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"Stimmung"

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TUNING IN AND DROPPING OUT: THE DISTURBANCE OF THE DUTCH PREMIERE OF STOCKHAUSEN'S *STIMMUNG*

BY ROBERT ADLINGTON*

'THE GREATEST "SCANDAL" in the eighty-year history of this temple of the muses': so wrote the weekly newspaper *Vrij Nederland* about the events that unfolded at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw on the evening of 22 June 1969. The Holland Festival had programmed a concert of two new works by Karlheinz Stockhausen, performed under the composer's direction. During the second piece, *Stimmung*, the concert was brought to a premature halt by noisy disturbances from the audience, and Stockhausen left the hall in a furious rage. He later recounted the event to Jonathan Cott:

We started performing... and after twenty minutes some people in the hall started a comic imitation, making somewhat similar sounds to those of the singers, then meowing or barking like cats and dogs. . . . [C]oncentration became quite impossible. . . . I stood up and went to the musicians and said, 'We're going home now. It doesn't make sense to perform under these circumstances.' . . . All of a sudden a crowd of young people rushed on the stage, got hold of the six microphones, and took advantage of the fact that this performance was a direct radio broadcast. They made a kind of manifesto for themselves and their own interests and then started a discussion among themselves.¹

In a later programme note for *Stimmung*, subsequently printed in Volume 3 of his *Texte*, Stockhausen claimed that the disturbance was caused by 'left-radical students' and "'modern" Dutch composers', who had found the work 'authoritarian'. '*Stimmung*', he wrote defiantly, 'will yet reduce even the howling wolves to silence.'² In this way, the events at the Concertgebouw became a well-known and often retold part of the early performance history of the piece.

Present at the concert, and vocal participants in the impromptu debate that followed, were four young Dutch composers who had indeed gained a reputation for their involvement with radical leftist causes and their opposition to authoritarian establishment institutions. Since 1966, Louis Andriessen, Reinbert de Leeuw, Misha Mengelberg, and Peter Schat, together with their colleague Jan van Vlijmen, had engaged in a

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¹ Stockhausen, in Jonathan Cott, *Stockhausen: Conversations with the Composer* (London, 1974), 102.

² Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Texte zur Musik 1963–1970*, ed. Dieter Schnebel (Cologne, 1971), 110.

series of activities that forged a strong connection between avant-garde music and the city's flourishing oppositional movements.³ The first of these had been a vigorous public campaign against the Concertgebouw Orchestra, whose artistic direction was accused of incompetence with regard to contemporary music; the composers' solution was that Bruno Maderna should be appointed as the Orchestra's associate principal conductor.⁴ The campaign was strategically launched in the aftermath of a highly publicized smoke-bomb attack by the anarchist group Provo upon the royal wedding procession of Crown Princess Beatrix. In this way, the composers sought to identify their demand for artistic renewal of the Netherlands' leading orchestra with the democratizing movements that were currently gripping the attention of the nation's media. In May 1968 their campaign was extended through a series of 'political-demonstrative experimental concerts', which juxtaposed new works performed by a specially recruited ensemble and fiery political speeches partly inspired by the recent student protests and riots in Germany and France.⁵ The first of these concerts, held at Amsterdam's Carré Theatre, threatened to turn into a full-scale occupation, as agitators unfurled red flags and took to the stage following the conclusion of the concert. By the time of the Stockhausen performance, the composers were in the final stages of preparation for their most ambitious joint venture, a collaboratively composed music-theatre piece called *Reconstructie*, which took as its subject the struggle of Che Guevara and the people of Latin America against American 'imperialism'.⁶ For months *Reconstructie*, which was to receive its premiere seven days after the *Stimmung* concert, had been the focus of considerable attention in the press, not least because this unapologetically partisan work was being expensively bankrolled by the state. It was little surprise, then, that the *Reconstructie* composers should find themselves implicated in the *Stimmung* disturbance, an implication strengthened by Stockhausen's subsequent claim that the disruption had been an expression of Schat's and Andriessen's professional jealousy.⁷

A re-examination of the event reveals a more complex and interesting picture. The disturbance was in fact initiated, not by any of the *Reconstructie* composers, but by others in the hall, foremost among whom were a group of composition students from the Amsterdam Conservatory. In the debate that followed, Peter Schat, in particular, took strong issue with the disturbers, arguing that Stockhausen had the right to have his music performed in silence. The students, on the other hand, declared that their intervention was not intended as protest, but rather had been motivated by a desire to 'participate' in *Stimmung*'s distinctively contemplative processes and resonant sound-world. The significance of this dispute about how best to engage with Stockhausen's piece may only be fully understood by placing it in the context of broader developments taking hold in Amsterdam and other Dutch cities at the time. In particular, 1969 saw the delayed emergence of a radical student movement in Dutch universities, a full year after similar movements had shaken university campuses in France and Germany.

³ Jan van Vlijmen participated in only some of these activities, and was not present at the Stockhausen concert.

⁴ For an English-language account of this campaign, see Kasper Jansen, 'Bruno Maderna and Dutch Concert Life', *Key Notes*, 11 (1980), 31–6.

⁵ For an account of this concert, see Robert Adlington, 'Forms of Opposition at the "Politiek-demonstratief experimenteel" Concert', in id. (ed.), *Sound Commitments: Avant-garde Music and the Sixties* (New York, forthcoming 2009).

⁶ See Robert Adlington, 'A sort of guerrilla': Che at the Opera', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 19 (2007), 167–93.

⁷ See Stockhausen, 'Gespräch mit holländischen Kunstkreis', in *Texte zur Musik 1970–1977*, ed. Christoph von Blumroder (Cologne, 1974), 478–549 at 498. The Dutch newspaper *De Telegraaf* also initially laid the blame at the feet of Schat and Andriessen; see its report on 23 June 1969. This account of the affair has subsequently passed into folklore: see e.g. the following websites: <<http://homepage.mac.com/bernardp/Stockhausen/ksfaq.html>> and <<http://ilx.wh3rd.net/thread.php?msgid=4208469>> (both accessed 12 Jan. 2007).

In late April, hundreds of students occupied buildings at the Tilburg University, renaming it Karl Marx University; then in May, the University of Amsterdam's Maagdenhuis was occupied for five days by 600 students. Other radical groups began to adopt similar methods: for instance, ten days before the Stockhausen concert the artists' trade union Beroepsvereniging van Beeldende Kunstenaars (BBK) mounted a nighttime occupation of the famous 'Nachtwachtzaal' at Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum. At the same time, though, the radical left was having to come to terms with the emergence of a rather different but equally thriving manifestation of progressive youth: the hippie counterculture. Since 1967, Amsterdam in particular had enjoyed a growing international reputation as a hippie 'magic centre', a reputation that drew thousands of young dropouts and travellers to the city every summer. The hippies shared the student movement's antipathy to the bourgeois establishment; but their predilection for unstructured collective gatherings and free-form self-exploration aroused the hostility of politically engaged student organizations. It is my contention that this tension—which in 1969 sharpened to the point of schism—directly informed the terms of the debate during the Stockhausen concert. The opposed positions adopted during this debate reveal the emergence of diverging ideas about what kind of musical practice should be deemed socially progressive, ideas that reflected the differences separating Amsterdam's cultures of dissent.

I begin my account with a concise description of the debate, in which Peter Schat, the most politicized of the *Reconstructie* composers, took a prominent role. I then examine the connections between the disturbance and Amsterdam's countercultural scene as it had developed in the years immediately preceding the concert. This scene placed a strong emphasis upon spontaneous participation, and provided manifold opportunities for involvement in music-making. The third section assesses the *Reconstructie* composers' stance towards the disturbers, which bore the clear influence of the student movement's critique of the counterculture. At the same time, it was also the product of a quite separate commitment to musical professionalism—a commitment that clashed with the counterculture's prevailing 'aesthetic of amateurism'.⁸ In the final section I briefly discuss the *Reconstructie* composers' own employment, later in 1969, of the tactics of disruption, an apparent strategic volte-face that led to an uncomfortable public exchange with another giant of post-war music, Pierre Boulez. The composers' attempts to get Boulez back onside highlight their continuing involvement with the narrative of musical progress, a narrative whose promulgation they felt had only been hindered by the *Stimmung* disturbance. However, their conception of musical progress sat as uneasily with the musical preferences of the student movement as it did with the hippie counterculture, imposing inevitable constraints upon the composers' identification with the era's principal 'democratizing' movements.

I

It is evident, both from the detailed press reports of the occasion and the surviving archive recording, that those responsible for disrupting the performance of *Stimmung* formed no united front.⁹ The first audible contribution from the audience is a sudden burst of loud, sarcastic applause; this triggered a rowdy response of booing, shouting,

⁸ George Lipsitz, 'Who'll Stop the Rain? Youth Culture, Rock 'n' Roll, and Social Crises', in David Farber (ed.), *The Sixties: From Memory to History* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1994), 206–34 at 216.

⁹ An archive recording of part of the disturbance and the subsequent debate is housed in the Nederlands Instituut voor Beeld en Geluid, catalogue no. oudHA25222.

laughter, and calls of ‘shhh’. According to press reports, the patience of many in the audience had been sorely tested by the first half of the programme, which comprised the world premiere of *Oben und Unten*, one of the text pieces from Stockhausen’s *Aus den Sieben Tagen* (‘From the Seven Days’). The score of this piece offers brief instructions for a theatrical scenario involving a man, a woman, and a child: the man is ‘shabbily dressed, degenerate, an animal’ and acts in a ‘disgusting, gruesome, depraved’ manner; the woman, however, is ‘beautifully dressed, noble, angelic’ and her actions are ‘of the most refined, exalted, and devout nature’.¹⁰ In keeping with Stockhausen’s recently devised principle of ‘intuitive music’, the performers are expected to improvise the details of their performance, which should last at least forty minutes, and includes interaction with four electronically modified instruments.¹¹ The result was described by one reviewer as ‘mystic gibberish’; according to another a ‘feeling of discontent’ was palpable during the interval.¹² Thus by no means all those who made noises during the second half did so in a ‘participatory’ spirit. There was even a suggestion, in the subsequent press post-mortem, that the disruption had been started by the music critic of the right-wing populist paper *De Telegraaf*, which had long been hostile to avant-garde art, especially when it was the beneficiary of state subsidy.¹³ (The *Telegraaf* critic, H. J. M. Muller, stoutly denied the accusation, but his review nonetheless dismissed *Stimmung* as ‘infantile’.¹⁴)

Yet in the ‘heated, chaotic discussion’¹⁵ that developed on the Concertgebouw stage following the performers’ departure, it was the idea of participation that came to the fore, and which was further adumbrated in subsequent commentary and explanation by those involved. According to Dirk Dekker, a twenty-four-year-old composition student and music teacher who became the principal spokesperson for the noise-makers, Stockhausen’s music had inspired in him and others an ‘impulsive reaction’ to join in.¹⁶ During the debate, one of his companions elaborated at greater length:

I go by what I feel to be real in myself as the music sounds. . . . I felt compelled in myself to get involved. I said to my wife: I fancy singing along. Still I didn’t do it. But apparently it was a more collective feeling because suddenly there were other people doing it. This was therefore a sincere feeling on my part, which was also found among other people. If you rule this out, then you have to face the consequences. You must give precedence to actuality.¹⁷

Central to this standpoint was the compositional structure and performance set-up of *Stimmung* itself. ‘*Stimmung*’, Stockhausen wrote, ‘is meditative music. Time is suspended.’¹⁸ The work is based upon an unchanging six-note chord comprising the first,

¹⁰ Stockhausen, *Aus den Sieben Tagen*, score (Vienna, 1970).

¹¹ For a description of the concept of ‘intuitive music’, see Michael Kurtz, *Stockhausen: A Biography*, trans. Richard Toop (London, 1992), 10.

¹² Lex van Delden, ‘Mystieke wartaal in “Oben und Unten”’, *Het Parool*, 23 June 1969; Wouter Paap, ‘De afgang van Stockhausen’, *Mens en Melodie*, 24 (1969), 270–3 at 272. Stockhausen also felt that the performance had been a failure, but attributed this to the ‘unsuitability’ of the Dutch actors; see *Texte*, iv, 123.

¹³ ‘Bij ons in Holland’ [editorial], *Vrij Nederland*, 28 June 1969.

¹⁴ H. J. M. Muller, ‘Stockhausen: De berg en de muis’, *De Telegraaf*, 23 June 1969.

¹⁵ Paap, ‘De afgang van Stockhausen’, 270.

¹⁶ Dirk Dekker, in ‘Publiek verstoort optreden componist Stockhausen’, *De Tijd*, 23 June 1969. Dekker did not set out to take this leading role in the occasion; he claims that he was easily identifiable for press reporters principally on account of the arm sling he was wearing at the time (interview with the author, 20 Apr. 2006). In more recent years Dekker has been widely active as a composer, teacher, and musical animateur.

¹⁷ Unnamed speaker, archive recording of debate. All translations from this and other Dutch-language sources are my own.

¹⁸ Stockhausen, in Karl H. Wörner, *Stockhausen: Life and Work*, trans. Bill Hopkins (London, 1973), 66.

second, third, fourth, sixth, and eighth overtones of a low B-flat; different combinations of notes from this chord are presented by six vocalists, who additionally produce their own distinctive harmonic spectra by singing different vowels. This is punctuated by fragments of recited poetry and the ‘Magic Names’ of gods from numerous different cultures. As such, Dekker argued, the work’s conception appeared to invite participation. Its unchanging harmonic structure, and the seemingly random placement of chants and recitation, meant that it was easy to sing along spontaneously while remaining in sympathy with the music: ‘a public without any training can join in.’¹⁹ Additionally, the ‘spiritualist-meeting-like’ stage arrangement of the singers, who sat on cushions arranged in a circle, was highly suggestive of a collective sing-in.²⁰ By allowing the audience to interact in this way, Dekker argued, the work could become ‘a true celebration of communicativity’.²¹

Yet Stockhausen had refused this possibility—a rejection that for Dekker and his companions seemed at odds with the spirit of the work. The contradictory nature of Stockhausen’s conception was underlined by the apparent illogicality of having the singers arranged in a circle on the Concertgebouw’s high stage, but the audience confined, ‘frustrated’, to rowed seating.²² The loudspeakers placed around the hall formed an added barrier between performers and public.²³ For some Amsterdammers, impressed by recent struggles for democratization in other arenas, and also undoubtedly mindful of the German wartime occupation, this exclusion of the audience indeed smacked of authoritarianism. One of the contributors to the debate remarked that he had exchanged comments with Stockhausen just before he left the hall: ‘He’s got to take account of Amsterdam. He said to me just afterwards that it was dead quiet during the premiere in Paris. Dead quiet! I said to him: this has nothing to do with Paris. You’re in Amsterdam. Here we have a different attitude.’²⁴

The *Reconstructie* composers, however, rejected the connection with the recent activism of the city’s students and artists. As Stockhausen and his singers disappeared backstage, Louis Andriessen immediately reprimanded those responsible for the disturbance: ‘Shame on you Amsterdam! Are you proud of yourselves?’²⁵ While Andriessen pursued Stockhausen in an (unsuccessful) attempt to lure him back from his dressing room to defend his work, Peter Schat quickly mounted the stage and contested the noise-makers’ motives.²⁶ He made clear, first, that he was no supporter of the music being performed. *Oben und Unten*, in particular, was ‘an exceptionally politically offensive hotchpotch’,²⁷ a judgement that doubtless partly reflected upon Stockhausen’s provocative decision (at least in the eyes of a 1969 leftist) to assign texts by Mao Tse-tung to the part of the ‘gruesome, depraved’ man. But, he argued, whether the disturbance

¹⁹ Dekker, in ‘Rel tijdens concert: Om de sleur te doorbreken’, *Het Parool*, 24 June 1969.

²⁰ Paap, ‘De afgang van Stockhausen’, 272. Dekker later likened it to the kind of arrangement familiar from ‘weekend vocal training workshops’; radio interview for ‘OVT’, broadcast by VPRO (22 June 2003), archived at <<http://geschiedenis.vpro.nl/afleringen/11858290/items/12606835/>>, accessed 12 Jan. 2007.

²¹ Paap, ‘De afgang van Stockhausen’, 272.

²² Dekker, in ‘Publiek verstoort optreden componist Stockhausen’.

²³ Dekker, communication with the author, 19 Feb. 2007.

²⁴ Unnamed speaker, archive recording of debate.

²⁵ Andriessen, in ‘Publiek brak concert af met geschreeuw’, *De Tijd*, 23 June 1969.

²⁶ ‘Zaal maakt einde aan concert’, *De Volkskrant*, 23 June 1969.

²⁷ Schat, archive recording of debate.

was intended as critique or as ‘participation’, it had wrongly obstructed other people’s right to hear the music. Thus, just as Dekker and his companions had done, Schat presented his argument in terms of ‘democracy’:

You want the whole hall to participate? You’ve achieved precisely the opposite. . . . How can you participate if you don’t know the notion behind the piece? . . . You deprive people of their own way of participating, which is by listening. . . . You must understand that you achieve the opposite of participation and democracy by doing what you fancy during a piece that doesn’t tolerate it.²⁸

The appeal to democracy was a motif common to all those critical of the disturbances. Jaap den Daas, the director of the Holland Festival, described the use of the word ‘participation’ as ‘camouflage for a form of aggression, an anti-democratic attitude’.²⁹ A few days later, Stockhausen made an even blunter comparison with fascism:

I found it gruesome that a small minority can impose its will on a great majority. This was also how it began in Munich before the war. There were small groups in climbing trousers [*Kletterhosen*], who by screaming and heckling at all kinds of performances tried to bring on the war. They later appeared in SS uniforms.³⁰

Schat and the other *Reconstructie* composers had particular reason to feel sensitive about the practice of disturbing musical performances. Seven months previously, the premiere of Jan van Vlijmen’s ambitious orchestral piece *Interpolations* had been disturbed by noisy protests from the audience; his colleagues had promptly leapt to his defence, with conspicuous displays of enthusiasm following the performance.³¹ In this context it was hardly sustainable to endorse similar disruption in the Concertgebouw, even if they found Stockhausen’s music objectionable. But behind the concern with democracy lay another motivation for their desire to preserve concert-hall decorum: namely, the continuing value they attached to the idea of musical progress. In the debate, Schat accused the disturbers of obscuring a piece which ‘possibly makes for a development in music’.³² Thus while Dekker proclaimed the attempt to participate as ‘progressive’,³³ Schat argued that the noise-makers only gave succour to cultural conservatives: ‘You know, the *Telegraaf*, it’s laughing now. With this racket you’re playing into their hands. Through this disturbance you’re helping the reactionaries. You’re doing something reactionary.’³⁴

II

In this way, two competing ideas of what constituted a progressive, democratic musical practice emerged: the first placed the emphasis upon everyone’s right to listen in silence, so as to allow proper appraisal of the music’s innovatory contribution; the

²⁸ Schat, archive recording of debate.

²⁹ Den Daas, archive recording of debate.

³⁰ Quoted in W. Hartering, “‘Voor domme lieden blijf ik niet weg’”; *De Telegraaf*, 24 June 1969. The practice of disturbing theatrical performances was indeed endemic in Germany prior to 1933, mostly caused by Nazis objecting to the perceived stranglehold of Jews and Marxists upon the theatre world; see James Jordan, ‘Audience Disruption in the Theatre of the Weimar Republic’, *New Theatre Quarterly*, 1 (1985), 283–91.

³¹ The attempts of Andriessen and Schat to whip up support for the piece, amid the booing and shouts of protest, were noted by the correspondents of the *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant* and the *Rotterdammer*, both 25 Nov. 1968.

³² Schat, in ‘Publiek verstoort optreden componist Stockhausen’.

³³ Dekker, in ‘Rel tijdens concert’.

³⁴ Schat, in ‘Publiek verstoort optreden componist Stockhausen’.

second stressed the right of everyone to get involved in the music-making itself. Today, the latter idea may seem unthinkable, not least because of the departure it represents from enduring concert-hall norms. Yet viewed in the context of late 1960s Amsterdam, the break with long-established concert convention by a part of the Concertgebouw audience could not simply be dismissed as arbitrary tomfoolery. The idea of 'participation'—of getting involved, not sitting by—was of course central to the social and political movements of the 1960s; and it was in the 'be-ins', 'love-ins', and 'smoke-ins' of the hippie counterculture that it attained its most extreme manifestation. These were typically intended as free-form gatherings in which everyone took part on equal terms, as in the Easter Be-In mounted in March 1967 in New York's Central Park:

The Be-In had no center of activity. The action continually shifted from point to point, from group to group and, from a high point in the meadow, you could watch the surges of people to the peaks of activity, usually closely followed by a tribe of people extoling the newly discovered banana high.³⁵

Amsterdam's reputation as a centre for the new hippie counterculture was already strong by the summer of 1967, when thousands of young tourists descended on the city and slept under the stars in the Dam (the city's central square) and the Vondelpark, a tradition that continued in subsequent years. The easy availability of soft drugs was a contributing factor to this reputation.³⁶ The activities of the anarchist group Provo had also gained a following overseas, not least because they appeared to presage the hippies' focus on transforming the city into an arena of pleasure and play. Provo publicity had cheerfully advocated 'expert' drug use,³⁷ and their relaxed attitude to sex was emblemized by the detailed 'syphilis-schema' included in one of their pamphlets, which diagrammatically mapped the complex sexual liaisons of prominent members, with an indication of pregnancies, under-age participants, and whether or not birth-control was used.³⁸ Provo also anticipated the hippie movement with their active concern for environmentalism and social policy, formulating a series of so-called 'white plans' addressing city pollution, provision of family planning clinics, and the utilization of empty buildings. Provo's public meetings took the form of theatrical 'happenings' mounted at various symbolic locations around Amsterdam; these attracted increasingly large crowds. For the founder of Provo, Roel van Duijn, the group's emphasis on the 'happening' was to be explained by its communality, its dissolving of the distinction between performer and onlooker:

A happening is no individual creation, but a collective one. At the happenings there is in principle no passive public that looks on with folded arms. Even the plain-clothes policemen at the Lieverdje [the site of many of Provo's happenings], who first observed quietly, can seldom withstand the temptation to get involved, although their behaviour is mostly more instrumental than creative. . . . Today's happenings are not only a precursor of this hopefully coming collective activity, they are at the same time a means to set a large déclassé youth into motion.³⁹

³⁵ Don McNeill, 'Be-In, Be-in, Being', *The Village Voice*, 30 Mar. 1967, archived at <<http://www.villagevoice.com/specials/0543,50thmcneill,69181,31.html>>, accessed 12 Jan. 2007. The idea that banana skins possessed mind-altering properties was a widespread myth at the time.

³⁶ James C. Kennedy, *Nieuw Babylon in aanbouw: Nederland in de jaren zestig* (Amsterdam, 1995), 139.

³⁷ See e.g. *Provo*, 7 (Feb. 1966), 8.

³⁸ *Provo*, 11 (Aug. 1966), 36.

³⁹ Roel van Duijn, in *Provo*, 7, 25–6.

During one such happening in May 1967, Provo was unexpectedly declared dead—apparently in response to the increasingly institutionalized status it had taken on in the eyes of both supporters and opponents.⁴⁰ But offshoots of the Provo movement continued to nourish Amsterdam's home-grown counterculture. Many of these accorded a primary place to spontaneous music-making—in natural response to the guitars and flutes that could be heard on the Dam and at the weekly 'love-ins' in the Vondelpark. The Eksooties Kietsj Konservatooriejum (Exotic Kitsch Conservatoire) established in 1968 by ex-Provo Theo Kley, for instance, mounted carnivalesque public performances in which anyone could participate providing they came equipped with their own home-made instrument.⁴¹ Provo inspired the name of the so-called 'Provadya?' clubs, set up throughout the country by the editor of the music journal *Hitweek*, Willem de Ridder, the intention of which was 'to take pop music out of the commercial sphere and make it more accessible to a larger and less well-off audience'.⁴² The 'Provadya?' clubs inspired two 'cosmic relaxation centres', Paradiso and Fantasio, opened by Amsterdam's city authorities in 1968 as a means of catering for the sensory demands of young people. Here, sixteen- to twenty-five-year-olds could enjoy bands, films, psychedelic light shows, and drugs, which although illegal were tolerated by the authorities on these premises.⁴³ Soon after opening, Paradiso organized two open microphone nights called 'UTKAN'—meaning 'het kan' ('it's possible')—in which anyone could mount the stage to perform.⁴⁴ However, Fantasio, which had a number of small rooms rather than one large hall, ultimately proved better suited to realize De Ridder's vision of 'creating a situation in which the public more or less filled out the programme themselves'.⁴⁵ In January 1969 Fantasio transformed itself into the 'Kosmos Meditation Centre', which offered yoga, meditation, and the opportunity 'to make music with the help of Eastern instruments such as tablas, drums, and tambourines'.⁴⁶

What George Lipsitz has called the counterculture's 'prevailing aesthetic of amateurism'⁴⁷ was also making an impact in the more institutionalized world of avant-garde art. In 1966, the poet, Provo, and proponent of drug use Simon Vinkenoog established the Sigma Centre, an organization dedicated to fostering collaborative artistic, social, and educational projects that explored 'new relationships' between artists and the public.⁴⁸ The centre was inspired by a manifesto for artistic renewal written in 1963 by the Scottish writer and Situationist guru Alexander Trocchi, which had called for the establishment of centres intended to 'foment a kind of cultural jam-session', in which 'the conventional spectator-creator dichotomy must be broken down . . . the "audience" must participate'.⁴⁹ Sigma declared in its first press release that its activities were directed towards the challenges presented by the growth in free time; accordingly, it took the form of an 'open institute', providing free as well as ticketed events.

⁴⁰ Niek Pas, *Imaazje! De verbeelding van Provo, 1965–1967* (Amsterdam, 2003), 333–4.

⁴¹ Coen Tasman, *Louter Kabouter: Kroniek van een beweging 1969–1974* (Amsterdam, 1996), 32–3.

⁴² Tasman, *Louter Kabouter*, 34. 'Vadya' is a Sanskrit word for music.

⁴³ Kennedy, *Nieuw Babylon*, 139.

⁴⁴ Lutgard Mutsaers, *25 jaar Paradiso: Geschiedenis van een podium, 1968–1993* (Amsterdam, 1993), 25.

⁴⁵ De Ridder, in Mutsaers, *25 jaar Paradiso*, 26.

⁴⁶ Tasman, *Louter Kabouter*, 34.

⁴⁷ Lipsitz, 'Who'll Stop the Rain?', 216.

⁴⁸ Sigma Centre press release, undated; copy in Peter Schat archive, Nederlands Muziek Instituut. This archive has not yet been formally catalogued.

⁴⁹ Alexander Trocchi, 'A Revolutionary Proposal: Invisible Insurrection of a Million Minds' and 'Sigma: A Tactical Blueprint' (both 1963), archived on 'Not Bored' website, <<http://www.notbored.org/sigma.html>> and <<http://www.notbored.org/invisible.html>>, accessed 12 Jan. 2007.

A representative event was the ‘happening workshop’ announced in January 1967, in which participants were ‘to arrive collectively at a form of free expression’; as a prompt for this, the announcement included a piece of psychedelic free verse urging willing participants to ‘make visible . . . pathos, ecstasy, freedom.’⁵⁰ Sigma also hosted international performing groups such as the itinerant Living Theatre, whose sixteen performances at the Sigma Centre included the collectively conceived work *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces*, which provided numerous opportunities for audience participation and ended with a ‘“free jazz” session’.⁵¹

Avant-garde musical performances of the time also sometimes encouraged everyone to get actively involved, paralleling developments elsewhere in Europe.⁵² In April 1969—a matter of weeks before the *Stimmung* concert—the American composer Frederic Rzewski performed in Amsterdam. For several years Rzewski, together with his Italian-based improvisation group Musica Elettronica Viva, had been developing his conviction that art ‘must reject the possibility of the impartial observer, present but not involved in the communication process, as contradictory to the idea of communication itself’.⁵³ Just as MEV performances were now routinely involving everyone present, so during the Amsterdam concert, percussion instruments were handed out to the audience and, as one music critic rather disconcertedly recorded, ‘instead of the musicians performing, activity was expected from the public’.⁵⁴ A year later, Dirk Dekker was incorporating the participatory impulse he claimed to have felt during *Stimmung* into his own compositions. His theatre piece *Diktatuur* (‘Dictatorship’), collaboratively composed with a writer, a designer, and two other composers, and performed in Paradiso in July 1970, included sections marked ‘Improvisation by the audience’, in which the audience’s interaction with scaffolding, ropes, and punchballs placed around the hall determined the contributions of the musicians.⁵⁵ The work’s libretto grappled with the theme of environmental pollution—a countercultural topic par excellence—and this was underlined by the visibly contaminated food consumed by the composers in the second half of the piece, and the ‘dictatorial’ expulsion of the audience at the end by means of a stink bomb.

The rhetoric deployed by the principal protagonists in the Stockhausen debate made clear that all sides associated the audience’s noisy intervention with this strong participatory seam within Amsterdam’s counterculture. Dekker was not personally involved in Amsterdam’s countercultural communities. Nonetheless, he was at pains to emphasize that the disturbance was not an organized political protest of the sort recently

⁵⁰ ‘Sigma happening workshop ’67’ invitation (16 Jan. 1967); copy in Peter Schat archive.

⁵¹ See Saul Gottlieb, ‘The Living Theatre in Exile: *Mysteries, Frankenstein, Tulane Drama Review*, 10/4 (1966), 137–52. A comprehensive list of Sigma activities is deposited in the Peter Schat archive.

⁵² 1969 saw, for instance, large-scale works by the French composers Luc Ferrari and François-Bernard Mâche that gave a primary role to audience participation; these challenged the audience (in Ferrari’s words) to ‘renounce its silence . . . [to] choose, make demands, cause an uproar, formulate its opinion’ (cited in Eric Drott, paper given at ‘“1968” and New Music’ panel, 18th Congress of the International Musicological Society, Zurich, 10–15 July 2007). In the same year, the English composer Cornelius Cardew brought together amateur and professional performers in the Scratch Orchestra, which he defined as ‘a large number of enthusiasts pooling their resources . . . and assembling for action (music-making, performance, edification)’ (Cornelius Cardew, ‘A Scratch Orchestra: draft constitution’ [1969], in Edwin Prévost (ed.), *Cornelius Cardew: A Reader* (Matching Tye, 2006), 90–4).

⁵³ Frederic Rzewski, programme notes for Festival Internazionale del Teatro Universitario (Parma, 23 Mar. 1968), cited in Amy Beal, ‘“Music is a universal human right”: Musica Elettronica Viva’, in Adlington (ed.), *Sound Commitments*.

⁵⁴ Ernst Vermeulen, ‘Overheid en avantgarde: *AKT* in gesprek met minister Klompé’, *Algemeen Kunsttijdschrift*, June 1969, 121–4 at 121.

⁵⁵ I am grateful to Dirk Dekker for a copy of part of the score and for a description of the piece. Reviews of the performance appeared in *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant* and *Het Parool*, both 2 June 1970.

mounted at the Maagdenhuis and the Rijksmuseum; rather, it was a 'spontane manifestatie', an 'echt happening'.⁵⁶ For Dekker, the 'prohibitions and taboos' of the Concertgebouw compared unfavourably, he argued, with the spirit of 'empathy' cultivated at the quintessentially countercultural Paradiso.⁵⁷ Peter Schat, on the other hand, accused the noise-makers of 'crude anarchism', thereby underscoring the connection with the methods of Provo and its offshoots, of which (as we shall see) he had become increasingly critical.⁵⁸

Ironically, the proximity of Stockhausen's new works to the counterculture only served as added encouragement for the noise-makers. Both pieces had been completed in the heady spring months of 1968; the cover of the published score to *Aus den sieben Tagen* proudly declares 'composed in May 1968'. But in a response to a request from a Parisian journal for a text confronting the tumultuous *événements* of that month, Stockhausen wrote a paean to the role of 'supra-personal cosmic consciousness' in the global revolution.⁵⁹ As the historian Arthur Marwick has pointed out, this aligned him more with the Beatles and Timothy Leary—the hippie guru who had first urged the world to 'turn on, tune in, and drop out'—than with the political struggle of the student and labour movements that had shaken France in the preceding weeks.⁶⁰ The affinity with Leary is underlined by the very title of *Stimmung*, whose meanings include 'tuning in' or 'attuning'. *Stimmung's* vividly erotic poetry, and its engagement with global spiritual traditions in the form of the 'magic names', represented further points of convergence, as did the stage layout, which the Dutch press likened to a 'hippie camp' and a 'seance of dervishes'.⁶¹ Additionally, the weight accorded to the contributions of the performers, particularly in the 'intuitive music' of *Aus den Sieben Tagen*, clearly resonated with the participatory aesthetic of the time. In this way, Dekker found himself able to defend his actions in Stockhausen's own terms: 'Stockhausen himself desires a genuine, un-concealed connection, and he believes that people must react intuitively. Well, that's what I did.'⁶²

III

As noted earlier, the counterculture did not enjoy a monopoly on the concept of participation.⁶³ The occupation of the University of Amsterdam's Maagdenhuis at the end of May 1969—the high point of the year's numerous student protests—revolved precisely around the students' demand to be allowed to participate in the management of the institution, a demand flatly refused by the university's rector.⁶⁴ Inside the occupied building, regular plenary meetings attempted to involve everyone in discussing the

⁵⁶ Dekker, radio interview for 'OVT'; interview with author, 20 Apr. 2006.

⁵⁷ Dekker, in 'Rel tijdens concert'.

⁵⁸ Schat, archive recording of debate.

⁵⁹ Stockhausen, 'Charter for the Youth' (June 1968), trans. Tim Neville; archived at <<http://www.stockhausen.org/charterfortheyouth.pdf>>, accessed 12 Jan. 2007.

⁶⁰ Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c. 1958–c. 1974* (New York, 1998), 331.

⁶¹ 'Bij ons in Holland'; Paap, 'De afgang van Stockhausen'.

⁶² Dekker, in 'Rel tijdens concert'.

⁶³ In this essay I use the term 'counterculture' in opposition to the student movement. This risks underplaying the importance of countercultural pursuits—not least pop music and sex—to many students' lifestyles. However, even on hedonistic grounds a distinction was recognized at the time between the 'smokers' (hippies) and the 'drinkers' (students); see Hans Righart, *De eindeloze jaren zestig: Geschiedenis van een generatieconflict* (1995; repr. Amsterdam, 2006), 252.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* 259.

way forward, in an effort to depart from 'the authoritarian structures that exist in society'.⁶⁵ The suggestion that these meetings should dispense with a chairperson proved a step too far, however. As one of the occupiers related to a press reporter, 'it is an illusion to think that you can accomplish something against the present structure without a minimal form of organization. In fact, such a purist idea only leads to complicity.'⁶⁶ This pragmatism points to the differing goals of the student movement: while hippies placed the emphasis upon personal expression and states of mind, the students sought political action. In spite of their shared antipathy towards established society, tensions frequently arose as a result of these differing goals, and not only in Amsterdam. The suspicion that the hippies' desire to 'turn on, tune in, and drop out' represented 'an attempt to escape from society rather than to reform it' had long been a bone of contention on the part of students and civil rights groups in the United States.⁶⁷ These tensions increased as the influence of communism within the student movement grew, a process evident during the Maagdenhuis occupation, when communist construction workers ferried supplies into the building across a temporary bridge, and the daily newspaper of the Dutch Communist Party pledged its full support.⁶⁸

In fact, antagonism towards the counterculture had already exploded into full view in the early months of 1969 with a series of critical attacks in publications associated with the student movement. The editors of *Aksie*, a new journal published by the Nederlandse Studenten Raad, argued that the counterculture laid itself open to commercial exploitation, and that its purported 'great refusal' was in fact 'no refusal, but a *modus vivendi*, a kind of accommodation'.⁶⁹ Then an article jointly authored by the radical student leader Ton Regtien and the German-born critical theorist and composer Konrad Boehmer launched a stinging attack upon the Provo movement and its subsequent offshoots.⁷⁰ Regtien, who had founded the Student Vakbeweging (Student Trade Union) in 1963, was by 1969 a committed Marxist, convinced that the future for the student movement lay in solidarity with the working classes.⁷¹ He and Boehmer accused Provo of failing to base its actions on a full analysis of the political and economic situation, and of 'petit-bourgeois elitism' in its neglect of working people. Provo's playful demonstrations demonstrated only that it had succumbed to 'politically irrelevant folklore'; and in its 'utopian and mystical pipe-dreams'—subsequently enthusiastically adopted by the hippie movement—it tended to the 'reactionary' and even the 'fascistic'.⁷²

As we have seen, the charges of 'reactionary' and 'fascistic' were also levelled against the disturbers at the *Stimmung* concert. Indeed, criticism of the disturbance generally mirrored the students' criticisms of the counterculture: it was unduly focused on the

⁶⁵ Unnamed student occupier, cited in Frits de Jong, *Macht en inspraak: De strijd om de democratisering van de Universiteit van Amsterdam* (Baarn, 1981), 272.

⁶⁶ Unnamed student occupier, cited *ibid.*

⁶⁷ Lipsitz, 'Who'll Stop the Rain?', 222.

⁶⁸ De Jong, *Macht en inspraak*, 272.

⁶⁹ Cited in Jacques Janssen and Paul Voestermans, *Studenten in beweging: Politiek, universiteit en student* (Baarn, 1984), 172.

⁷⁰ Konrad Boehmer and Ton Regtien, 'Provo—Modell oder Anekdote', in *Kursbuch*, 19 (1969), 129–50. Boehmer relates that he in fact wrote this article alone, following discussions with Regtien (interview with the author, 2 Apr. 2005); a similar analysis of Provo can, however, be found in Regtien's *Universiteit in opstand* (Amsterdam, 1969), 110–11.

⁷¹ Ruud Abma, 'Een spannend jongensboek: Studentebeweging en tegencultuur in de jaren zestig', *Psychologie en Maatschappij*, 23 (1999), 331–44.

⁷² My account is based on the summary given by Tasman, *Louter Kabouter*, 131.

impulses of individuals, ill-disciplined, and blind to matters of real political import.⁷³ (Schat, for one, was amazed that the intervention had taken place during *Stimmung*, while the more politically dubious *Oben und Unten* was left undisturbed.⁷⁴) This convergence of sentiment is not surprising. Schat had once counted himself an anarchist and supporter of Provo; but since a trip to Cuba at the beginning of 1968 he had undergone an ideological reorientation, towards a broadly communist outlook.⁷⁵ This was reflected in the subject matter of *Reconstructie*, which was determined in the face of initial resistance from two of Schat's fellow composers.⁷⁶ During *Reconstructie's* rehearsals, a short visit to the occupied Maagdenhuis reinforced Schat's sense of political commitment: 'inside the hall', he later recalled, 'the sun rose: the euphoria of the revolutionary Deed warmed the heart'.⁷⁷ The termination of the occupation by the police prompted the *Reconstructie* team to a gesture of sympathy: it was decided that the court summons notices handed to the occupiers as they were evicted should be accepted as tickets for the performances.⁷⁸ Schat's distance from the countercultural cause was confirmed in January 1970 when he, along with Ton Regtien and leaders of other radical youth and artists' groups, was invited to join forces with Roel van Duijn's 'Kabouters', a neo-Provo movement focused on environmental and lifestyle issues. The meeting split up in acrimony, and van Duijn was forced to look elsewhere for collaborators.⁷⁹

The *Reconstructie* composers were also linked to the student movement through Konrad Boehmer, who collaborated with Ton Regtien not just on the Provo article, but also on a similar critical diagnosis of the new Kabouter movement.⁸⁰ Boehmer had previously worked at the Cologne electronic music studios alongside Stockhausen, but had moved to the Netherlands in 1966 to join the Institute of Sonology in Utrecht; he also became the music critic of the leftist weekly *Vrij Nederland*. His training as a Marxist critical theorist, combined with his musical expertise, made him valuable as a collaborator on the young Dutch composers' musico-political projects; he advised on both the political concerts of May 1968 and the development of *Reconstructie*. Boehmer, like Schat, was no friend of Stockhausen's music: indeed, rumours had been circulating that Stockhausen would refuse to appear in the Concertgebouw at all if he spotted Boehmer, on account of the aesthetic and personal differences that had arisen between them.⁸¹ Boehmer, for his part, was doubtless responsible for a scathing, unattributed editorial that appeared in *Vrij Nederland* after the concert, which accused Stockhausen of violent and homophobic behaviour towards his Cologne colleagues.⁸² Nonetheless, he interpreted Dirk Dekker's 'sudden declaration that he had only wanted to participate

⁷³ The paradox here is that the disturbers included many (composition) students; my argument, however, is that their actions would be harshly criticized by their politically radical colleagues.

⁷⁴ Schat, archive recording of debate.

⁷⁵ Lidy van Marissing, 'Kunstenaars spelen de rol van hofnar in deze maatschappij' (interview with Peter Schat, Apr. 1968), in *28 interviews* (Amsterdam, 1971), 31–9 at 33. Schat was the only one of the composers to (briefly) join the Dutch Communist Party—see Tom Rooduijn, 'Zeven jongens en een ouwe opera', in *Haagse Post*, 20 Dec. 1986, p. 107.

⁷⁶ See Rudy Koopmans, 'On Music and Politics: Activism of Five Dutch Composers', *Key Notes*, 4 (1976), 34.

⁷⁷ Peter Schat, *Muziek voor wie niet weg is*, typescript draft of an unpublished autobiography (1974), 90; copy in Peter Schat archive.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* 91. Schat relates that the Holland Festival management refused to implement this plan.

⁷⁹ Tasman, *Louter Kabouter*, 62.

⁸⁰ Ton Regtien and Konrad Boehmer, 'Neo-Provo: Oranje Vrijstaat', in Boehmer and Regtien, *Van Provo naar Oranje Vrijstaat* (Amsterdam, 1970), 46–61.

⁸¹ 'Reconstructie, reacties, realiteit', *Elsevier*, 12 July 1969, 63.

⁸² 'Bij ons in Holland'.

in the performance' as a 'cowardly' retreat from real protest; and he joined Schat in advocating silent listening as the 'democratic way'.⁸³

In this way, the opposed positions of the Stockhausen debate corresponded to the cleavage separating different parts of Amsterdam's progressive youth. Majority opinion within the Concertgebouw, and in the subsequent press coverage, came down decidedly in favour of Peter Schat. Schat was no doubt aware that this had more to do with the fact that he was, in effect, defending the status quo with regard to concert-hall practice, than because he was keeping faith with the stance of students and communists against countercultural methods. Indeed, given his commitment to the revolutionary cause, one imagines that it was with some discomfort that he found himself aligned, during and after the debate, with 'establishment' opinion—as expressed by Jaap den Daas, artistic director of the Holland Festival, by most of the national press, and even by Stockhausen himself, whose cause, in a startling twist to their customary aesthetic preferences, was improbably championed after the concert by the populist *Telegraaf*.⁸⁴ Yet the energy that Schat devoted to deflecting the 'participation' argument may also be seen as a sign of some defensiveness over this way of gauging music's democratic credentials. His recent scores, like those of his immediate colleagues, took the form of intricate constructions whose exacting demands required faithful realization by highly trained professionals. The composers' campaigns had correspondingly placed great emphasis on the enhancement of professionalized structures to enable the better realization of their sophisticated compositional endeavours: hence, their championing of Bruno Maderna during the campaign against the Concertgebouw Orchestra, the formation of specialist ensembles for the political-experimental concerts and for *Reconstructie*, and the development in 1969 of a Studio for Electro-Instrumental Music to enable the realization of new sonic possibilities.

Schat's conviction that the creation of culture was the preserve of professionals had already brought him into conflict with artistic figures within the Dutch countercultural scene. In 1966 Simon Vinkenoog had enlisted him to join the management board of his newly created Sigma Centre, on account of his close relation with Provo. Schat subsequently became involved with the Centre's programme of activities, collaborating with Andriessen, De Leeuw, and the free jazz pianist Piet Kuiters on a series of performance workshops on improvisation and graphic scores—notably intended for '(professional) instrumentalists, vocalists, and others'.⁸⁵ By the start of 1967, however, he found himself disillusioned with the Centre. In a 'minority report' announcing his departure from the board, he argued that the 'collective creation' that formed one of the fundamental rationales of the centre was '*by definition*, contrary to specialized, professional performances of theatre or music'. The Centre had attempted to embrace both, and in doing so had confused 'collective events' and 'culture'. The 'aimless, playful activities' of collective events had their place; indeed, Sigma should henceforth concentrate exclusively on becoming a 'fun-palace', providing 'all sorts of mechanical and electronic amusement'. But this remit should not be mistaken for the 'culture' that constituted Schat's 'profession'.⁸⁶ In a subsequent, sharply worded private exchange with Vinkenoog, Schat

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Hartering, "Voor domme lieden blijf ik niet weg".

⁸⁵ A copy of an undated announcement for this workshop is in the Peter Schat archive. For more on Piet Kuiters's involvement with Sigma and its consequences for Dutch jazz, see Kevin Whitehead, *New Dutch Swing* (New York, 1999), 55.

⁸⁶ Peter Schat, 'Minderheids-rapport van Peter Schat', prepared for the meeting of the Sigma management board on 25 Jan. 1967; copy in Peter Schat archive.

went further, claiming that the counterculture, in seeking to circumvent intellectual conflict through mind-altering drugs and a faith in collective love, was itself fundamentally inimical to real creativity.⁸⁷ In this way Schat's differences with the counterculture over political strategy merged into a position of profound aesthetic disagreement.

IV

As 1969 proceeded, the *Stimmung* disturbance, far from being an isolated incursion of anarchistic high spirits into the city's 'temples of the muses', appeared increasingly to have begun a trend. Following their occupation of the Nachtwachtzaal in June, the BBK embarked upon a highly publicized campaign for an improvement in the social position of artists, which involved the occupation of other museums and the disturbance of meetings of decision-making bodies.⁸⁸ A matter of days after the Stockhausen concert a performance by the Dutch National Ballet was disrupted by protestors.⁸⁹ In October, young actors and theatre students threw tomatoes during a performance at the Amsterdam Stadsschouwburg; this launched a programme of disruption at the city's established theatres, coordinated by the so-called *Tomaat Aktiegroep*. Then, on 16 October a group of music students from the Conservatoire in the southern town of Tilburg interrupted a concert by the local Brabants Orchestra in protest at its conservative artistic policy. At a meeting of the Dutch composers' union Geneco on 1 November, it was agreed to issue a statement of support for the students' action, and a number of younger members interpreted this as offering the green light for similar action against the Concertgebouw Orchestra.⁹⁰ Thus was born the *Aktiegroep De Notenkraaker* (or *Nutcracker*), whose leading members were Schat, Andriessen, and De Leeuw, which dedicated itself to securing not just artistic renewal but a complete overhaul of the orchestra's 'obscure' management structure.⁹¹

The *Notenkraakers'* chosen methods, however, seemed directly to contradict all that had been said during the Stockhausen debate. On 17 November, about twenty-five members of the group sabotaged the beginning of a Concertgebouw Orchestra concert, first making gentle noises on small toy clickers, and then throwing leaflets among the audience. The subsequent press coverage was not slow to express outrage at this 'undemocratic' disturbance, which had patently not met with the support of the majority of those present.⁹² The composers sought to distinguish their tactics from those of the noise-makers at the Stockhausen concert. First, there was the difference that their protest was aimed at an establishment target, as opposed to the putatively avant-garde offerings of Stockhausen: this, the composers felt, in itself justified their guerrilla attack. Additionally, they stressed repeatedly that they, unlike either the *Stimmung* disturbers or the Tilburg students, had not actually interrupted a musical performance; rather, by taking Bernard Haitink's opening beat as their cue, they had merely prevented it from starting. The *Notenkraakers* dwelt on this point because they did not wish

⁸⁷ Letter from Peter Schat to Simon Vinkenoog (7 Feb. 1967); copy in Peter Schat archive.

⁸⁸ A useful chronology of these and other artists' protests of the time is included in K. L. Poll (ed.), *Twee jaren van neutraliteit: Kunst en overheid in de pers* (Den Haag, 1971), 151–64.

⁸⁹ See Dick Hillenius, 'De Notenkraakeractie', *Vrij Nederland*, 13 Dec. 1969.

⁹⁰ Hans van Dijk and Marius Flothuis, *75 jaar Geneco: De geschiedenis van het Genootschap van Nederlandse Componisten* (Amsterdam, 1988), 53.

⁹¹ For more on the *Notenkraakers*, see Robert Adlington, 'Organising Labour: Composers, Performers and the Movement for the Renewal of Musical Practice', *Musical Quarterly* 90 (2007), 539–577.

⁹² On the reaction of the audience see Hans Heg, 'Noten kraken of noten maken in het Concertgebouw?', *Luister*, Jan. 1970, pp. 10–13; Aad van der Mijl, "'Het is waar: Ik hou niet van rust"', *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 29 Nov. 1969.

to be seen as compromising the working conditions of the orchestral musicians, whose interests they claimed to champion.⁹³

Yet to the outside observer the niceties of intention distinguishing the June disturbance from the November one were less evident than the general impression of a widespread breakdown in the codes of conduct governing concert behaviour. Among those strongly critical of this development was Pierre Boulez, with whom Peter Schat had studied composition in the early 1960s. In an interview published in the Dutch record magazine *Luister* in January 1970, Boulez declared:

I am always afraid that these sorts of methods quickly lead to fascism—the way in which people now disturb concerts in Amsterdam, for instance, is strongly reminiscent of the behaviour of young fascists. . . . What's happening in Amsterdam . . . strikes me as an inferior kind of exhibitionism. . . . I absolutely do not believe in what people currently term 'participation', because its only goal is for people to attract attention to themselves. . . .⁹⁴

These comments came hard on the heels of critical remarks about *Reconstructie*, which Boulez accused of 'Cuba-glorification' and 'a form of political exaltation that automatically leads to a kind of colonialism'. Neither the Stockhausen nor the Concertgebouw Orchestra concerts were mentioned explicitly, but it was not difficult for subsequent Dutch press coverage to infer both a criticism of the *Reconstructie* composers' involvement in the Notenkraak protest, and a belief on Boulez's part that they had also been responsible for the *Stimmung* disturbance.

Boulez's negative remarks threatened a public relations disaster for Schat and his colleagues. *Reconstructie's* high-spirited polystylism had signalled its composers' comprehensive rejection of the kind of stylistic purity with which Boulez's music was associated. But this did not mean abandonment of the ideology of musical progress, of which Boulez continued to be perceived as a (if not the) leading advocate. In Andriessen's words, the 'exceptional and the dangerous' remained 'the most important qualities of a composition'; accordingly, *Reconstructie* was presented by its authors as aesthetically as well as politically 'revolutionary'.⁹⁵ As we have seen, this ideological obligation also shaped Schat's stance during the Stockhausen debate. Without allowing Stockhausen's music to be heard in silence, Schat had argued, it was impossible to tell whether it 'made for a development in music'—the yardstick against which Schat and his colleagues wished their own compositional activity to be judged. The importance attached by the composers to this idea of progress and its embodiment in the person of Boulez is indicated by the frantic efforts they made, following the *Luister* interview, to manoeuvre him back into a supporting position. Schat and Boehmer both contacted Boulez in

⁹³ See Heg, 'Noten kraken of noten maken', 12; the point is also stressed in the 'Informatie-bulletin Notenkraak' produced by the composers themselves in Dec. 1969 (see p. 7; a copy of this bulletin may be found in the Aktie Notenkraak archive, held at the Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis). The protestors' argument was, however, insufficient to prevent an influential syndicate of different musicians' unions from issuing a press statement declaring that their working conditions had indeed been made intolerable by the protest, and threatening to boycott the works of the composers concerned should the disruption recur; see Adlington, 'Organising Labour', and Wilma Tichelaar, 'Het spel en de kickers: Inpraak, democratisering en rivaliserende musicibonden aan het eind van de jaren zestig', in Florian Deipenbrock (ed.), *100 jaar vakbeweging in de kunsten* (Amsterdam, 1994), 70–80.

⁹⁴ Boulez, in Klaas A. Posthuma, "'Na Berg geen opera meer'", *Luister*, Jan. 1970, pp. 8–10.

⁹⁵ See Adlington, "'A sort of guerrilla'", 190. Andriessen's statement appears in his article 'Het symphonie-orkest achter de muziek aan', in *Muzikale en politieke commentaren en analyses bij een programma van een politiek-demonstratief experimenteel concert* (Amsterdam, 1968), 24–6 at 26.

order to secure a clarificatory statement, and a press release was issued accusing *Luister's* interviewer of purposely misleading the great man.⁹⁶ Boehmer subsequently travelled to Germany to conduct a long interview with Boulez, extracts of which were printed in *Vrij Nederland* with the headline, “If people get annoyed, then it’s entirely healthy if they go and shout”.⁹⁷ But while Boulez accepted the need for structural reorganization of the symphony orchestra, Boehmer’s dogged justifications of the Notenkraaker protest were either parried evasively, or prompted reassertion of the sentiments from the earlier *Luister* interview.⁹⁸ It was not permissible, Boulez argued, to impose one’s ideas on others ‘by means of coercion’; moreover, the composers’ actions merely cast them in the role of court jester, serving as no more than a ‘valve’ for established society.⁹⁹ In a private response to Schat, written the day after Boehmer’s interview, Boulez acknowledged that he had been confused about who had been responsible for the different disturbances, but added that ‘the systematic use of interruption’ merely reveals ‘your pre-conceived ideas and not your reaction’, and moreover demonstrates ‘a great deal of narcissism’.¹⁰⁰

Boulez’s comments closely echo the argument of Schat himself during the *Stimmung* debate. The idea of musical progress to which they both adhered—one calibrated in terms of the kinds of conceptual innovation that can be encoded into fully conceived works—provided them with no alternative to this position. In order properly to assess the composer’s contribution to music’s ‘development’, silent audition was a prerequisite. Unexpected noises risked obscuring the innovative particularities of the musical conception, and were thus unacceptable; an audience response was only justified once the composer’s discourse was complete. This stance was of course entirely consistent with well-established conventions of concert behaviour, whose evolution had been shaped precisely by the influential model of the composer as purveyor of the unprecedented.¹⁰¹ As we have seen, the audience attending the Stockhausen concert—which the press reports characterized as the ‘in-crowd’, followers of new music who were well accustomed to the codes of the concert hall—largely shared this view of how best to engage with Stockhausen’s rarefied conception.¹⁰² But the skewed demographic of the audience made it easier for Schat to go further and present the practice of silent listening as the value of the ‘democratic’ majority per se, one naturally aligned with reason and civility as opposed to ‘narcissism’ and ‘fascism’. This was also the effect of Stockhausen’s highly emotive comparison of the ‘gruesome’ disturbance ‘of a small minority’ to the behaviour of Nazis in pre-war Germany, which drew an analogy between the demos of the concert hall and that of the nation, and so blurred the distinction between the preference of the majority of the Concertgebouw’s ‘in-crowd’ and that of the population at large.

In spite of the claims to universality, the composers’ view of what constituted a progressive, democratic musical practice placed them apart not only from the hippie

⁹⁶ Boehmer, cited in Klaas A. Posthuma, ‘Pierre Boulez’ laatste woord’, *Luister*, Mar. 1970, pp. 152–3.

⁹⁷ Konrad Boehmer, ‘Als men zich ergert, dan is het heel gezond als men gaat schreeuwen’, *Vrij Nederland*, 14 Feb. 1970, p. 9. The printed interview was extracted from a longer one broadcast on Dutch radio.

⁹⁸ See Posthuma, ‘Pierre Boulez’ laatste woord’, 153.

⁹⁹ Boulez, in Boehmer, ‘Als men zich ergert’.

¹⁰⁰ Pierre Boulez, letter to Peter Schat (3 Feb. 1970); copy in Peter Schat archive. On Boulez’s own history of disrupting concerts in the mid-1940s, see Stephen Walsh, *Stravinsky: The Second Exile* (London, 2006), 176–7.

¹⁰¹ For a concise overview of the emergence of the practice of attentive listening, see the ‘Introduction’ to Matthew Riley, *Musical Listening in the German Enlightenment: Attention, Wonder and Astonishment* (Aldershot, 2004).

¹⁰² Gérard Verlinden, ‘Podium’, *Elsevier*, 28 June 1969, p. 88; Paap, ‘De afgang van Stockhausen’, 270.

counterculture, but also from the student movement with which they so evidently sympathized. Ton Regtien's Student Vakbeweging had been highly critical of *Reconstructie*, regarding it as 'made in the midst of the establishment and for the establishment'. Schat, in response, had publicly despaired of 'the cultural disinterestedness of our comrades. . . . It appears that the left movement wishes to leave culture in the hands of the right.'¹⁰³ Schat saw his role, on the contrary, as 'taking [culture] away from the right, in order to give to the left'. Yet the intricate musical conceits of *Reconstructie* held little sway with a youth movement whose most dramatic gesture of resistance—the occupation of the Maagdenhuis, a mere month before the *Stimmung* concert—had been sustained by a smuggled tape of the Rolling Stones, broadcast around the clock from the pirate radio station (the 'Vrije Maagd' or Free Virgin) in the building's attic. 'The heavy rhythms', Regtien later recalled, 'the texts deemed impermissible by some radio stations, the "cry of dissatisfaction": they were an integral component of the events of these years, were . . . created from it. . . . *Street Fighting Man* was a contemporary political manifesto, an utterance attuned to the feelings of much radical youth of the time.'¹⁰⁴ Jagger's lyrics undoubtedly had more than a metaphorical resonance for those holed up inside the Maagdenhuis. But the 'progressiveness' of this music was surely also to be gauged by the extent to which its outrageous energy and physical impact withdrew the very option of inert audition. The agitatory function of the Vrije Maagd—which, according to Regtien, quickly became 'the most listened to and popular station in Amsterdam'¹⁰⁵—was perhaps most concretely realized by the Stones' commandeering of the voices and bodies of listeners throughout the city in active participation.

Stockhausen's later, falsified accounts of the disturbance of *Stimmung*, which pinned the blame on Schat and his colleagues, understandably riled them. In an interview with Richard Duffalo in 1987, Peter Schat recalled:

I defended Stockhausen. And he heard this and he knew this . . . [but he] later told the paper in Holland and Germany and the television in Germany that *I* had disrupted the concert! . . . When he came back recently to The Hague, I let him know, 'You have to correct this situation'. He said no, he was not interested. He lied about it.¹⁰⁶

Yet it is clear that the decision to oppose the disturbers, and to defend the right of Stockhausen's music to be heard in silence, threw into relief aspects of young Dutch composers' own creative practice that jarred with the democratizing tendencies of the time—tendencies with which they sought to be identified. The idea of participation is central. Not just the hippie counterculture, with which the disturbance at the Concertgebouw was most obviously aligned, but also the student movement placed considerable value on the capacity of music to invite and accommodate the active involvement of all present. This chafed with the idea of progressive composition as it had evolved in the twentieth century, and whose continuing development Schat and others saw as an imperative to avoid both the stagnation of the cultural establishment and the growing

¹⁰³ Schat, cited in 'Van zang en spel door kameraden', *Pharetra*, 23 May 1969, pp. 3–4 at 3.

¹⁰⁴ Ton Regtien, *Springtij: Herinneringen aan de jaren zestig* (Houten, 1988), 205–6.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.* 205.

¹⁰⁶ *Trackings: Composers Speak with Richard Duffalo* (New York, 1989), 372.

dominance of commerce. It was not the first time that the causes of the social vanguard and the artistic avant-garde found themselves mutually opposed.¹⁰⁷

It should not be imagined, however, that the composers' position remained immovably fixed. By the end of 1970 notable shifts had occurred, partly perhaps in response to the contradictions that had been thrown up by the clashes with Stockhausen and Boulez. In November, Schat announced to the artistic director of the Holland Festival his desire to turn his back on the 'refined, well-disposed, enlightened, advanced, interested, up-to-date-audience' that had attended *Stimmung* and *Reconstructie*, and his intention instead to throw in his lot with the 'long-haired déclassé of the Dam' who were 'sick of all this consumption of power and possessions'.¹⁰⁸ He was conceiving a work for massed guitars and youth choir, for night-time performance on the Dam among what he called the 'unregulated gypsies of the street'. The imposition of a ban on public music-making in the summer of 1971 even led to a plan to perform the work on the instruments that had been confiscated from hippies by the Amsterdam police, which Schat plotted to liberate from the city's magistrates' court.¹⁰⁹ Andriessen, meanwhile, was preparing the first performance of his *Volkslied*, a unison chant that progressively transforms the Dutch national anthem into the *Internationale*, and which permits the participation of anyone able to read music. At the work's first performance on 11 June 1971, over a hundred amateur and professional musicians from different backgrounds congregated in the foyer of Rotterdam's De Doelen hall to take part. The highly influential collaborative performance ventures on which both composers subsequently embarked (respectively, the Amsterdam Electric Circus and the Orkest de Volharding) were similarly motivated by a desire to re-establish common ground—one might even say a sense of attunement—with a broader audience. While this typically stopped short of embracing audience participation, it did involve according greater recognition to familiar musical styles, and thus bespoke diminishing confidence that 'a development in music' in itself amounted to a contribution to social progress.

ABSTRACT

The disruption of the Dutch premiere of Stockhausen's *Stimmung* in June 1969 has become an often-told aspect of the piece's early history, but existing accounts—including Stockhausen's own—significantly misrepresent the event. The performance was interrupted, not (as Stockhausen later claimed) by young, politically engaged composers such as Peter Schat and Louis Andriessen, but by a group of composition students who wished to 'participate' in the piece. In an impromptu debate following the aborted performance, Schat and Andriessen defended Stockhausen's right to have his music heard in silence. I interpret this clash of young Dutch musicians in terms of the sharp schism that emerged in 1969 between Amsterdam's thriving hippie counterculture,

¹⁰⁷ For some reflections on this, see Hubert van den Berg, 'Avant-garde—Some Introductory Notes on the Politics of a Label', in Adlington (ed.), *Sound Commitments*; Susan Buck-Morss, 'Vanguard/Avant-garde' [2006], <<http://falcon.arts.cornell.edu/sbm5/Documents/Vanguard%20Avant-garde.pdf>>, accessed 20 Apr. 2007; Donald D. Egbert, 'The Idea of "Avant-garde" in Art and Politics', *American Historical Review*, 73 (1967), 339–66.

¹⁰⁸ Peter Schat, unpublished letter to Jo Elsendoorn, Nov. 1970; contained in the Peter Schat archive.

¹⁰⁹ This plot, which was unsuccessful, is recounted in *Muziek voor wie niet weg is*. The guitar piece eventually reached its final form as *To You*, first performed in 1972.

whose communal 'happenings' encouraged the dismantling of the performer–audience distinction, and the city's student movement, whose emphasis on political action found reflection in Schat's and Andriessen's growing interest in communism. It is clear, however, that Schat's and Andriessen's stance was also motivated by commitments to musical professionalism and to the ideology of musical progress, commitments that sat as uneasily with the musical preferences of the student movement as they did with the hippie counterculture.