

[Review of \*The Music of Elliott Carter\*, Second Edition. By David Schiff. \(Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998\)](#)

By: Guy Capuzzo

[Capuzzo, Guy](#). 2000. David Schiff, *The Music of Elliott Carter*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. *Intégral* 13, pp. 201-215.

Made available courtesy of Eastman School of Music: <http://theory.esm.rochester.edu/Integral/>

**\*\*\*Note: Figures may be missing from this format of the document**

The second edition of David Schiff's *The Music of Elliott Carter* differs drastically from the first.<sup>1</sup> Gone are two lengthy chapters on musical time and musical space; both are replaced by a single, brief technical glossary. The second edition is organized by genre, not chronologically. Discussions of pieces included in the first edition have been revised. Schiff's writing has undergone a marked change as well. 'What he describes as the "rhetorical excesses of the first edition" (vii) has been exorcised in favor of a terse, occasionally hurried prose style—perhaps too strong a swing to the other side of the writing pendulum.

Certainly Schiff's revisions, however, have improved the book's readability. One useful feature of the first edition that might have been retained is the subject headings that organized the discussion of each piece. Ironically, though the prose in the second edition is much tighter, one can generally locate specific information about a given piece more quickly in the first edition.

Despite the book's changes, Schiff's intended audience remains the same as in the first edition: "performers, listeners, composers, and critics" (vii). He is equally clear about whom the book is not intended for:

In the United States, it is assumed that a book like this is aimed primarily at graduate students of music theory. This premise creates a problem, for the kind of detailed analysis performed by theorists is usually incomprehensible for non-theorists. Fortunately there is now a considerable body of theoretical and musicological writing about Carter; I hope the information in this book can serve as a resource for such analysis (vii-viii).

The second edition begins with an introductory chapter that encapsulates Carter's entire career. The technical glossary mentioned above then appears, followed by individual chapters on Carter's chamber music, vocal music, piano music, and orchestral music. Two appendices follow. The first reproduces Carter's listing of the 129 three- to six-note set-classes, followed by a list of "Link" chords, used in Carter's recent music and discussed later in this review. The second appendix reproduces Carter's performance notes for the song *Voyage*. A comprehensive bibliography and discography, both compiled by John Link, close the book.

The changes in organization and tone spring from Schiff's decision to discuss every composition in Carter's catalog, which dates from 1928 and, at present, shows no signs of letting up. After the first edition of Schiff's book in 1983, Carter entered a "late period" marked by an uninterrupted string of compositions. Schiff writes:

The sheer size of Carter's late oeuvre would have demanded a significant extension of the first edition, but the importance of these new works and the unexpected ways in which they develop Carter's style made a radical surgery of the old edition necessary (vii).

Schiff's decision to cover Carter's entire output in a single volume has ramifications beyond the aforementioned hurried prose style. While discussions of several pieces are engaging and substantial—the "String Quartets" chapter is the highlight of the book—the very pieces that necessitated the second edition receive scant and

---

<sup>1</sup> David Schiff, *The Music of Elliott Carter* (London: Eulenberg Books, 1983).

cursory treatment. Schiff recognizes that the brief works composed since *Changes* (1983) represent "a genre as important for [Carter] as the *Sequenze* are for Berio" (29), and he has written elsewhere of their structural similarities,<sup>2</sup> but the absence of an extended discussion of Carter's "new genre,"<sup>3</sup> due to space limitations or otherwise, is disappointing.

The space limitations inherent in the decision to exhaustively cover Carter's output may also account for problems in the "Technical Glossary." In the first edition, Schiff devoted nearly fifty pages to Carter's treatment of pitch and rhythm.<sup>4</sup> The second edition's "Technical Glossary" lacks the richness of the first edition's corresponding chapters; additionally, this brevity may account for factual errors. Term entries abound with inconsistencies, and where explanations in the first edition cushioned differences between Schiff's usage of received, music- theoretical terms and their more common usages, many of the dictionary-style entries in the second edition agree neither with the usages found throughout the book nor with the standard definitions found in undergraduate textbooks and the professional literature. For instance, Schiff refers to the all-interval tetrachords as "collections" (34)—a term he does not define—after using (even italicizing) the term "chord" in the entry for "all-trichord hexachord." While it is true that these terms are often used casually and interchangeably in conversation, a technical glossary is best served by consistent use of a limited amount of terms.

Additional problems in the "Technical Glossary" stem from a conflation of pitch- and pitch-class concepts. Schiff's definition of "chord" is representative:

Carter uses the word "chord" to mean any collection of three or more pitches. This is similar to Allen Forte's term "pitch-class set," with similar notions of equivalency. According to both Carter and Forte there are twelve three-note chords, twenty-eight four-note chords, thirty-eight five-note chords and fifty six- note chords (36).

For Carter, a "chord" is a collection of pitch-classes, not pitches. Schiff thus refers to a pitch-class set in the first sentence. In the final sentence, however, "chord" is synonymous not with pitch- class set but with set-class--a class of pitch-class sets related under transposition and/or inversion. The definition is further muddled by the tonal connotations carried by the term "chord." Finally, the listing of twenty-eight four-note set-classes, not twenty-nine, is one of many pesky errors that haunt the glossary. While most of these errors are typographical, not conceptual, their repetitions quickly become confusing and do not instill confidence in the acumen of the discussion. For instance, set-class 6-17[012478],<sup>5</sup> the "alltrichord hexachord," is called the "all-interval hexachord" on three separate occasions, each crucial: in its entry in the technical glossary (34), in the *General Index* (368), and in reference to James Boros's article, "Some Properties of the All-Trichord Hexachord" (49).<sup>6</sup>

Schiff's definitions also have the effect of isolating the structural features of Carter's music. This is unfortunate, since it hinders the recognition of features in Carter's music shared by other composers and repertoires<sup>7</sup> and does not lead the interested reader to further literature. For instance, while Schiff's entry for "all-interval twelve-tone chords" (34) refers to the pioneering article on this subject by Stefan Bauer-Mendelberg and Melvin

---

<sup>2</sup> Schiff, "Elliott Carter's Harvest Home," *Tempo* 167 (1988): 2-13.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>4</sup> Reviews of the first edition that address this portion of the book include those of Andrew Mead in *Notes* 40/3 (1984): 544-47 and Robert Morris in the *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 38/1 (1985): 183-90. Carter responds to Mead's review in *Notes* 41/1 (1984): 195, and Mead responds to Carter in *Notes* 42/1 (1985): 187.

<sup>5</sup> In this review, the identification and labeling of set-classes follows that of Robert Morris, *Composition with PitchClasses* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987). Set-classes with Z-partners, such as 6-17, are labeled without the "Z."

<sup>6</sup> *In Theory Only* 11/6 (1990): 19-41.

<sup>7</sup> Mead (1984) and Morris (1985) discuss this point.

Ferentz,<sup>8</sup> several articles have since appeared that are relevant both to Carter's music in particular and to much atonal and twelve-tone music in general.<sup>9</sup>

The opening chapter, entitled "The International Theme," contains the entire "narrative aspect of the book" (vii). To discuss the trademark polyphonic aspects of Carter's music at the same time as he chronicles Carter's life and career, Schiff employs the metaphor of the Atlantic Ocean—hence the chapter title. The Atlantic Ocean represents the gap between ensembles in Carter's music—the two duos in String Quartet No. 3, the three duos in Triple Duo, the five sextets in Penthode, and so on—as well as the source of that gap, which "lies deep in Carter's character and development; it would not play such a persistent role if it were merely a technical device" (2). The metaphor is sensible. Much of Carter's youth was spent in Western Europe, his primary musical training was with Nadia Boulanger in Paris, several pieces written between 1950 and 1980 were composed in Europe, and today, the majority of his commissions come from European performers and orchestras. With the Atlantic Ocean metaphor in hand, Schiff goes on to link Carter to Henry James (1843-1916) and Wallace Stevens (1879-1955), whom Schiff calls Carter's "spiritual forebears" (4):

In his midatlantic perspective on Europe and America, Carter continues the line of Henry James and Wallace Stevens. Like these two predecessors, Carter conceives the Atlantic more as an idea than as a physical obstacle. Henry James turned the transatlantic crossing into a cultural myth, the "international theme." Wallace Stevens, who never physically traveled to Europe, was the spiritual heir to the later James in his insistence that the subject of poetry was the imagination. The outer trappings of the international theme appeared in Stevens through his use of the French language, which he employed as an indication of an aesthetic distance or playfulness (3-4).

James fits Schiff's international theme better than Stevens. James, an expatriate, found the American scene "hostile toward creative talent" and "[void of] adequate subject matter";<sup>10</sup> his novels *Transatlantic Sketches* (1875), *The American* (1877), *The Europeans* (1878), and *An International Episode* (1879) grapple with American and European sensibilities. As for Stevens, in a 1969 essay Carter quotes the following passage from Stevens's *Esthetique du mal* to "draw attention to some of the main aims of my work":

...out of what one sees and hears and out  
Of what one feels, who could have thought to make So many selves, so many sensuous worlds,  
As if the air, the midday air, was swarming  
With the metaphysical changes that occur Merely in living as and where we live.<sup>11</sup>

Aside from Stevens's use of the French language, the link between Carter and Stevens is primarily structural, not transatlantic. In describing first hearings, Andrew Mead has stated that "[w]hile the initial impression made by much of Elliott Carter's more recent music may be one of dense confusion, greater acquaintance will reveal continuities..."<sup>12</sup>

We are reminded of much the same when Eugene Paul Nassar writes, "I take it as the common experience in reading Stevens that one first finds a surface incredibly bizarre and seemingly impenetrable."<sup>13</sup>

And both the sound of Carter's music and the diversity of his compositional methods come to mind when Marie Borroff, writing on Stevens, states:

---

<sup>8</sup> "On Eleven-Interval Twelve-Tone Rows," *Perspectives of New Music* 3/2 (1965): 93-103.

<sup>9</sup> See David Cohen, "A Re-examination of All-Interval Rows," *Proceedings of the American Society of University Composers* 7/8 (1972/73): 73-4; Robert Morris and Daniel Starr, "The Structure of All-Interval Series," *Journal of Music Theory* 18/2 (1974): 364-89; Andrew Mead, "Pitch Structure in Elliott Carter's String Quartet No. 3," *Perspectives of New Music* 22 (1983): 31-60; idem, "Twelve-Tone Composition and the Music of Elliott Carter," in *Concert Music, Rock, and Jazz Since 1945: Essays and Analytic Studies*, Ed. Elizabeth West Marvin and Richard Hermann (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1995), 67-102; John Link, "The Composition of Carter's *Night Fantasies*," *Sonus* 14/2 (1994): 67-89.

<sup>10</sup> James D. Hart, "Henry James," in *The Oxford Companion to American Literature*, Sixth Edition (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 326.

<sup>11</sup> Elliott Carter, "Two Sonatas, 1948 and 1952 (1969)," in *Elliott Carter: Collected Essays and Lectures, 1937-1995*, ed. Jonathan W. Bernard (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1997), 228.

<sup>12</sup> Mead (1983): 31.

<sup>13</sup> Eugene Paul Nassar, *Wallace Stevens: An Anatomy of Figuration* (Pennsylvania, 1965), 13, 19.

To understand how diversity of diction in Stevens is dramatically motivated, we need to think of it in terms not of static patterns but of temporal unfolding. From this point of view, diversity is change, perceived as we read a number of poems or a single long poem... We see [Stevens] turning from one expressive means to another, trying out now this kind of language, now that, now this kind of word, now that, in the incessant attempt to express what remains perpetually "beyond the rhetorician's touch."<sup>14</sup>

In sum, we may profitably relate Carter to both James and Stevens, but not entirely under the same rubric.<sup>15</sup>

The remaining chapters of the book discuss each of Carter's published works in varying degrees of detail. More than any other chapter, the "String Quartets" discussion captures the sound of Carter's music, if in its broad sweep more than its moment-to-moment details. However, problems that will plague the entire book already rear their heads in this first analytic chapter. Set-classes are sometimes mislabeled, as when Schiff writes that the Adagio of String Quartet No. 1 closes with an all-interval tetrachord formed by the notes C, B, G, and G# (66). The absence of annotations on examples and charts often leads to confusion. Example 1, Schiff's Chart 10 (75), is one such instance. In the chart, two dyads combine to form a member (pitch-class set) of set-class 4-15[0146]. The same dyads are bracketed along with two others to form a member of 4-29[0137]. Since no pitch-classes are duplicated among the dyads, a tetrachord label is disorienting, indeed impossible, since eight distinct pitch-classes are bracketed. Only upon noticing that Schiff's 4-29 bracket refers only to the higher note of each dyad does the 4-29 label become clear.

Example 1. Schiff's Chart 10



While the lack of annotations renders some examples unclear, other examples—some full-page—are unusable without annotations. Schiff's Example 24 (91), a dense dyadic passage from String Quartet No. 4 (mm. 159-63), intends to illustrate "where the instruments form eight-note harmonies out of their constituent intervals" (90). But since the eight-note harmonies Schiff refers to are not named, the example loses all force.

Inconsistent use of terms abounds in the "String Quartets" chapter. The "all-interval twelve-tone chords" defined in the Technical Glossary (34) are referred to as "all-interval twelve-note chords" in the discussion of String Quartet No. 3 (83), "twelve-note tonic chords" in the discussion of String Quartet No. 4 (88), and later in the book, both "twelve-note harmony" and "twelve-tone harmony" in the discussion of *Con Leggerezza Pensosa* (14344). Readers will also notice that Carter's compositional use of "all-interval twelve-tone chords" is identical in every instance to Schiff's term "spatial set" (46); why the latter term? An examination of Schiff's criteria for segmentation holds an answer.<sup>16</sup> A "spatial set" is an "all-interval twelve-tone chord" ordered in register.<sup>17</sup> Most often, Schiff groups temporally-adjacent notes into pitch-class sets, but registral adjacency guides other segmentations, as seen in Schiff's Chart 10 (75), discussed in Example 1 above. But in no case are the criteria for segmentation made explicit. A consistent distinction between pitch-classes ordered in time and

<sup>14</sup> Marie Borroff, *Language and the Poet: Verbal Artistry in Frost, Stevens, and Moore* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 72-3.

<sup>15</sup> For more on Stevens, see Frank Kermode, *Modern Essays* (London: Fontana, 1971) and idem, *An Appetite for Poetry* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 79-96.

<sup>16</sup> For discussions of segmentation, see Christopher Hasty, "Segmentation and Process in Post-Tonal Music," *Music Theory Spectrum* 3 (1981): 53-73; Dora Hanninen, "A General Theory for Context-Sensitive Music Analysis: Applications to Four Works for Piano by American Composers," Ph.D. dissertation, Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester (1996), and idem, "On Association, Realization, and Form in Richard Swift's *Things of August*," *Perspectives of New Music* 35:1 (1997): 61-114.

<sup>17</sup> Each author cited in note 9 makes this distinction.

pitch-classes ordered in register ("space") would weed out redundant terms and tighten up the Technical Glossary, making for more concise reading throughout the book.

In the remaining analytic chapters, Schiff's analyses succeed variously in the book's intent to function as a "resource for (musicological and theoretical) analysis" (viii). Some analyses, such as those of *Scrivo in Vento* (1991) (144-45) and *Changes* (1983) (136-38) are incomplete, even misleading. Many of the insights in these discussions come across as glossy, perhaps gleaned from Carter's sketches. Other analyses, such as that of the *Sonata for Cello and Piano* (1948) (106-11) and *90+* (1993) (218-21) are beset by errors.

Of *Scrivo in Vento*, Schiff writes:

Harmonically, the dualism of the piece derives from a single source: Carter's hexachord number 20 (0, 1, 2, 3, 5, 7) which contains both all-interval tetrachords (0, 1, 3, 7) and (1, 2, 5, 7). Hexachord number 20 and an inversion contain all twelve tones, a feature Carter exploits at bars 48-49.

Two aspects of the above quotation stand out. First, the mixing of abstract and literal pitch-class set inclusion is at best a fundamental error in the theory and analysis of twentieth-century music and at worst disorienting to the reader who looks for tetrachord {1257} on Carter's list of set-classes.<sup>18</sup> Second, and more importantly, the pitch-class aggregate that Schiff mentions is but one of three aggregates central to this piece. Example 2 shows these three aggregates, labeled X, Y, and Z. The second aggregate immediately follows the one that Schiff points out, and the third occurs in m. 98.<sup>19</sup>

The X, Y, and Z aggregates unite several key features of the piece. X realizes  $T_6$ -related members of 6-8[023457] in time and  $RT_3I$ -related ( $RT_{39}I$  in pitch-space) members of 6-9[012357J] (Carter's hexachord number 20) in register. Z reverses the arrangement: it realizes  $RT_7I$ -related members of 6-9 in time and  $T_6$ -related members of 6-8 in register. Y realizes six interval class 3's (ic3's) in time; ic3 is prominent in X and Z and throughout the piece. Though the hexachordal identity of Y differs from that of X and Z, Y relates immediately to X via contour. The contour of X converges symmetrically to the closing pitches <G5, G#5>.<sup>20</sup> Y's contour reverses this: its first four pitches diverge from the starting C5, and its last eight pitches diverge from G5. Z's contour flattens the registral alternations of X and Y: it consists of a six-pitch ascent

---

<sup>18</sup> Many standard accounts of atonal and twelve-tone theory make this distinction, including Allen Forte, *The Structure of Atonal Music* (New Haven: Yale University Press: 1973), 24-26; John Rahn, *Basic Atonal Theory* (New York: Longman: 1980), 80, 94-5, 136; Morris, *Composition with Pitch Classes*, 15, 57, 85, 87-88, 90, 110; *idem*, *Class Notes for Atonal Music Theory* (Hanover: Frog Peak Music: 1991), 4-5, 8, 47-58; Joseph N. Straus, *Introduction to PostTonal Theory*, Second Edition (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall: 2000), 85.

<sup>19</sup> In Example 2, the inclusion symbol E indicates that bracketed pitches form a pitch-class set belonging to the labeled set-class.

<sup>20</sup> Pitches are labeled with middle C as C4. Angle brackets < > denote ordered elements; curly brackets { } denote unordered elements.

Example 2. X, Y, and Z Aggregates in *Scrivo in Vento*

followed by a six-pitch descent.<sup>21</sup> In closing, the Y and Z aggregates are as important to *Scrivo in Vento* as the X aggregate that Schiff discusses; to acknowledge them would not require more than a few sentences.

Some of the analytic comments on *Changes* are misleading. Schiff writes that the piece contrasts the all-trichord hexachord 6-17[012478] (this time called the "all-triad chord") with the four "all-ics-but-ic6" hexachords: 6-1[0123456], 6-8[0234567], 6-14[013458], and 6-32[024579] (137). He notes that a member of 6-14 "appears at the very opening of the work" and that "bars 12 and 13 are based on Carter's hexachord number 4" (Forte's 61 [012345]) (137). Example 3 shows that not one but two members of 6-14[013458] appear in the first two bars of the piece, along with one member of 6-32[024579] and two all-trichord hexachord members. As for bars 12-13, Schiff's segmentation criterion for noticing the  $T_6$ -related 6-1 members {504132} and {E6T798} changes without notification to articulation—staccato notes form one 6-1 member and non-staccato notes form the other. However, bars 12-13 are no more "based on" these 6-1 members than they are on the  $T_6$ -related 6-14[013458] members {589047} and {T136E2} on the basis of registral adjacency and the  $T_6$ -related 68[023457] members

<sup>21</sup> These and other contours typical of Carter's music are discussed in Guy Capuzzo, "Variety Within Unity: Expressive Ends and their Technical Means in the Music of Elliott Carter, 1983-1994," Ph.D. Dissertation, Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester (1999), 57-65, 142-58.

{E64132} and {50T798} on the basis of Carter's stemmings. Each segmentation involves the all-ics-but-ic6 hexachords; because each hexachord lacks ic6, each  $T_6$ -related hexachord pair produces an aggregate.

Schiff closes his discussion of *Changes* as follows:

Because it is exclusively based on hexachordal harmony rather than the intervallic stratification *Changes* is, apart from its effectiveness as a display of guitar virtuosity, an excellent introduction to the harmonic procedures which support Carter's later works (137-38).

To the contrary, the above segmentations demonstrate that *Changes* does take advantage of the aggregate-forming properties of

Example 3. *Changes*, mm. 1-2

A B C D E

$T_7I$

$T_0I$

- A  $\in$  6-14[013458]
- B  $\in$  6-17[012478]
- C  $\in$  6-32[024579]
- D  $\in$  6-17[012478]
- E  $\in$  6-14[013458]

Mm. 12-13:

the all-ics-but-ic6 hexachords (among others); the piece is not based exclusively on hexachords.

Other analyses are marred by errors. On the Sonata for Cello and Piano (1948), Schiff writes that "[t]he first bar contains a six-note set (0, 1, 2, 5, 7, 8) that is immediately repeated in transposed form; the set is not given consistent serial treatment, however" (106). The pitch-classes in the first bar, {69T53E}, realize a member of 6-43[012568], not 6-18[012578].<sup>22</sup> These pitch-classes are then *inverted and transposed* at  $T_4I$ , not just transposed, to form a second 6-43 member, {76T51E}, and this not "immediately," but three bars later. The term "serial treatment" is undefined and makes no other appearance in the book; here Schiff apparently refers to the transposition and/or inversion of members of a single set-class.

<sup>22</sup> 6-43 is the Z-partner of Carter's favored all-trichord hexachord, 6-17[012478]. Both set-classes have become hallmarks of Carter's music, beginning with *A Mirror on Which To Dwell* (1975).

Closing a discussion of 90+, Schiff writes:

The most apparently esoteric part of the piece may be the scattered scherzo in bars 48-69. These seemingly random sprays of notes are in fact based on the "Link" chords, the all-interval twelve note chords which contain hexachord number 35 in a contiguous spacing which theorist John Link assembled for the composer. Only once in this passage does Carter state hexachord number 35 linearly (from the last beat of 62 through the second beat of 64) but all the spacings are determined by the hexachord (220-21).

Example 4 shows that bars 48-69 contain much more than just one member of Carter's hexachord 35 (Forte's 6-17[012478]). The passage emerges as neither "esoteric" nor "random": 6-17 members imbue the music. And only four of the chords are Link chords<sup>23</sup> (labeled A-D), so it cannot be said that Link chords exert much structural force on the passage.

The detail I invoke in the foregoing examples may initially seem unnecessary in light of the book's intended audience: "performers, listeners, composers, and critics" (vii). But I do not believe that Schiff's book fully succeeds in its goal to serve as a "resource for theoretical and musicological analysis" (viii). One reason is the inconsistencies and errors identified in the examples above.

*Example 4. Members of the All-Trichord Hexachord 6-17[012478] in 90+, mm. 48-69*

A. B. C. and D are Link Chords.

INT(A) = <E8623>  
Link Chord: <4E8623T5179>

INT(B) = <387E2>  
Link Chord: <96415T387E2>

INT(C) = <85692>  
Link Chord: <713T85692E4> or <TE738569241>

INT(D) = <1T8E9>  
Link Chord: <21T8E956347> or any of five others.

Bayan Northcott pinpoints a second reason in his review of the first edition, stating that "Schiff has failed to raise a question about the apparent disparity between the clarity of procedures suggested in Carter's published descriptions and charts and their somewhat less than obvious realization in the flux of his actual music."<sup>24</sup> Northcott's point will resonate with anyone who consults Schiff's book as an entrée into a Carter piece. The gap between Schiff's prose and Carter's musical surfaces is wide. To close that gap, the reader needs clear, annotated examples and focused, consistent discussions.

<sup>23</sup> A "Link chord" is an all-interval series containing an ordered-pitch-class interval segment that forms a member of the all-trichord hexachord. In Appendix A of Schiff's book (324-7), Link chords are listed as series of ordered pitch-class intervals, akin to Robert Morris's INT (Morris, *Composition with Pitch-Class*, 4041, 47; Morris, *Class Notes*, 6). For instance, in Example 4, the INT of the chord labeled A is <E8623>, which is a segment of the all-interval series <4E8623T5179>. Thus A is a Link chord.

<sup>24</sup> *New York Review of Books* Vol. 31/9 (May 31, 1984): 18-20.

It is more difficult to gauge Schiff's success in another of his stated aims: "to include as many of [Carter's] ideas about how he has composed the music as possible" (vii). The absence of consistent attributions and citations makes it difficult to know which ideas are Carter's and which are Schiff's. As such, it cannot be by coincidence that the book's bibliography was not prepared by Schiff. In large part, Schiff shields his text from the considerable literature on Carter that he duly acknowledges (viii), but chooses not to engage with. Such an engagement would only bolster the authority of Schiff's book, not tarnish it with outside impurities. Nor would it necessarily deter from the presentation of Carter's ideas.

In a 1990 interview, Carter outlined his thoughts on music analysis:

Analysis which starts by assuming the artistic value of a work, and then analyzes it, seldom tells you what it is that makes the work so interesting to hear. I would rather read theoretical articles that explain why it is that the work, when heard, captures our attention, and what is so valuable about it musically, and then show what it is that contributes to this experience.<sup>25</sup>

Schiff's book does realize Carter's vision of music analysis save for the last point. To "show what it is that contributes to the experience" of Carter's music, we cannot shrink from the vast literature on Carter's music as well as post-tonal music more generally. Carter's music is extraordinarily rich, and the tools to grasp, appreciate, and revel in that richness are in place. We need only consult them.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> Jonathan Bernard, "An Interview with Elliott Carter," *Perspectives of New Music* 28:1 (1990): 180-214.

<sup>26</sup> I wish to thank Eric McKee, J. R. Meloro, Robert Morris, and Adam Ricci for reading a draft of this review and offering suggestions for its improvement.