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HERBERT EIMERT AND THE DARMSTADT SCHOOL

*The Consolidation of the
Avant-Garde*

Max Erwin
University of Leeds



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Abstract: After 1951, the discourse surrounding both the Darmstadt courses in particular and European New Music more broadly shifted away from a dodecaphonic vocabulary in favour of concepts such as ‘punctual music’, ‘post-Webern music’, and ‘static music’, all collected under the newly christened unity of the Darmstadt School. This study proposes a genealogy of the Darmstadt School through the institutional influence and writings of Herbert Eimert.

It demonstrates that Eimert’s understanding of music history – whereby technical procedures are universalised as the acme of historical progress – was adopted as the institutional discourse of New Music in Europe, and remains central to both textbook and critical scholarly accounts which attempt to make sense of the avant-garde after World War II.

Keywords: Darmstadt, serialism, New Music, Webern, institutional studies

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