be able to work a little more and a little better in this city. For, in São Paolo, the rehearsals for *Colomb* were frightful, on account of the incompetence of the choir they provided us with. Never having sung in French, and not being professional musicians ['spécialement musiciens']. Some average instrumentalists – except for one or two; some deplorable.³⁶

Turning later in the letter to the question of composition, he writes:

on the subject of *Le Marteau*, I'm getting seriously back down to it. In São Paolo, with the boring work with these minimally gifted choirs, with conferences and people to right and to left, in an ultra-noisy hotel, I have not had the leisure to devote myself very much to "fruitful meditations"! Here, in this little provincial city [Montevideo], everything is perfectly tranquil.³⁷

³³ Paul Claudel had been French Ambassador to Brazil in 1917–18.

³⁴ Undated. Postmark dated 14 May 1954 (BNF: NLA 393 (6) 2–3). Boulez refers to a letter he sent to Souvtchinsky from Dakar but which has not survived.

³⁵ Undated. Estimated date, between 24 May and 4 June (BNF: NLA 393 (6) f.6, f.7, f.8).

³⁶ Letter dated 3 June [1954] (BNF: NLA 393 (6) 10–14). The stay in Montevideo is described as 'boring' in a later letter to Cage (Nattiez, *Boulez–Cage Correspondence*, p. 149).

³⁷ Letter dated 3 June [1954] (BNF: NLA 393 (6) 10–14).

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On a more positive note, he tells Souvtchinsky that he has given two lectures in the School of Music in São Paulo titled 'The Antecedents of Music Today' and 'Recent Aspects of Musical Sensibility'.³⁸ In a later letter, to Stockhausen, he reveals that this was through the auspices of the soprano Gabrielle Dumaine who was spending six months as professor at 'L'Escola libre de São Paulo' [*sic*].³⁹ He enthuses that he has found in São Paulo 'a really very interesting milieu; curious to know everything that is new and *au courant* – if not through concerts, then at least with records of all of the current scores'.⁴⁰ This is equally the case with the painters and poets he has met there and he notes: 'I'm keeping in touch with them. For they are going to publish a review "LYNX", and have asked me to write some texts, or at least translate the most recent ones I've written.' He tells of a 'long discussion' he had one Sunday afternoon in São Paulo with these artists and intellectuals on Pound, Joyce and Cummings, recalling that 'they spoke to me of Mallarmé's *Coup de dés* as the greatest poem in the French language, a level which had never been attained afterwards by any French poet'.⁴¹

Describing the city as 'the most passionate milieu in Brazil', he reports that his new friends gave him 'the address of a related group in Buenos Aires'.⁴² Two of those whom Boulez met, the concrete or *Noigrandes* poets and brothers Haroldo and Augusto de Campos, have written of their encounter. Haroldo de Campos recalls that they met Boulez in São Paulo in 1954 at the home of the painter Valdemar Cordeiro, 'where we all enthusiastically discussed Webern and Mallarmé'.⁴³ Reflecting on the encounter in 1981, de Campos remembers that Boulez was shown some early examples of concrete poetry,⁴⁴ Augusto de Campos's *Poetamenos* which are printed in various typographical arrangements, employ multiple colours and are capable of multiple readings. Looking back, Haroldo de Campos sees a relationship between the score of Boulez's Third Sonata from 1957 and his brother's *Poetamenos*, both using 'different colors to distinguish certain alternative routes'. Interestingly, the poems, which date from 1953, were stimulated by Webern's use of *Klangfarbenmelodie* and, beyond these works,

³⁸ *Ibid.* The lectures are titled 'Antécédentes de la Musique Actuelle' and 'Aspects récents de la Sensibilité Musicale' [*sic*].

³⁹ Undated. Written on headed notepaper from Hotel Florida, São Paulo, Brazil. The envelope has a Uruguayan stamp. Date estimated by Robert Piencikowski, 9 June 1954, Montevideo (PSS).

⁴⁰ Letter dated 3 June [1954] (BNF: NLA 393 (6) 10–14).

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Undated. Date estimated by Robert Piencikowski, 9 June 1954 (PSS).

⁴³ H. de Campos, *Novas*, pp. 171–2. Haroldo de Campos (1929–2003).

⁴⁴ Haroldo de Campos describes concrete poetry as 'a new poetics, national and universal. A Planetarium of "signs in rotation", whose point-events were called (like topographic indexes) Mallarmé, Joyce, Apollinaire, Pound and Cummings, or Oswald de Andrade, Joao Cabral de Melo Neto [*et al.*]' H. de Campos, *Novas*, p. 171.

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Augusto de Campos's production, more generally, favoured a form of writing that fuses music and language, and he continued to work with Webernian ideas throughout his career.⁴⁵ This early addition of colour to essentially Mallarméan typography is certainly noteworthy in the light of Boulez's use of similar means in his 'Constellation' ('Constellation-Miroir'), the centrepiece of the Third Sonata.

Beyond poetry, in a number of texts produced in the early 1950s by the concrete poets of São Paulo, there are frequent references to sound, most particularly to the new music of composers including Boulez and Stockhausen. In the 'Pilot Plan for Concrete Poetry' (1958), the manifesto of the concrete movement,⁴⁶ amongst all their other references and sources 'Webern and his followers: Boulez and Stockhausen; concrete and electronic music' are identified unambiguously as influences.⁴⁷ While, unlike Boulez, Augusto de Campos mixed 'Viennese dodecaphonic theory and Brazilian bossa nova swing',⁴⁸ it is not difficult to see the attraction for Boulez in these Brazilian poets and artists who shared his enthusiasm for Webern and Mallarmé. Indeed, Augusto de Campos's book *Música de invenção* includes a defence of Boulez from 1957 as well as his translation of Boulez's 'Homage à Webern'.⁴⁹

Returning to Boulez's letter to Souvtchinsky of 3 June, we note in passing a significant moment in Boulez's growing self-awareness. Given that he had not yet started to conduct beyond the theatre ensemble for the Renaud-Barrault company, he now shares with Souvtchinsky that Jean-Louis Barrault,

speaking to me about this and that, said to me that I should take up orchestral conducting, that it could be useful to me; that Deso [Roger Désormière]⁵⁰ needs to be replaced – I admit that being part of a theatrical company and playing music for the theatre no longer has much interest for me, and I now feel myself capable of doing better. But is it worth the effort? We must speak about it again.⁵¹

Boulez wrote his first letter of the trip to Stockhausen around 9 June in Montevideo,⁵² where the company had arrived two days previously. In addition to many points made in the letters to Souvtchinsky, he discusses what he describes as the 'epistolary hermeticism' of Stockhausen's recent

⁴⁵ See Bessa, 'Sound as Subject', pp. 219–36.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 220. The 'Pilot Plan for Concrete Poetry' was written by Augusto de Campos, Haroldo de Campos and Décio Pignatari and first published in São Paulo in 1958 (H. de Campos, *Novas*, pp. 217–19).

⁴⁷ H. de Campos, *Novas*, p. 218.

⁴⁸ Bessa, 'Sound as Subject', p. 222.

⁴⁹ A. de Campos, *Música de invenção*.

⁵⁰ Roger Désormière (1898–1963) conducted the première of Boulez's *Le Soleil des eaux* in 1950. Suffering from a thrombosis, he stopped conducting in 1952.

⁵¹ Undated. Postmark dated 3 June [1954] (BNF: NLA 393 (6) 10–14).

⁵² Undated. Date estimated by Robert Piencikowski, 9 June 1954 (PSS).