

# contact

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# experimental music catalogue

Over the next two or three issues we aim to provide a comprehensive survey of the scores currently contained in EMC. The Catalogue is the most important single source of experimental music in this country and is also starting to gain a reputation abroad.

Below we begin with an introduction to the Catalogue by Gavin Bryars, one of the members of the editorial board (the others being Chris Hobbs and Michael Nyman). Then reviewers discuss some of the music contained in the Catalogue.

Later issues will contain lists of anthologies and some of the individual pieces which are available separately, together with prices, further reviews and supplements of selected pieces from the Catalogue.

A full list of the scores currently available, and the scores themselves, can be obtained from: Experimental Music Catalogue, 208 Ladbroke Grove, London, W.10.

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The Experimental Music Catalogue was formed in 1969 to provide a service to the growing number of young English composers, based mainly in London, and to distribute their scores over as wide a field as possible. The work was initiated by Chris Hobbs who obtained scores from friends and associates to photocopy so that, hitherto, local and private collections could be better known. For example, the pianist John Tilbury had an enormous number of pieces, some written for him to play, which were not published and existed only in manuscript form. From time to time friends like myself or Chris might have borrowed these, and he might have borrowed pieces from us, but few people outside that circle would know where to obtain these pieces or information about them. Tilbury gave these to Chris who collated them with pieces given by others, as well as pieces obtained direct from the composers. In this way the first edition of the Experimental Music Catalogue was compiled. The results were advertised in the Musical Times and copies of the pieces were sold by mail order at a price related to the cost of duplication plus postage.

The EMC continued in this way until early 1972, when Chris was preparing the fourth edition and found that the work was becoming more than he could handle: not only the orders that were waiting to be fulfilled, but the work involved in obtaining scores from composers once they had been promised (still a problem). For a time the EMC seemed likely to cease its activities until Cornelius Cardew called a meeting to discuss a document he'd drawn up, pointing out the merits of the EMC as a focus for composition (outside the Scratch Orchestra, for example) and giving a possible economic base on which it could work. A meeting of most of the composers took place, who more or less accepted many of the points but did not accept that Cornelius should run it. After the meeting Michael Nyman, Chris Hobbs and I met and offered a basis for running the EMC on a new, expanded footing. This the composers accepted.

The function of this three-man editorial board is to formulate policy, print the pieces, organise the catalogue of pieces, obtain pieces from composers, run the day to day business of the EMC etc. We wrote to all the composers asking them what pieces they wished to include in the catalogue and what they wished to remove from it. (One of the bases of the EMC has been that composers are encouraged both to submit new pieces and to withdraw old ones that don't reflect their current concerns - something alien to conventional publishing.) On the basis of these replies we organised a series of anthologies of related pieces as well as pieces by individual composers as a means of distributing the work more effectively - someone is more likely, we argued, to buy a string anthology containing an unknown composer's string quartet than that piece on its own. The anthologies currently printed are The Scratch Anthology, Keyboard Anthology, Rhythmic Anthology, Vocal Anthology, String Anthology, Nature Study Notes and Visual Anthology. Some composers also began to see the value of anthologising their own work (David Jackman and Bryn Harris); Christian Wolff sent us a set of new prose pieces which we have now printed with his earlier prose works; Cornelius let us have a revised version of the Great Learning paragraphs 1 and 2; John Gosling reprinted George Brecht's Water Yam (considered to be a primer of experimental music); Tom Phillips let us have all his currently printed work. Currently the composers represented are Robert Ashley, Richard Ascoug, George Brecht, Greg Bright, Gavin Bryars, Cornelius Cardew, Michael Chant, Ed Fulton, Phil Gebbett, Jon Gibson, Bryn Harris, Chris Hobbs, Ivan Hume-Carter, David Jackman, Terry Jennings, Chris May, Michael Nyman, Michael Parsons, Tom Phillips, Eddie Prévost, Richard Reason, Hugh Shrapnel, Howard Skempton, John White and Christian Wolff. A new edition is already being considered, including works by more non-English composers: Julio Estrada of Mexico, Alvin Curran - an American living in Rome, Takehisa Kosugi of Japan, a possible Australian anthology collated by David Aherne, plus one or two other American

composers presently being considered. Two or three young English musicians who were not included in the first edition are being considered for the next one - David Mason of Wigan, who sent a piece that may be possible in the projected anthology of education pieces, Stuart Marshall, a former fine art student who has been working in Massachusetts with Alvin Lucier, and David Toop who brought his bi(s)onic pieces to us. In addition Gavin Bryars and Chris Hobbs are preparing a set of writings on Satie's "Vexations" for publication.

The editors meet frequently to discuss new works that have been submitted and to prepare work for printing. Any piece that the EMC handles is unlikely to be considered by other publishers (that is one criterion for including it in the catalogue) and the composers themselves do not consider the EMC as a "stepping stone" to a conventional publisher. The composers accept the concept of renewable publication and will receive a share of whatever proceeds their works bring in. We do not actively encourage composers to submit works (i.e. those who are not already published by us) as several that we have looked at seem to be eminently publishable by conventional means and those that submit do so out of an examination of the types of work that we handle already. The EMC is not a static body as it reflects only the current concerns of its composers and actively encourages composers to remove pieces where there is any doubt - hopefully producing a more healthy organism than hitherto.

GAVIN BRYARS.