

James Joyce and Avant-Garde Music

Scott W. Klein of Wake Forest University, USA writes about the influence of James Joyce on Avant-Garde composers. This paper was originally given at the Contemporary Music Centre's ReJoyce in Music Seminar in June 2004.

The importance of James Joyce to twentieth century music is perhaps as surprising as it is pervasive. Influence within art forms tends to stay within disciplinary boundaries. It's no great surprise to find musicians influenced by preceding musicians, or authors influenced by other authors; but Joyce's influence over a range of music is perhaps without precedent. This influence was largely conceptual, as opposed to lines of influence in the nineteenth century, when composers used authors almost entirely by settings their texts or rifling their works for plots for tone poems or operas. Unlike Goethe's work, for instance, whose Romanticism tended to attract aesthetically like-minded composers, Joyce's work influenced a wide range of composers of almost impossibly divergent aesthetic presuppositions. In part, this reflects the variety of Joyce's writings. His earliest prose works, *Dubliners* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* are based on late nineteenth century models of naturalism and symbolism, while his major works *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* become increasingly experimental in their reconceptualization of literary form, style, character, and language, until *Finnegans Wake* can scarcely be said to have a conventional plot or characters at all. At the same time, Joyce wrote two collections of poems as well as a play, *Exiles*, which are distinctly traditional in form and tone. Composers have been drawn to these diverse sides of Joyce, in many cases the more traditional tonal and Romantic composers finding a congenial set of texts for setting from the poetry -- and Myra T. Russel has noted that there are well over 140 composers who have set them¹-- while the more avant-garde musicians of the twentieth century were attracted to the formal innovations suggested by Joyce's work, by his use in *Ulysses* of a variety of different styles, by the musicality of his language, particularly in the late and highly experimental *Finnegans Wake*.

That composers have found Joyce congenial is scarcely surprising. Joyce was himself an accomplished amateur musician, a tenor who in 1904 shared the stage with the great Irish tenor John McCormack. Music has a profound presence throughout his works. He titled his first collection of poetry *Chamber Music*, while concerts and amateur performances of music appear throughout *Dubliners*. Molly Bloom, one of *Ulysses*'s main characters, is a professional soprano, and an entire chapter of *Ulysses*, known as 'Sirens', takes music as its subject and style -- Joyce claimed he wrote it in the form of a *fuga per canonem*. Important moments throughout the novels are related in musical terms: in Chapter 4 of *A Portrait*, when Stephen Dedalus finds his calling as an artist, it is heralded by his hearing imaginary music that is described in some technical detail,² while in the climactic *Circe* chapter in *Ulysses*, a pianola and gramophone appear behind much of the action, and Joyce has Stephen pick out an octave on the piano as a symbol of returning home after an odyssey.³ Joyce even writes in a few bars of actual musical scores in three places in his work -- a fragment of plainchant (9.499) and two fragments of a ballad in *Ulysses* (17.808-828) and what Joyce calls "The Ballad of Persse O'Reilly" in *Finnegans Wake*.⁴ Allusions to music -- popular song and opera -- are everywhere. The first attempt to

categorize these allusions, *Song in the Works of James Joyce*, by Matthew J. C. Hodgart and Mabel P. Worthington (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959) contained 3,500 allusions, and the authors apologized for its lack of completeness.

Ironically, given his extraordinary innovations in narrative, Joyce disliked most of the contemporary music of his day. As a tenor, he was a die-hard fan of singable melody, and he approached music from a singer's perspective. He complained about Stravinsky that "not even a canary could sing" his music,⁵ and he loved opera, claiming to prefer Bellini to Wagner. He adored Elizabethan music, especially lute songs at a time when they were scarcely known except to scholars (this was about the time that Philip Heseltine, also known as the composer Peter Warlock, was producing modern editions of some of these songs). George Antheil, an American avant-gardist who knew Joyce in Paris, wrote "Joyce's madness was opera, preferably Purcell, but if no Purcell as available, just opera... Another one of Joyce's madnesses was Irish singers; almost any Irish singer traveling through Paris could be assured of Joyce's support; he was always in the front row applauding loudly."⁶ Joyce personally knew a number of forward looking musicians: he was a friend of Antheil, and of Otto Luening in Zurich, who would become one of the earliest composers of *musique concrète*. Joyce was a neighbor to Philipp Jarnach, who completed Busoni's opera *Doctor Faust*, and he met Busoni. But the only contemporary composers Joyce actively liked were the lyrical Swiss composer Othmar Schoeck, and, surprisingly, Antheil, who was also a friend of Ezra Pound. Joyce tried to get Antheil to write an opera based on Byron's *Cain*, and even talked with him about creating an opera based on the *Cyclops* episode of Ulysses, for which a score of the first few bars exists, filled with Antheil's trademark pianolas and percussion instruments familiar from his 1921 *Ballet Mécanique*.⁷ But, although *Finnegans Wake* contains the terms 'serially' (522.12) and 'retrogradation' (557.23), (as well as 'augmentation' [551.18]) suggesting at least a passing acquaintance with Schoenbergian principles, Joyce's taste was firmly traditional. And in this, he was little different from most educated Englishmen and Irishmen of his day, for whom the primary national composers were Stanford and Elgar. Lawrence Rainey reports that when the Italian Futurist Marinetti was booked into the London Coliseum in 1914 for a series of lectures and concerts including the Futuristic noisemaking of Luigi Russolo, Oswald Stoll, the theatrical entrepreneur, insisted that the Futurists include in their performances a gramophone playing records by Elgar, allegedly "to bring a little melody into the act."⁸

Melody was paramount to Joyce, and the earliest Joycean music consists of song settings. According to Louis Gillet, who knew Joyce in Paris, "For Joyce, a sentence was not severable from its melodic qualities,"⁹ and indeed Joyce ventured into composition once, writing a beautiful musical setting for his poem *Bid Adieu*, with the accompaniment realized by the American composer Edmund Pendleton, another Parisian acquaintance. After World War I Frank Bridge set Joyce's poem *Goldenhair*, but the first significant international incursion into Joycean music took place in 1932, when for Joyce's fiftieth birthday the Irish composer Herbert Hughes gathered together a group of thirteen composers to set the thirteen poems of Joyce's collection *Poems Penyeach*, which was published privately by the Sylvan Press in an edition of 500 called *The Joyce Book*. The participating composers ran the gamut from E. J. Moeran, Arnold Bax, and Herbert

Howells, to Antheil, the young Roger Sessions, and Albert Roussel. Many of the settings are relatively harmonically straightforward, but some show a use of impressionistic harmonies, parallel triads, and harmonies in fourths in the cases of Moeran and Bax, and a somewhat more advanced idiom in the bitonality of Antheil, the violent dissonance of Eugene Goossens, and the lack of meter and key signature in the setting by Bernard van Dieren. The finest song settings of all of Joyce's poetry followed a few years after, by the American Samuel Barber. In 1935-6 Barber set the poems *Sleep Now*, *Rain has Fallen*, and *I Hear an Army*, for voice and piano, as well as gesturing later in his career towards texts from later Joyce works. The delightful *Nuvoletta*, which sets lines from *Finnegans Wake*, appeared in 1947, only a few years after the *Wake*'s 1939 publication. Much later, in 1968-9 Barber set an enigmatic passage from *Ulysses* as part of the song cycle *Despite and Still*, as a song called *Solitary Hotel*. These last two settings are particularly noteworthy not only because of their unusual choice of texts, but because Barber seems to have intuited Joyce's love of both opera and popular music. In *Nuvoletta*, the lines from *Finnegans Wake* are set as a kind of mock operatic scene based upon a waltz, while *Solitary Hotel* presents us with an unlikely musical/national paradox: a Joycean tango, a perfectly ironic musical metaphor for the disconnection between male and female described by the text.

Fine as these song settings are, Joyce's greatest musical effect on international composers occurred after World War II. These later composers were inspired by the larger conceptual aspects of Joyce's experimentation: by *Ulysses*'s innovations of form and by *Finnegans Wake*'s linguistic virtuosity. In *Ulysses* Joyce introduced cyclicity of structure, parody and pastiche, and the idea the style could shift from chapter to chapter; in *Finnegans Wake* he broke with conventional form, language, and character almost entirely to provide a dreamlike vision of history and family relationships from the ambiguous perspective of a Chapelizod publican. The major avant-garde movements that emerged in continental Europe included a group of composers for whom Joyce was a central intellectual presence, and who were mainly centered around the summer music courses held in Darmstadt. Of these composers, the major voices were Pierre Boulez, Luciano Berio, John Cage, and Karlheinz Stockhausen: and of those, only Stockhausen, whom history has shown was far more interested in creating his own mythological systems, was not influenced by Joyce.

Boulez was the most vocal theoretician of the group. He had read *Ulysses* in French, and in a letter to John Cage in 1950 he thanks the American composer for his gift of a copy of *Finnegans Wake*, calling it "almost a totem," while admitting "reading it was slower than slow, given the difficulty of deciphering it."¹⁰ Boulez was interested in avant-garde literature in general, admiring Mallarmé particularly for his density and obscurity. Boulez thought of Joyce as a key figure for the way in which avant-gardism in literature tended to precede avant-gardism in music. In his essay *Recherches Maintenant* in 1954 he asked for "a new poetics, a different way of listening," noting "Neither the Mallarmé of the *Coup de dés* nor Joyce was paralleled by anything in the music of his own time."¹¹ In a 1961 lecture at Darmstadt, Boulez noted that he was after something deeper than mere provocation, wishing to emulate the subtlety and engagement with tradition of Joyce rather than the antics of the noisier avant-garde: he wrote, "Satie included typewriters in

his orchestra, Webern did not. The surrealists shouted in the street and Joyce shut himself up with old Irish songs and Italian operatic airs. Which has proved the greater provocation? Which is the provocation recorded in the pages of history other than in a footnote?"¹² His implicit claim is that Boulez, and his generation, could accomplish in music what Joyce had in literature.

Boulez never set Joyce's texts, and one might wonder what appeal Joyce, with his baroque aesthetics of elaboration, might have for the post-Webernian Boulez. Yet Webern was perhaps the first Western composer whose compositions cannot easily be divided into its constituent musical parts; that is to say, one can scarcely make a piano reduction of Webern, because the 'narrative', the melodic forms, are inseparable from structure and timbre. In an analogous way, the same is true for Joyce: by the time of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* there is no longer 'plot' and 'style' separate from one another; all of the aspects of prose, including the sound of the language, are integral to the meaning of the whole. Indeed, when recalling what drew him to Joyce, Boulez cited "the specificity of technique for each chapter, the fact that technique and story were one" (Peyser, 80). It is not too farfetched to look at Boulez's *Marteau sans Maître*, where each movement has a different orchestration, and see behind it not only the example of Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* but also the changing styles of *Ulysses*.

Most of Boulez's published references to Joyce occur in the 1960 essay *Sonate, que me veux-tu?* (Sonata, what do you want of me?), an essay on his Third Piano Sonata. Of the sonata, Boulez wrote, "It may well be that literary affiliations played a more important part than purely musical considerations" noting that "some writers at the present time have gone much further than composers in the organization, the actual mental structure, of their works" (*Orientations*, 143). Boulez explicitly compares the innovations of his sonata to those of "Joyce's two last great novels." "It is not only that the organization of the narrative has been revolutionized," Boulez writes, but that "The novel observes itself *qua* novel, as it were, reflects on itself and is aware that it is a novel" (*Orientations*, 143). Boulez compares the construction of the sonata to the self-consciousness of technique in two particular chapters of *Ulysses*, *Scylla and Charybdis*, where Stephen Dedalus lectures on *Hamlet*, and *Oxen of the Sun*, where the "growth of a foetus in the womb is suggested by a series of pastiches in which the evolution of the English language is traced from Chaucer to the present day" (*Orientations*, 144). In the Third Sonata, this auto-referentiality is mainly a function of the various ways in which the movements can be structured and played. Originally in five movements, or 'formants', only two have been published by Boulez. They can be played in a variety of configurations, particularly in Formant 2, titled *Trope*, in which the constituent parts, *Glose*, *Text*, *Parenthèse*, and *Commentaire* (all literary terms) can be reordered according to a fixed set of permutations. When listening to the Sonata, one cannot tell that it is based on Joycean ideas, but for Boulez the idea of mobility of structure and innovation of language was Joycean above all else.

Far more than Boulez, the Italian composer Luciano Berio was practically involved with Joyce as an author rather than as the basis for aesthetic theory. Berio studied with Luigi

Dallapiccola, who was himself interested in Joyce throughout his life: Dallapiccola wrote his own Homeric opera *Ulisse* in 1968, and a published photograph shows the composer in 1958 taking a copy of *Ulysses* down from a shelf in his study.¹³ One of Berio's earliest compositions is a setting of three poems from Joyce's *Chamber Music*, written in 1953 for his wife, the soprano Cathy Berberian, with harp, cello, and clarinet. Unlike Boulez, Berio never wished to leave tonality behind entirely, and although he set the songs serially, Berio chose his 12 tone rows to emphasize consonant intervals, rather as Berg did in his *Violin Concerto*. Berio's most significant Joycean work dates from a few years later, and was considerably more experimental. Berio had attended the first public concert of taped or electroacoustic music ever performed in the United States, at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City in October of 1952, a concert that included (incidentally) an example of music composed from manipulated flute sounds by Joyce's old friend Otto Luening. Berio became interested in the possibilities of electronic music at around the same time that he began working at the RAI in Milan, Italy's national radio company. Berio also became friends with Umberto Eco, whose enthusiasm for Joyce's language was well-known. Eco introduced Berio to *Ulysses* in 1957, and the two began work on a radio program about onomatopoeia in poetic language. Although the program never aired, Berio produced from the project in 1958 the eight minute taped piece *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)*.

Thema consists of the manipulated sounds of Cathy Berberian reading from the opening of the eleventh chapter of *Ulysses*, the *Sirens* chapter. This passage was chosen carefully -- not only is *Sirens* the chapter devoted to musical style, but the opening pages, sometimes called the 'Overture' to the chapter, are the first place in Joyce's work where language bursts free of narrative and semantic restraints in a series of disconnected quotations from the chapter to follow. The first two minutes of *Thema* are a reading of the first 36 lines of the chapter ending in the word "hiss," which suddenly opens up the acoustical space of the voice. From there, Berio attempts to extend Joyce's experimentation by turning words into pure sonics without discernable lexical content. Taking his cue from the direct musical and sonic references in the text of *Ulysses* (11.1-36)—"steelyringing," "blew," "longindying call," "crashing chords," "Liszt's rhapsodies"-- Berio atomizes the text into what he called continuous, discontinuous, and periodic phonetic elements, and rearranges words according to their consonantal and vowel sounds, and then transforms the resultant elements on tape through superimposition, phase and frequency shifting, altering the tape speed to create choral effects and spatial polyphony.¹⁴

An aesthetic chasm clearly divides *Thema* from *Bid Adieu*. Rather than music providing a melodic framework for the original words, *Thema* pulverizes the words into pure sound. Every now and again recognizable fragments of the original text emerge in Berberian's voice, but the whole emphasizes instead the sonic polyphony implicit in Joyce's original. *Thema* joins Stockhausen's *Gesang der Jünglinge* as one of the major experiments in *musique concrète* of the 1950s, while maintaining Berio's signature style of vocal composition: his manipulated treatment of Berberian will seem musically familiar to those who know her and Berio's other experiments with extended vocal technique (for instance, Berberian's later *Stripsody* of 1966).

Berio did not set other Joycean texts, but his further work shows the influence of Joycean precedent. *Epifanie* (1961) takes its name from Joyce's early use of the term 'epiphany' to mean a sudden moment of illumination or insight, while Berio's working conditions became closer and closer to the technique used by Joyce when writing *Finnegans Wake*. In the long years of its composition, Joyce referred to *Finnegans Wake* only as "Work in Progress," publishing excerpts from it in small literary magazines, that become more complex in style with each subsequent appearance (it was always Joyce's habit to expand and elaborate on his proofs; the early publishers of *Ulysses* must have nearly pulled their hair out when a proof would return from Joyce with nearly as much additional text added in as in the original). Like Joyce, Berio continually rewrote, superimposing new layers over his works, producing, in short, works in progress, increasing their complexity with each pass over them (in a similar vein, Boulez called his Third Sonata a "work in progress" in this Joycean sense, and he, like Berio, remains to this day an inveterate tinkerer with his past work). Thus, Berio's concerto *Chemins* (1964) is a complication of the solo *Sequenza II* for harp (1963), and the solo *Sequenza VI* for viola (1967) became embedded in *Chemins II* (1967), which Berio in turn embedded in the larger and yet more complex *Chemins III* (1968). Berio's most famous work, *Sinfonia* (1968-9) also shows Joycean allegiances. Although its text comes from Levi-Strauss and Beckett among others, rather than Joyce, the third and most famous movement, which rings changes on the *ländler* movement of Mahler's Second Symphony shows the influence of Joycean aesthetics. Basing a contemporary piece of music explicitly on a past piece of music echoes *Ulysses*'s use of Homer as a past substructure to a modern work; moreover, Mahler was a figure comparable in some ways to Joyce in his late nineteenth/early twentieth century use of traditional forms but stretching them in novel directions, and in his integration of popular music -- the *ländler*, echoes of klezmer -- into "high art." The *ländler* in Berio acts not only as a kind of framework for vocal pastiche and avant-garde orchestral intervention, but also for a kind of historical tour through the genre of orchestral waltz. Periodically in the movement moments will burst through from Ravel's *La Valse*, from Weber's *Introduction to the Dance*, and others, not unlike the way Joyce alludes to as many names of world rivers as possible in the *Anna Livia Plurabelle* section of *Finnegans Wake*, or the tour of the history of the English language through pastiche in *Oxen of the Sun*, already cited by Boulez. Even Berio's 1988 work *Rendering*, an attempt to 'finish' the sketches of Schubert's Tenth Symphony without hiding the gaps in the original, is Joycean in the way Berio creates 'bridge passages' in an unequivocally twentieth century style. Unlike similar modern completions, such as Anthony Payne's elaboration of Elgar's Third Symphony, Berio's suggests Joyce's influence in the way it bases new work on a previously existing one, without attempting to hide the irony implicit in the modernizing of incomplete material.

The third major musical innovator of the 1950s was John Cage. Cage's 1979 *Roaratorio* is without question the major and most extensively Joycean musical work, mainly because Cage was the single composer most immersed in Joyce over much of his career. Best known for introducing chance procedures into music, and using noise and silence as structural materials, Cage was obsessed by Joyce and *Finnegans Wake* for much of his life, particularly from the later 1960s onwards. Earlier, in 1942, he made a setting of

several lines from *Finnegans Wake* for soprano and pianist playing percussively on a closed piano called "Wonderful Widow of Eighteen Springs," and he gave several other pieces, all from 1943-44, Wakean names, such as *Root of an Unfocus*, *Tossed as it is Untroubled*, and *The Unavailable Memory Of*. Unlike other composers, Cage not only produced music based upon Joyce, but also textual works, which he called "Writings Through" *Finnegans Wake*, one of which forms the spoken text of *Roaratorio*.

In the late 1970s Cage discovered an intensive interest in language *per se*. Although he had always been a copious essayist and lecturer, in the 1960s and 1970s he became interested in creating prose works, first his series of *Diaries*, then works based on the writings of Thoreau, and finally a series based upon *Finnegans Wake*. These latter two sets of works were benignly parasitic on previous texts, as a new way of breaking down hierarchies between past and present art. The idea of making new texts from old through imitation and the introduction of gaps into original material provides one aesthetic rationale behind his series of "Writings Through *Finnegans Wake*." The other was Cage's desire to break down the last remaining hierarchy available in Joyce's language. Although fascinated by Joyce's innovations, Cage was dissatisfied with Joyce's conventional grammar. He notes disapprovingly in his *Diaries* "Finnegans Wake employs syntax./ Though Joyce's subjects, verbs and/ objects are generally unconventional,/ their relationships are the ordinary/ ones."¹⁵ Harking to his friend Norman O. Brown's assertion that "syntax is the arrangement of the army"¹⁶ Cage set out to create a nonsyntactical language out of fragments of *Finnegans Wake*, a demilitarized version of Joyce's global language.

Yet the "Writings Through *Finnegans Wake*" are not entirely unstructured. While free of syntax, they are composed according to a poetic form of Cage's own invention, the "mesostic." Like an acrostic, in which the first letters of a series of lines of poetry read down spell a name or hidden title, each mesostic arrays phrases as poetic lines around a keyword found in the lines' middle, and which Cage capitalizes for visibility. Cage uses these mesostics as the source for his musical work *Roaratorio: An Irish Circus on Finnegans Wake* (1979), which combines the "Writing for the Second Time Through *Finnegans Wake*" (1977) with a collage of sounds suggested by Joyce's work. Produced on commission by Klaus Schöning of the West German Radio, *Roaratorio* takes to its logical extreme Cage's fascination with juxtaposition of sounds, Joyce, and the musical possibilities of words. Schöning suggested that Cage compose a "soundtrack" to accompany a reading of his "Writing for the Second Time" and the result drew upon Cage's desire to treat language, as had some of the Italian Futurists as well as Berio in *Thema*, as simply another sound source capable of musical expression.

Roaratorio -- which takes its name from *Finnegans Wake* -- juxtaposes Cage's hour-long reading of his second "Writing Through" against a panoply of other sounds, including the music of six Celtic musicians playing a variety of traditional melodies, and 62 tracks of taped environmental sounds recorded in Ireland and throughout the world, at as many of the geographical locations mentioned in the *Wake* as Cage could manage, through his own travels and the help of radio stations and universities in many countries. The resulting version of *Roaratorio* draws upon over a thousand sounds recorded at over a

thousand places. The environmental sounds are mixed according to chance operations, according to Cage's schema, against the Celtic musicians and Cage's speaking voice, placed proportionately to the length of the piece to where they first appear in *Finnegans Wake*.

More than Berio's *Thema*, the result flaunts analysis: it is a vast sonic panorama of Cage's recitation against a constantly shifting collage of sounds that are identifiable as partly Joycean and partly universal. Cage's voice varies in prominence throughout the work, and his reading of the text moves from straightforward recitation to a form of improvisatory *sprechstimme*, a half-singing of Joyce's disjunct words. The human voice in *Roaratorio* becomes a sound amidst many other sounds, sometimes the most prominent, at other times merely part of the larger sonic fabric. At many times that fabric is unremittingly dense. Cage's voice is heard alone only for perhaps two minutes of the hourlong piece, and the barrages of noise -- carefully orchestrated in waves of overwhelming sonic collage alternating with more lightly scored sections-- suggests that Cage was guided by the phrase from the seventh Wakean mesostic of the work, "and all thE uproor/ aufroofS" (*Empty Words*, 138). Particular kinds of sounds, however, make their thematic importance present through repetition, and these are all sounds thematically relevant to the *Wake*. The sounds of water, church bells, babies crying and children laughing, sea gulls, thunder, snippets of voices although half-overheard, work their way through the sonic tapestry with frequency, underlining the *Wake's* emphasis on the waters of the Liffey, the encompassing presence of the Church, the cycles of life and the games of children, and the density of voices all jostling and melding in Joyce's fictive Ireland. Yet if Ireland, through the mediation of Joyce, is for Cage both the source of chance and a productive chaos, throughout *Roaratorio* the sounds of not only Irish history but of multinational experience intrude. Occasionally a snippet of an old recording of opera appears like a long deceased singer from Joyce's *The Dead*, while fragments of gamelan music weave in and out of duets for bodhrán, blending Celtic with world musics. Fragments of a jazz band, military fanfares, choirs, and classical music for strings suggests *Roaratorio's* attempt to capture not only Joyce's sonic world, but also in Joycean fashion, to act as a kind of democratizing agent for music. Its title is both secular and religious-- an "oratorio," or sacred work for accompanied voice, plus the "roar" of the crowded world-- *Roaratorio* says, as *Finnegans Wake* puts it, "Here Comes Everybody" not only to environmental sounds but to the history and universal experience of music.¹⁷

The most thorough-going forms of Joycean inspiration among avant-garde composers, then, are Boulez's structural aesthetics and Berio's and Cage's *musique concrète*. But other modern composers also turned to Joyce for his structural effects and lyric inspiration. The American composer Elliott Carter credited his revolutionary First String Quartet (1950-1) with its cyclical construction, sudden suspension and resumption of musical activity across the gaps between movements, and the association of different instruments with separate sets of characterological rhythms and melodic intervals, to the composer's reading of Joyce. Peter Maxwell Davies credited the *Cyclops* chapter of *Ulysses* with the inspiration for the form of his provocative and polystylistic *Missa Sur L'Homme Armé*, one of the outrageous theatrical pieces written for the Fires of London in the 1960s. In the 1980s, Toru Takemitsu wrote several pieces with titles drawn from

Finnegans Wake: A Way a Lone for string quartet, *Far calls. Coming, far!* for violin and orchestra, and the piano concerto *Riverrun*, compositions that merge Takemitsu's impressionist aesthetic pieces with *Finnegans Wake*'s emphasis on watery flow (even if some of Takemitsu's writing makes the [river] Liffey sound as though it runs directly into Debussy's *La Mer*). And before turning to Lewis Carroll for decades of inspiration, the American David del Tredici made many settings of Joyce's poems, including the fine 1966 work *Syzygy*, released in 2004 by Deutsche Grammophon in a performance conducted by Oliver Knussen and sung by Lucy Shelton, which sets *Ecce Homo* and *Nightpiece* for soprano and chamber ensemble.

Closer to Joyce's place of birth, younger composers, particularly in Britain, still show the influence of Joyce. Richard Emsley wrote a chamber piece with the title *From Swerve of Shore to Bend of Bay*, taken from *Finnegans Wake*; Emsley's short piano piece, *Finnissys Fifty*, written for composer Michael Finnissy for his fiftieth birthday, also winks at us through its lack of apostrophe that the title is a nod to *Finnegans Wake*. Michael Finnissy's many piano transformations of Verdi and Gershwin show a Joycean refraction of previous materials into a modern idiom, as well as the integration of nineteenth century opera and 'popular' materials of the past into contemporary art. Other composers of the so-called New Complexity movement, such as Brian Ferneyhough, owe their intellectual virtuosity in part to Joycean models of modernism: Ferneyhough's 1975 *Transit*, with its technical complexities and texts from Paracelsus and Heraclitus, is nearly unthinkable without the processes of modernism and the juxtaposition of classical thinking with avant-garde experimentation underwritten by the example of Joyce.

So contemporary composers have found a great deal in Joyce to inspire their own efforts. They have found in his poems fruitful lyrics for vocal settings; they have been influenced by the originality of his literary form, by his use of different styles in chapters of *Ulysses*, his introduction of pastiche, parody, and cyclical ideas of history to narrative, and his musicalizing of language—indeed, Joyce's influence on the arts has been so pervasive that many contemporary artists and composers may well use techniques so firmly embedded in modernism and the avant garde that their origins in Joyce may be obscured by history. A challenge to today's composers interested directly in Joyce would be, perhaps, to make a full-scale attempt to musicalize *Ulysses*; the only dramatic setting of that novel with which I am familiar is Anthony Burgess's somewhat misbegotten *The Blooms of Dublin*, a kind of 'music hall opera' written for BBC radio in 1982, and never (perhaps for good reason) revived. But one impediment for contemporary composers is the Joyce estate, which still jealousy guards the use of Joyce's language in other works of art. Most infamously, several years ago they blocked Irish composer David Fennessy from using only 18 words from *Finnegans Wake* in a choral piece.

And yet: I recently learned that due out soon from Fire Records, an independent rock label in England, is *Chamber Music*, a 2 CD set containing settings of Joyce's 1907 poems by 36 independent rock bands. According to the Fire Records website (www.firerecords.com) among the artists contributing are Flying Saucer Attack, The Wardrobe, The Great Depression, Bark Psychosis, Saint Joan, and Green Pajamas (the list continues, as the conservative eyebrow arches ever higher). One presumes that

Chamber Music, published in 1907, is now in the public domain, or that the project (perhaps with the help of one or more flying saucers) has flown beneath the Joyce estate's radar. But before one gets up in arms about the incursion of rock into the realms of Joyce, it is worth noting that the Beatles' *Revolution #9* from the *White Album* -- however unlikely this seems -- was inspired not only by Paul McCartney listening to Stockhausen, but directly from his attending a lecture in 1966 on Berio's *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)*. So if nothing else, the intersection of the avant-garde and popular music proves that a hundred years past Bloomsday, and some decades past the innovations of Boulez, Berio, and Cage, Joyce continues to exert a fascination, and an inspiration, to the artists of the twenty-first century. Joyce is reputed to have said that his works were so filled with puzzles and enigmas that it would keep the professors busy for centuries. Perhaps the composers will keep just as busy, finding new and different ways to translate Joyce's language into the music of their times.

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¹ See Myra T. Russel, "Chamber Music: Words and Music Lovingly Coupled," in Bronze by Gold: The Music of Joyce, ed. Sebastian D. G. Knowles (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1999), p. 58.

² See A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1992), "It seemed to him that he heard notes of fitful music leaping upwards a tone and downwards a diminished fourth, upwards a tone and downwards a major third, like triplebranching flames leaping fitfully... It was an elfin prelude" (179).

³ See Ulysses: The Corrected Text, edited Hans Walter Gabler (New York: Random House, 1986), 15.2103-2121. References to this edition are keyed to chapter number followed by line number.

⁴ Finnegans Wake (New York: The Viking Press, 1975), p. 44.24. References to Finnegans Wake are keyed to page number followed by line number.

⁵ Richard Ellmann, James Joyce: New and Revised Edition (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 669.

⁶ George Antheil, Bad Boy of Music (Garden City: Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1945), p. 153.

⁷ The first page of this score is reproduced in Bronze by Gold, p. 105.

⁸ Lawrence Rainey, Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), p. 37.

⁹ Louis Gillet, "The Living Joyce," in Portraits of the Artist in Exile, ed. Willard Potts (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1979), p. 196.

¹⁰ See The Boulez-Cage Correspondence, ed. Jean-Jacques Nattiez, trans. Robert Samuels (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), letter of 3, 11, and 12 January 1950, p. 46.

¹¹ Quoted by Joan Peyser, Boulez (New York: Schirmer Books, 1976), p. 118.

¹² "Le gout et la fonction," trans. as "Taste: 'The spectacles worn by Reason?'" in Orientations: Collected Writings of Pierre Boulez, ed. Jean-Jacques Nattiez, trans. Martin Cooper (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 61.

¹³ The photograph is reproduced in Dallapiccola on Opera; Selected Writings of Luigi Dallapiccola, Volume One, trans. and ed. Rudy Shackelford (Exeter: Toccata Press, 1987), p. 213

¹⁴ For a fuller treatment of this process, see Timothy S. Murphy, “Music After Joyce: The Post-Serial Avant-Garde” (Hypermedia Joyce Studies, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1999). Available at <www.2street.com/hjs/murphy/index.html>.

¹⁵ John Cage, M: Writings '67-'72 (Middletown, Conn.: Weleyn University Press, 1973), p. 102-3.

¹⁶ John Cage, Empty Words: Writings '73-'78 (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1979). p. 133.

¹⁷ For a more complete treatment of the relation between Joyce and Cage see my article “The Euphonium Cagehoused in Either Notation” in Bronze by Gold, pp. 151-170.