
# Reconsidering the Roots of Minimalist Music: An Examination of Post-War Europe and its Minimalists

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**Abstract**

This paper examines the styles, traditions, and aesthetics associated with various schools of minimalism in Europe, including *New Simplicity*, *Neue Einfachkeit*, *The Hague Schoo*l, and *Mystic Minimalism*. Through historical and sociological discussion, a breakdown of the cultural and political circumstances that fostered these movements are presented. It is the author's intention to show that different schools of minimalism appeared in Europe parallel to those in the United States, disrupting the often-accepted notion that minimalism as a musical style appeared first in U.S. metropolitan areas.

The second part of this paper attempts to understand why the European contributions to minimalism have historically been placed in the periphery. To do so, it examines the post-WWII European music industry, specifically radio broadcast and new music festivals, to make the argument that these composers were overlooked due to the industries need to close the cultural gap (years 1930-1946.)

This paper finds that European minimalism had unique qualities that differed from American minimalism and that conservatism from cultural elites and the music industry obscured the visibility of European contribution to minimalism on a global scale.

To my mother *Alisa* for all the trips to Mrs. Vickie's
and to *Petros* for the late-night calls to get me through it.

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## Forward

For all the tomes that have been written about minimalism—its origins, styles, and impact—few have taken up the challenge of parsing out the unique role European composers have played in forming this influential musical movement. At present, a scan through the literature will show a certain unanimity amongst researchers, with most citing minimalism as a style that originated in the United States in the mid to late 1960s. To this end, European composers are often discussed in terms of their stylistic and ideological adoption of this musical movement The narrative goes as such, that minimalism began as a counter-serial movement amongst American composers who later inspired similar aesthetic practices in their European contemporaries. While this has become the standard outlook in academic literature, it is but a simplified account of a much more complex history; one that examines globalization, information exchange, and the burgeoning role of the radio and university in the post-WWII era. It is here that this paper begins, with the intention to show how European musical minimalism appeared in a parallel but unique form to its American counterpart.

To do so, this paper will examine the musical output of various European and American composers, paying special attention to publication dates, styles and aesthetics. This research will show that European composers were already writing work that broadly met the criteria for what has come to be known as minimalism. This paper will show that European composers were pursuing such endeavors as early as the 1950s—concurrent with similar undertakings that were transpiring in the United States.

This broad overview will look closely at various schools of minimalism in Europe, such as *The Hague School* and the *Mystic Minimalists*. These will be used as case studies to consider how and why minimalism as an ideological and aesthetic practice took hold among those composers working within, or often cited as belonging to, one of these groups. This research will offer readers a reconsideration of minimalist roots, looking at how these unique histories and agencies were part of a large global movement that was reacting to the situations, concerns, and limitations of society.

Secondly, this paper will postulate on the various reasons that European composers were unable to achieve the same recognition as their American colleagues in these formative years. To this point, research will show how post-war European institutions such as radio broadcast companies and new music festivals heavily favored the modernist tradition which had been largely ignored due to the incurred financial strain during the interwar years. This is in contrast to the American university, which starting from the 1950s introduced ethnomusicology and other world music topics into their curriculum. This ignited a cultural phenomenon that had strong implications in the development of minimalism in America—and one that would come to have influence in Europe only later on.

**Timeline**

- 1952 Goeyvaerts' *Nr. 4 met dode tonen*
- 1957 La Monte Young's *For Brass*
- 1958 La Monte Young's *Trio for Strings*
- 1960 Yves Klein's *Monotone Symphony*
  La Mont Young's *Composition #7*
- 1962 Andriessen's *Registers* for piano
- 1964 Pärt's *Solfeggio*
  Terry Riley's *In C*
- 1966 La Monte Young's Dream Houses
  Reich's *Come Out*
- 1967 Reich's *Piano Phase*
- 1968 Stockhausen's *Stimmung*
- 1971 Tom Johnson coins the term minimal music
- 1972 Andriessen's *De Staat* (started)
  Gorecki's *2nd Symphony*

## I. Tom Coins Minimalism: The Politics of Identity

*It was hardly an American movement, no matter what the other critics were saying. - Tom Johnson*

It is perhaps wise to begin this paper by discussing what is meant by the term minimalism and under what conditions it is to be observed. It is, after all, a term of contention—and one that has historically proved problematic for scholars and artists alike to define. Much of what is written on minimalism has been largely framed by Anglo-American narratives, a point highlighted in Ian Pace's recent contribution to the book *Writing to Louis Andriessen*: *Commentaries on Life and Music.* Pace's text charts out the history of American scholarship on minimalism before focusing on the European narratives that subvert and challenge notions of American exceptionalism.[1]

The often accepted Anglo-derived narrative, presented across scholarship in a limitless array of permutations, can be found synthesized in K. Robert Schwarz's 1996 book *Minimalist*. He begins the history of minimalism with La Monte Young's 1958 *Trio for Strings*, a work which ushered in a radical new period that saw musical developments in tandem with aesthetic ideologies of minimal art and Fluxus. From there, Schwarz moves to *Terry Riley,* a former classmate of Young, showing how his early tape pieces from the early 1960s provided a catalyst in both style and aesthetic that would lead to the completion of *In C* in 1964—a pinnacle work of the minimalist canon. The narrative continues, moving on from Riley to *Steve Reich* and then to *Philip Glass*.[2]

Many of the texts prior to Schwarz garner much of the same in determining the bedrock of minimalism. In Timothy A. Johnson's 1994 contribution to the *Musical Quarterly*, he parses out the different considerations of minimalism when viewed through the lenses of aesthetic, style, and technique. As an aesthetic, Johnson reviews the findings of Edward Strickland who, in his *Minimalism Origins*, upheld the correlation between minimalist art and music. Johnson writes that in each historical period, music has had its own objectives,

[1] Ian Pace, *The Historiography of Minimal Music and the Challenge of Andriessen to Narratives of American Exceptionalism, (Writing Commentaries to Louis Andriessen, 2019*), 90.
[2] Pace, *Historiography*, 90-91.

such as voice leading and harmonic progression while minimalism is void of these objectives, "thus, pieces focusing primarily on the process alone, or pieces that lack goals and motion towards those goals, best exemplify the delineation of minimal music." Johnson illuminates on scholar *Eliane Broad* who wrote that "minimalism represents a new way of listening to music, concentrating on the process itself." Himself adding that "[minimal pieces] require new listening strategies in order to fully appreciate them."[3]

After his musings, Johnson takes the stance that minimalism is neither an aesthetic nor style, but rather, a technique built from what Glenn Watkins describes as, "a general reduction of materials and emphasis on repetitive schemes and stasis." Johnson upholds the Anglo-derived narrative by asserting conditions of minimalism strongly associated with that of American composers, namely, "a continuous formal structure, an even rhythmic texture and bright tone, a simple harmonic palette, a lack of extended melodic lines, and repetitive rhythmic patterns." Johnson's severe limitation goes so far as to remove Young as a candidate of the minimalist canon.

While Johnson provides his reader with a finite image of what he considers minimalism, it leaves much still to be extracted from Watkins' notions of repetition and stasis. In Marten Beirens' writings, which conclude that there are two types of minimalism, the *repetitive* and the *reductive* type, he provides a much broader definition allowing a greater plurality of minimalist styles to be considered. For Beirens, the repetitive type is characterized by process-based repetition that is used in generating material and form while the reductive type constitutes anything simple in nature.[4] In turn, it takes a more holistic view of process—offering a definition that is inclusive of the minimalist experiments that occurred in the late 1950s, in Fluxus, and more broadly, to a variety of musical trends that emerged in the 19th century—some of which will be discussed in the subsequent chapter.

To that end, this thesis proposes that minimalist ideologies, in conjunction with localized histories and conditions, actually gave rise to two lineages of

[3] Timothy Johnson, *Minimalism: Aesthetic, Style, or Technique*, (The Musical Quarterly, 1994), 742-745.
[4] Maarten Beirens, *Minimal Music in the Low Countries*, (Tijdschrift Van De Koninklijhe Vereniging Voor Nederlandse Muziekgeshiedenis, 2004), 31.

minimalism; the first, an American one built on processes and repetition like those outlined in Johnson's text, and a second, European style of minimalism, largely traced to *Eric Satie*, that is rooted in the music of the medieval period, Renaissance polyphony, and in neoclassical ideologies. It is to be stated that these two minimal lineages are not mutually exclusive, and in fact, globalization in the post-war era helped to see a healthy exchange between them, albeit arguably contributing to an obscured visibility of the historical contributions of Europe.

So, what then of the scholarship on European minimalism? In Wim Merten's *American Minimal Music*, he presents a trajectory that comes largely from European composers, linking Schoenberg, Webern, and Stockhausen with minimalism, upholding what Kyle Gann sees as minimalism's shared affinities with serialism.[5] While Merten places figures like Young, Reich, Riley and Glass at the centre of his work, he gives peripheral acknowledgement to Bryars, Nyman, Andriessen, Hamel, Michael Fahres, Karel Goayvaerts, and Frans Geysen among others.[6] Schwarz, however, handles the music of both Andriessen and Pärt with shocking ill-consideration, concluding that their early works stim from an "epiphany" imparted by American minimalists. In the early 1980s, Michael Fahres founded the European Minimalism Project which published essays that sought to chronicle the history of European minimalism. In an interview carried out with him for the purposes of this paper, Fahres asserted that European minimalism was a very active movement after the war and any histories that place it at the side fail to acknowledge the circumstances that hindered composers' careers. Fahres believes that European minimalism 'lost time' in the 1950s and 1960s due to the European music industry's need to close the cultural gap that existed from 1930 to 1947 due to the war. This issue is taken up in chapter III of this text.[7]

[5] Johnson, *Minimalism*, 743.
[6] Pace, *Historiography*, 94.
[7] Michael Fahres, *Interview*, (2018.)

## Tom Johnson and the Voice of New Music

As an ideology, minimalism proliferated through every form of art—spanning beyond the visual arts to literature, film, and music. Schwarz's text began in a period of United States history where post-consumer ideology was enabling the creation of new artistic practices that were spreading throughout the country. As discussed, they favored reduction and process over sentimentality and encouraged a unification of artistic practices across disciplines. By the 1950's, New York City's Happenings were laying the foundations for the 1960's Fluxus, a multi-disciplinary art movement that saw collaboration between visual artists, writers, dancers and composers, often in the form of live art or performance.

It was from this environment that Tom Johnson first began writing about minimal music as a critic in the *Voice of New Music Series*. His writings are significant not only in how they highlight the diversity of minimalism, but also in their review of its international contributors. The examination of Johnson's text provides a broader scope with which to consider the aesthetic influences of minimalism, and more importantly, those that were provided by European immigrants or otherwise any aesthetics or trends coming from Europe.

On March 30, 1971, Johnson first used the term minimalism in a music critique titled *The Minimal Slow Music Approach: By Alvin Lucier and Others*.[8] The review featured three works, including those by *Stuart Marshall*, *Mary Lucier*, and *Alvin Lucier*. Of the three pieces, each featured strong performative elements with Johnson writing that the first piece had no sound at all. The historic concert, which was held at the Village Presbyterian Church in Greenwich Village, is striking in that it affirms the connection between performance art and experimental music practices with minimal music as late as the early 1970s. This gives credence to Beirens' reductive type of minimalism while weakening Timothy Johnson's more strict observances that minimalism follows set formalistic features in both harmony and rhythm. Tom Johnson's inclusion of Alvin Lucier connects the American lineage of minimalism to the experimental and performative in the same way that *Yves Klein*'s works in France connects

[8] Tom Johnson, *The Minimal Slow Music Approach: By Alvin Lucier and Others*, (The Voice of New Music, 1972.)

them to the European lineage. In general, this text shows that pieces outside of the inherent musical canon can and should be used when looking at broader developments in the minimalist ideologies both in the United States and in Europe. Reflecting on this text, Johnson notes that already a few years later the aesthetic associations of minimalism had become more concrete. He writes:

> I don't think I fully realized yet that my own Four Note Opera, written on a four-note scale that very same year, was also a form of minimal music. … The minimal experiences I was talking about had nothing to do with the music that most people thought of as minimalist music a few years later.[9]

On April 6, a week after the Village Presbyterian concert, Johnson referred to the additive-process based style of Philip Glass as *hypnotic music.* He was referring to Glass's *Music with Changing Parts* when he stressed the work's rhythmic complexity that gave rise to the term. By September 7, Johnson had embraced this *hypnotic* title—saying he agreed, at least in part, with the title for the then-called *New York Hypnotic School* including the four figures outlined in Schwarz's historiography of minimalism: Riley, Reich, Glass and Young. Interestingly, Johnson notes that he would wish to include British composer *Gavin Bryars* to the list, a historical fracture to the American-centric narrative. In regard to all five, Johnson deduces that:

> The form of their pieces is always flat. They are not interested in building to climaxes, or manipulating tension and relaxation, or in working with large contrasts of any kind.[10]

The second major mention of a European composer active in the New York minimal scene came in March 1973 when Johnson published a review of the then fairly unknown Eliane Radigue—a French-born electronic music composer who had been active since the early 1950s. Radigue had moved to New York only two years prior after studying music concrète techniques with Pierre Schaeffer and Pierre Henry. That same year she premiered her work Chryptus before going on to become a regular performer throughout the city. In his writing about her, Johnson employs the word minimalism for first time when referring to a more

[9] Tom Johnson, *Minimalism in Music: in search of a definition*, 2.
[10] Tom Johnson, *La Monte Young, Steve Reich, Terry Riley, Philip Glass*, (The Voice of New Music, 1972.)

'traditional' pitch-based composition—as opposed to the performative and experimental music seen at the Village Presbyterian concert in 71.

Thus, this chapter has exposed the critical fault present in much of the commonly cited minimalist research—its lack of inclusion regarding European narratives, and more, the contributions by Europeans to minimalism more generally. Tom Johnson provides insight into the formation of the minimalist identity while revealing the true breadth of the movements international reaching's. From here, this text will consider the developments unique to European minimalism in an effort to provide scholarly material that supplants Anglo-centric narratives. Following that, Fahres' views of the post-war European music industry will be brought under consideration to better understand why European minimalism has historically been placed at the side of dominant narratives.

## II. An Overview: The Development of Minimalism in Europe

To understand European minimalism, we must parse out its distinct histories and lineages, forever ascribing them to any number of definitions provided by musicologists and historians—like those discussed in Chapter I. To that end, I return to the succinct breakdown provided by Marten Beirens, who postulates that there are *two types* of minimalism; first, the *repetitive type*, characterized by process-based repetition as a generator for material and form, and second, the *reductive type*, which includes anything simple in nature. For the second, the canonic works of Morton Feldman or certain experiments by La Monte Young might come to mind. Problematically, Beirens finds both of these forms to be *borrowed*, originating first in the United States before moving to Europe. This statement can be easily dispelled by reviewing a thorough timeline of early minimal music endeavors. The timeline in this text marks Karel Goeyvaerts' *met dode tonen Nr.4*, from 1952, as one of the earliest experiments in minimal composition, with Arvo Pärt's 1964 *Solfeggio* composed the same year as Terry Riley's *In C*—a work often cited in the literature as being among one of the first minimal compositions. What the timeline does not show, however, are the ideological and stylistic exchanges that occurred both within and between Europe and the United States. This chapter will examine the musical practices unique to Europe which promoted a thoroughly European form of minimalism. It is to be noted that this writer does not deny the influence of the United States on such efforts, for in fact, certain aesthetic outcomes were indeed heavily influenced by American composers. Rather, this chapter intends to show that European minimalism was first based in its own aesthetic queries before opening up to a broader global development spearheaded by the robust community of minimalists in the United States. Chapter I set up these complex histories by noting the United States' post-war consumer culture and the rise of Fluxus, a movement some have argued has its roots in European Dadaism. More so, the various names, including *New Simplicity*, *Hypnotic Music*, and *Meditative Music* are all used here to illuminate the individual trajectories that were established before the term minimalism came into common usage. While Chapter III focuses extensively on the agents of the music industry, and their overwhelming support for modernist trends, expressionism, and the composers associated with the

Darmstadt school, this chapter examines those trends which were concurrent, albeit less visible, with American minimalism.

**Rendezvous in Paris: Minimalism and France**

One cannot begin to talk about a unique European minimalism without discussing the contributions of the French. Their efforts arguably serve as one of European minimalism's most important players, and as such, will be referenced continuously throughout this chapter. Not only did late 19th century actors, including artists, architects and composers, establish the foundations for an aesthetic built on reduction and simplicity, but by the second half of the 20th century, France played an active role in securing its popularity.

In reflecting on his own musings of the term minimalism, its origins, and the early attempts to define it, Tom Johnson arrived at the following realization:

> Is minimalism a French Idea? One can not really claim that, though it is historical fact that the first monochrome paintings and the first extreme minimal music in Europe were produced by two curious men from Honfleur, Normandy: Eric Satie and Alfons Allais. If minimal architecture has roots in Adolf Loos, minimal music has roots in the work of these two, who, already in the 1890s, in Paris, began their own subtracting processes, taking away images, emotions, decorations, and trying to get to the essentials of art and music.[11]

While it would be hard to pin Eric Satie down to any one singular aesthetic, given that he prided himself on humor and character pieces intended to satirize the musical establishment[12], it is with a certain candidness I acknowledge the sparse and spatial qualities present in much of his music. Debussy once said of him that he is 'a gentle medieval musician lost in this century'[13]—a unique insight which requires momentary consideration. While impressionist composers like Debussy looked to the early baroque to find their musical scaffolding, Satie was existing in his own temporal space, conjuring poetic ideas that his contemporaries saw as paralleling the medieval. This relevant insight brings us to a defining point of European minimalism—that it holds, in part, origins in the revival of medieval aesthetics. Scholars of *The New Simplicity* and *Mysticism* would later reflect that

[11] Tom Johnson, *Minimalism in Music*, 5.
[12] Robert Orledge, *Eric Satie*, (New Grove Dictionary, 2001.)
[13] Orledge, *Satie*

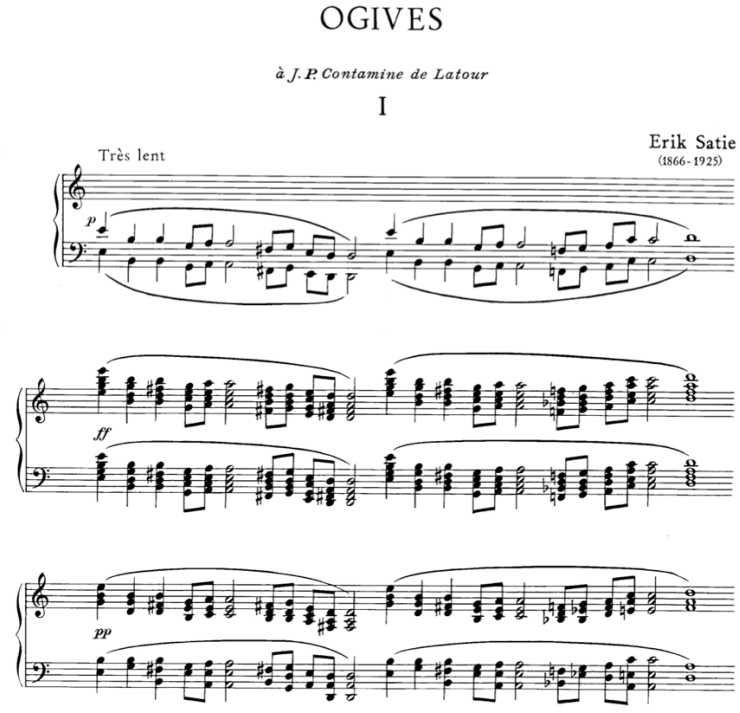
these Medieval sensibilities are present in many of the works, while composers would openly acknowledge its influence. Ladislav Kupkovcik in his discussion of New Simplicity would characterize such aims as an exploration into the new uses of tonality.[14]

For Tom Johnson, Satie provides the narrative of an early avant-gardist who fathered the codified minimalists of the 1960s. While in truth, Satie can lay claim to much more. He originated new questions and devised an aesthetic impetus that would define compositional practices both in Europe and in the United States. Biographer Robert Orledge writes of him that, "…his harmonic ear was his greatest gift, though his work gained greater strength through the sparser, more contrapuntal approach he adopted after his years at the Schola Cantorum."[15] Satie described of his style in 1917:

> Do not forget that the melody is the Idea, the outline; as much as it is the form and the subject matter of a work. The harmony is an illumination, an exhibition of the object, its reflection ... If there is form and a new style of writing…[16]

With a steadfast focus on melody, contrapuntal considerations, and a view that the harmony serves to illuminate, no work highlights his aesthetical considerations and medieval musings better than the four barless *Ogives* from 1886—each using a tune "in the spirit of a medieval plainsong."

[14] Ladislav Kupkovcik, *The Role of Tonality in Contemporary and 'Up-to-Date' Composition.* (Tempo, 1980), 17.
[15] Orledge, *Satie*
[16] Ibid.






Combining the ancient with the French virtues of simplicity and brevity, Orledge surmises of the work;

> As in many of Satie's early compositional sets, the concept is timeless and spatial, as if the same sculpture were being viewed from different angles. Through repetition Satie makes a lot out of a little; the craft is certainly a simple means to an end, and both the style of writing and the concept were entirely new.[17]

And still, Satie's role as a cultural observer and commentator extend his contributions to minimalism well beyond his music. As a member of the French art circles, the older Satie played an active role in hosting functions for the burgeoning Dadaist movement in Paris[18]. At times begrudgingly, Satie was championed by the Dadaist for his lifetime of out-of-the-box and avant-garde work.[19] In that way, he is also to be included in the narrative of the experimental and conceptual art that grew from Dadaism into the vibrant post-war art scene in France, one that owed much in ideology and aesthetics to its predecessors.

One such artist of this new generation was Yves Klein, who debuted his iconic *monotone symphony* on March 9, 1960, in the grand salon of the Maurice

[17] Orledge, *Satie*
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.

d'Arquian's Galerie Internationale d'Art Contemporain.[20] The work, which asks an orchestra and choir to sound continuously on one singular pitch, parallels the explorations of La Monte Young between 1957-1960. In the work's program liner, Klein posited that he had formulated the idea as early as 1947.[21] Similar aesthetics of reduction were provided by the composer Eliane Radigue who, after having completed an education in *musique concrète* with Pierre Schaeffer, relocated to New York where she began performing in the city's experimental music scene and appearing in Tom Johnson's *Voice of New Music Series*. Both Klein and Radigue reflect a generation that grew up in the light of Satie's developments.

In addition, France's contributions to the history of minimalism can also be seen in its role as an ambassador and place of pedagogy, helping garner international recognition for a largely American-based group of minimal composers. French influence no doubt came to Reich and Glass through their studies with Darius Milhaud, and more, to Glass who studied with the famous 20th century pedagogue Nadia Boulanger.[22] More, figures like Chantal D'Arcy were important in instituting their careers in France and in Europe.

D'Arcy self-founded Shandar Records in 1970 under the advice of Cecil Taylor and would go on to record some of the most influential early recordings of minimal music[23]. In its span, the small studio would release such pivotal albums as Steve Reich's *Four Organs and Phase Patterns* (1970,) Terry Riley's *Persian Surgery Dervishes* (1971,) and Philip Glass's *Solo Album* (1975.)[24] D'Arcy's founding of the studio and interest in the subject were heavily influenced by her involvement in the French art scene, where she had previously established summer concert series at museums. Shandar Records also promoted the music of European composers, including the 1971 recording of Stockhausen's Illimité, among others.[25] This underscores Fahres findings that with Stockhausen's completion of Stimmung in 1968, more and more European modernists were unleashed from their pressures and allowed to experiment with certain

[20] Par Frédéric Prot, *Incandescence*, (Milan, 5 Continents Editions, 2012.)
[21] Prot, *Icandescence*
[22] Pace, *Historiography*, 91.
[23] Chantal D'Arcy, *Interview* (Berkley, Ode Gravity, 1973.)
[24] Ibid.
[25] D'Arcy, *Interview*, (1973)

*meditative* or *minimalist* aesthetics. Shandar Records thus stands as a significant player in Europe for the dissemination and visibility of American and European minimalism.

**The New Simplicity, Neue Einfachkeit, and Mysticism**

An insightful seminar was held at the Aspen Institute of Berlin in 1977 that brought 15 composers together to discuss *The origins of the New Simplicity in Music*. Among those present were Reich, Brian Ferneyhough, and Antonius De Leeuw, with several others coming from Eastern Europe, Russia, and Japan. John Evarts, writing for *The World of Music* provides a day by day account of the discussions that took place on New Simplicity and its emergence (or re-emergence) as an aesthetic. On the first day, the composers were asked that who among them identified as belonging to the New Simplicity: none responded reports Evarts. It was that distance and seeming curiosity that framed the experience over the next four days. Quoting Peter Heyworth, the seminar began:

> "I am myself not altogether sure that the modish concept of "The New Simplicity", which we have taken as our theme, really describes the dominating compositional tendencies of the music of the 1970's. I am convinced, however, that these new tendencies are closely related to our present-day interests and can therefore be generally justified. These interests aim at the broadening of our compositional consciousness towards the goal of a 'world music'.[26]

The group made concentrated efforts to both identify the characteristics of the New Simplicity while understanding its origins. Edward Cowie of Great Britian was the first to make the connection between New Simplicity and the Paris School and French composers—stressing their historical influence on English composers.[27]

Alexander Goeher, speaking at a lecture on "The Roots of New Simplicity" focused his attention on the significance of the 1920s, emphasizing the aesthetical ties to Stravinsky, Eisler, and Brecht. Goeher determined that the interwar years had seen a change in aesthetical pursuits. He explained that, "Pre-

[26] John Evarts, *Seminar at the Aspen Institute Berlin-The New Simplicity in Contemporary Music* (The World of Music, 1977), 191.
[27] Evart, *Seminar*, 192.

1918 music might be described as "untransformed" music-neo-classicism, and post-1918 as "transformed" music. Two aspects influenced neo-classicism: the Russian Revolution (Eisler, Brecht, Weill, etc.) and, after 1918, the influence of the Russians."[28] Goeher goes on to describe Hindemith as an example of failed simplicity because it relies on a 'back-to-Bach' approach as opposed to the use of more common and approachable materials like that seen in the works of Eisler.[29]

Scholar Frank Hentschel has looked at the works of Hindemith, such as *Orgelwerk*, and Britten's *Cello Symphony*, to trace the historiography of European New Simplicity.[30] Goeher's beliefs might underscore why it has been challenging to link Hindemith and similar figures directly to the rise of the New Simplicity movement. Namely, that its aesthetical occupations lay rooted in the wrong ideologies. Goeher notes that with the interwar years their began a reactionary period against impressionist music, a style already based in the antiquity of the baroque.[31] It gives a certain weight to the argument that New Simplicity composers were in search of inspirations either removed from or outside the weight of the western music tradition. Although it goes unmentioned, this interest in an aesthetic removed from the developmental narrative of western art music might explain the larger shift to Medieval and other early music practices. Antonius De Leeuw saw the weight of tradition as a major weakness for European composers unlike their American counterparts.

The influence of the visual arts was also discussed. Evarts writes of Polish composer Zygmunt Krauze:

> his music …has been influenced by the Polish painter Syymanski (1924), who painted in one color and achieved a clear, material unity thereby. Mr. Krauze attempted to transform this 'unitary' simplicity to his compositions as opposed to the "baroque" developmental style.[32]

This sentiment seems to echo the issues that Goeher took with the music of Hindemith—a seeming disinterest in the history of a dominant developmental narrative in western art practices and music.

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[28] Evart, *Seminar*, 193.
[29] Ibid, 193.
[30] Frank Hentschel, *Wie Neu War Die "Neue Einfachheit*, (Acta Musicologica, 2006), 117.
[31] Evart, *Seminar*, 193.
[32] Ibid, 192.

New Simplicity existed in various pockets throughout continental Europe. A group of composers active in the early 1970s in West Germany were identified by scholar Aribert Reimann. while an independent New Simplicity School formed arguably some 15 years earlier in Denmark. In addition to their aesthetic fascination with 1920s neo-classism, ancient musical forms, and, like their American counterparts, influence from the music of South East Asian, some scholars have examined the specific inter-musical goals of the New Simplicity. Kupkovcik writing in 1980, asked how 'simple' the New Simplicity really was. His writing looks closely at the tools used in the New Simplicity, noting the importance of musical quotation, something that was already a recognizable feature in the music of New Complexity composers. Kupkovcik finds that the goal of New Simplicity was the discovery of new idioms and new harmonies for tonal contexts. He argues that in fact New Simplicity was anything but simple given its reliance on creating new music within the strict codified rules of tonal practice.[33] The New Simplicity aesthetic was also, in part, a reactionary movement against the Darmstadt School and the European avant-garde. Amy Beal credits the influence of Morton Feldman and David Tudor, whose works and performances inspired young European composers attending Darmstadt festivals in the late 1950s and early 1960s (The specifics of these courses are addressed in the following chapter.)[34]

In the United Kingdom, composers like Michael Nyman, Peter Maxwell Davis, and Gavin Bryans represented a distinctively British New Simplicity[35], continuing perhaps, as Hentshel suggests, in the line of Britten's more reductive compositions, or like Edward Cowie put it, under the important influence of the French. The impact of visual art and visual thinking can also be seen in Colin Matthew's Fourth Sonata (which premiered eight months before Andriessen's De Staat.) In reflecting on the work in the 1990s, Matthews comments:

> When I planned the work, I gave its three main sections the working titles of 'Intensification', 'Complexity' and 'Simplification', with the central section subdivided into three in a way which exactly parallels the divisions of the whole. I also gave the piece a subtitle which reflected the fact that I saw the music in terms of colours: but the

[33] Kupkovcik, *The Role of Tonality,* 16-20.
[34] Amy Beal, *Interview*, (2020.)
[35] Pace, *Historiography*, 97.

> subtitle was later withdrawn, not least because I decided that the colours I had suggested were, in retrospect, inappropriate ones. However, the concept of large areas of colour, applied as if in large brush-strokes, is perhaps a useful way of seeing the work; and its preoccupations still seem valid to me, at a distance of nearly 25 years, especially the idea of 'intensification', which has remained a central concern.[36]

In Eastern Europe, prominent figures like Gorecki and Pärt became associated with a subset of the New Simplicity known as Mystic Minimalism. Like the larger trend, it too looked simultaneously both outward and inward, with Josiah Fisk commenting of Pärt's aesthetic that it was "a personal and relatively free-form mixture of Western Medieval and Eastern asceticism."[37] The Medieval aspects are also present in the work of Gorecki, with Fisk lamenting on the handling of musical canons in his third symphony:

> Gorecki's canon simply continues as it began, with higher and higher voices adding themselves to the pile. He doesn't alter the initial pattern. He fulfills the expectation of the naive ear and calls it a day. What about the musical content of the canon? Here too the listener is sent away empty. Rather than any perceptible form of interaction among the voices of the canon? any mutual acknowledgement? there are merely simultaneous monologues. The composer has scrupulously followed the basic specifications for a canon, taking a musical line and overlapping it with itself at regular intervals, but has ignored the principles which give the form an interest.[38]

Here, one might return to Kupkovcik's point regarding the interest in creating new idioms and contexts for tonal music. If the medieval associations present in the music of Gorecki are 'empty' or 'naïve', one might interpret this 'emptiness' and naïve handling as an exaggeration of medieval austerity, thus making the familiar otherworldly much in the same way that Eastern music is otherwordly. In Hungary, László Sáry approached minimalism through aesthetic ideology linked more with pedagogy than with specific musical influence. Over the course of his career he developed the Sáry Method, a form of teaching that connected music with experimental theatre practices. Sáry also founded Hungary's New

[36] Colin Mathews, *Program Note: Fourth Sonata*, (Novello, 1998)
[37] Josiah Fisk, *The New Simplicity: The Music of Górecki, Tavener and Pärt*, (The Hudson Review, 405.
[38] Ibid, 401.

Music Studio (uj zenei studio) with Peterrel Eötvös which helped Hungary to expand into new territories in experimental music.[39]

### The Netherlands and Belgium: *the Hague School* and Renaissance Polyphony

Another important player in the development of European Minimalism was the Netherlands. So much so that a group of active composers headed by Louis Andriessen would later be canonized as *The Hague School*—defined by an aesthetic that included elements of both the *reductive* and *repetitive types* of minimalism as outlined by Beirens. In addition to using process-based approaches and the conceptual frameworks of the visual arts, Dutch minimalism too pulled from influences of serialism and the revival of Medieval and Renaissance ontologies. For the former, Dutch composers were able to assimilate American influence while deducing a uniquely European sounding minimalism that participated in the continent's dominant discourses on modernism. The latter, perhaps more interestingly, provides insight into the collective movement throughout Europe—the very same that can be traced from Satie. For example, the revival of Netherlandish Renaissance polyphony—as seen in the works of Joep Franssens and Belgian composer Frans Geysen—provided a historical contrapuntal practice that evaded sentimentality while favoring process. This pluralism of Netherlandish minimalism has perhaps in part been the catalyst for its success. Still, it produces unique challenges in parsing out the difference between adoption and influence that occurred between minimalists in the United States and those in the Netherlands, while also identifying the key tenets of a specifically Netherlandish minimalism.

In the Anglo-American literature on musical minimalism, no one European composer seems referenced more for his merits than of Louis Andriessen. As such, his stylistic trajectories and life's work make him a difficult figure to categorize for any number of reasons. While one cannot ignore the clear influence that the American minimalists have had on him, given his own recognition of that influence, it is, as with any composer, possible to assert influences and connections not yet considered or their implications not yet

[39] László Sáry, *Composer's Website*, (2020.)

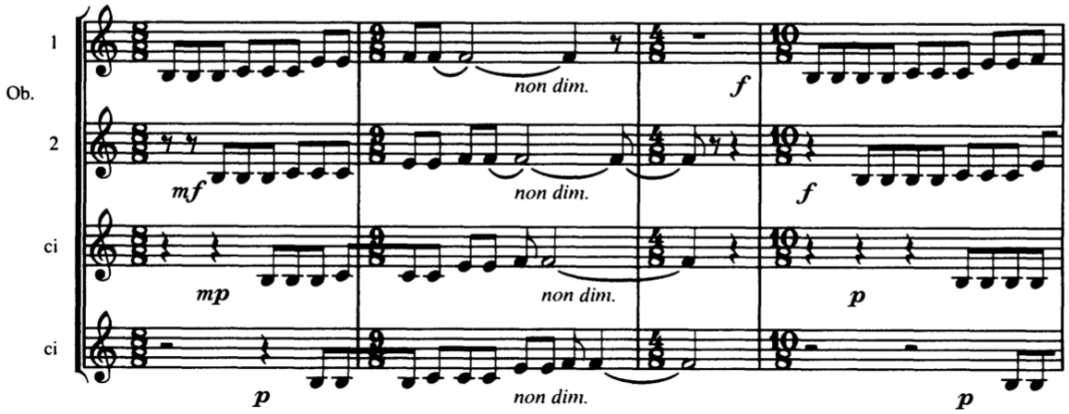
realized. In this case, we might look at Beirens' assertion that Andriessen's early European influences were more in line with the French, rather than with German romanticism[40]— an aesthetic attraction that one might conceive as a fascination with the French virtues of simplicity and brevity discussed above. At any rate, Beirens assertion puts certain aesthetics of Andriessen's in proximity with a form of minimal influence not specific to the United States, but rather that of a long tradition extant in France since the end of the 19th century. It is quite possible to believe that Andriessen's arrival at minimalist aesthetics may have come not only from influence by American composers, but by parallel aesthetics that were developing in France and in Europe more broadly. Certain scholars, like Robert Aldington have also look at the Stravinskian influence of Andriessen's music— perhaps aligning him with neoclassical interests that were discussed at the Aspen Institute discussed above.[41]

Beirens also looks at Andiressen's love of jazz music. This too complicates the distinction of influence versus adoption. Post-war globalization and consumerism saw a fast spread in the availability of American popular music to European markets. Having listened to popular music styles and Jazz during his formative years, it seems obvious to note that he would have digested many of the same trends and stylistic tendencies ascertained by his American counterparts. This is to distinguish a narrative of Andriessen's adoption of American minimalism with one that instead considers a more nuanced view, suggesting that it also arose from the influence of already familiar American styles from his youth. In essence, it makes sense that if the early *New York Hypnotic School* and Andriessen had shared similar listening experiences that each may have provided the catalyst for their later conceptions of form, tonality, and process. Jazz and improvisation as such have largely been included in the historiography of musical minimalism for both American and European composers.

Of course, Andriessen's early music didn't achieve the machine line minimalism that would come in his later works. Instead, early experiments like his *Registers* for piano from 1962 focus on conceptual frameworks that link him

[40] Maarten Beirens *The Identity of European Minimal Music as Reflected in the Works of Louis Andriessen, Karel Goeyvaerts, Gavin Bryars and Michael Nyman: A Music-Analytical Study*, (2006.)
[41] Robert Aldington, Louis Andriessen: De Staat (Ashgate Publishing Company, 2004), 31-56.

with the performative and experimental developments that happened in tandem with minimalism.




© Louis Andriessen, De Staat mm. 28-31
1976 Donemus, Amsterdam.

Andriessen's peers were also pluralistic in their aesthetics. Beyond *The Hague School,* many post-war musical practices in the Netherlands saw a return to tonal idioms. Composer and pedagogue Antonius de Leeuv built a generation of composers that engaged these queries throughout the second half of the twentieth century. De Leeuw himself experimented with modal and spatial compositional procedures as early as 1960s,[42] over a decade before Andriessen's De Staat. Tonal-minded students like Tristan Keuris developed a hybrid aesthetic that pulled equally from Stravinsky, Stockhausen, and the meditative and minimalist developments around him. Still, other trends included the revival of older music forms such as Netherlandish Renaissance polyphony, an influence clearly displayed in Joep Franssens' 2001 *Harmony of the Spheres*. In Andriessen's *De Staat*, one might wonder if the canons featured in the figure above are rooted as much in this revival as they are in a work like Ligeti's *Atmospheres*.

This revivalist trend had long been underway and served as a significant influence for Belgian composer Frans Geysen. Geysen began studying serialism in the mid-1960s before developing his own style of minimalism that was, according to biographer Yves Knockaert, void of any American influence. Having trained as an organist, his unique style also relied on the revived Netherlandish Renaissance

[42] Rokus De Groot, *Ton De Leeuw*, (New Grove Dictionary, 1996.)

Polyphony.[43] Other experiments in Belgian minimalism had been underway long before Geysen. Goayvaerts, despite receiving little acknowledgement during his early-life for his contributions to minimalism, was heavily interested in its forms and processes. Beirens, speaks of Goeyvaerts' letters to Stockhausen about his interest in certain musical principles that would later come to define the larger minimalist aesthetic.[44] Beirens determines that Goayvaerts came to minimalism some twenty or so years after establishing his reputation as a serialist. This is in part a factual inaccuracy, as Goayvaerts 1952 work *Nr. 4 met dode tonen Nr. 4* already fit well into the reductive principles of minimalism before his most important serialist compostitions.

[43] Yves Knockaert, *Frans Geysen*, (New Grove Dictionary, 2013.)
[44] Beirens, *Minimal Music in the Low Countries* (2004.)

## III. Post-War Poster Children: An Effort to Save the Lost Years

> *To me it seems important that the Zeitgeist from the USA and Europe were the same but that the 2nd World War made it difficult for minimalist composers to be heard. They lost time. – Michael Fahres*

If the European music industry had an impact on the those it represented and the narratives it fostered, it could be asked whether composers might have avoided minimalistic tendencies for fear of societal pressures established by the industry; that which primarily upheld and promoted the modernist and avant-garde trends of Europe. This chapter looks more closely at this, considering the phenomenon of radio broadcast and new music festivals as important agents of for the post-war European music industry, arguing that to a large extent, they did favor certain aesthetics which have obscured the visible narratives of European minimalism.

The end of the 2nd World War was a turning point for Europe. Cultural and educational institutions such as orchestras, museums, and universities were faced with the challenge to begin rebuilding and expanding their prewar aims and objectives. For most, these challenges were exacerbated by the destruction of former facilities and ensuing financial strains. In her examination of American music in West Germany, Amy Beal discusses just this: describing the extensive loss of the cultural and architectural landmarks in Berlin and the effects on the institutions they housed. For orchestras, she argues, the practical and mental challenges to resume concert programming were significant. Not only were most major orchestras without a home, but many former musicians had either died or were ill from the prolonged war conditions while others had been left without instruments. To aid in these struggles, Beal cites the large number of American soldiers still stationed in Germany who filled empty vacancies at concerts in the immediate months following the war.[45] For Beal, this frames the United States involvement in West Germany's economic and cultural rebuilding while providing context for the complex reception of American composers later on.

[45] Amy Beal, *Patronage and Reception History of American Experimental Music in West Germany*, 1945-1986, University of Michigan, 1999.) 22-32.

Beal's text highlights only one example of the unique struggles and circumstances that plagued most European nations. Much of Western Europe, including France and the United Kingdom, were receiveing U.S. military aid following the war, and those American soldiers still deployed played a significant role as cultural ambassadors, leading to a heightened interest in U.S. culture and customs throughout the continent. With an ongoing concern for Europe's instability and the looming fear of communist threats, U.S. interest and accessibility increased with the the 1948 Marshall Plan: a mutually beneficial series of policies that would invest in European industry while providing stimulus to the U.S. economy by establishing markets for American goods.[46]

These plans, combined with Europe's own restructuring efforts, including those of the newly established Council of Europe, helped to pave a road forward that provided a catalyst for European institutions to return to conversations of cultural exchange and dialogue within the continent. The post-war era saw Europe return to several existing agents employed for such efforts, namely radio broadcasting and universities. For the former, European radio's managing bodies had long established aims and objectives geared toward cultural empathy and knowledge during the initial proliferation of broadcast in the interwar years. Similarly, the post-war university provided common ground for discourse structured around academia—the sciences, humanities, and art. Together, these two institutions played a crucial role in the preservation of musical ideologies and trends while bucking a constant fear of collapse under the continual strain of war.

By the war's end, European relations had shifted, strengthening some while weakening others. In the world of contemporary music, this brought on a new agent for cultural exchange—the new music festival. For a state like West Germany, which had seen so many liaisons dismantled, the founding of institutions like Darmstadt not only enrichened the state's cultural life but allowed it to once again become a point of destination for the burgeoning new music scene. Similar festivals appeared throughout the continent, each serving to unite domestic artistic practices while providing a stage for international discourse and ensuring a global visibility for the state that housed it.

[46] United States Office of the Historian, *Marshall Plan* (2020.)

With these three and other various agents working jointly to rebuild the musical and cultural life throughout Europe, one significant challenge stood—how to remain relevant while mitigating the years of artistic advancement lost to the war. While individual and collective artistic pursuits had certainly continued between 1939 and 1946, emergency measures across nations severely handicapped their spread, limiting most to a localized recognition, if any at all. The post-war era thus demanded collaboration between cultural institutions to ensure that artistic activities that had been carried out during the war years would see deserved acknowledgement. It necessitated efforts to preserve the linear continuity of artist activities within the continent. For the music industry, including radio, instrumental ensembles, orchestras, and publishing houses, there was a backlog that created a distorted representation of the contemporary happenings. The allocation of time and money, in conjunction with other social and cultural shifts, created a stall in the visibility of artistic advancements that were contemporaneous with the institutions focus on saving the lost years.

No account captures this phenomenon better than a 1996 interview with Pierre Boulez. Interviewer Erling Guldbrandsen focused in on these pivotal years, asking Boulez to describe the war's impact on the exchange of music and materials between France and other nations:

> From 1939 to '45, the country was absolutely cut off, and there was no real modernism. There were certain sources of information, certain documents, which were completely missing. Even Stravinsky was barely known. Bartok not at all. Of the three Viennese, absolutely nothing was performed, or at least, publicly known.[47]

Boulez goes on to highlight that after 1945 these pieces and ideas began to make an appearance. He continues, "we were suddenly confronted with these great personalities, with masterpieces, some of which were not even performed… [one] could barely get hold of a score."[48] Most interesting is the acknowledgement of the delay, citing that the process took several years to see certain pieces and composers included in discussions, concert programming, and publication.

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[47] Erling Guldbrandsen, *PIERRE BOULEZ IN INTERVIEW, 1996 (I) MODERNISM, HISTORY AND TRADITION*, (Tempo, 2011), 9-10.
[48] Ibid, 9-10.

Furthermore, Boulez keenly highlights yet another layer to the slow acceptance and proliferation of these new pieces—the institutions' inability to understand them. Speaking anecdotally, Boulez describes of his experiences in France that the ensembles and orchestras did not at first understand the music, and consequently, did not perform it well. In regards to serialism and the Second Viennese School, Boulez places blame on the long existent stylistic and aesthetic differences between the French and German peoples.[49] Across Europe, the process of understanding the musical advancements made between 1939 and 1945 would further slow the efforts to *save the lost years* while hindering the visibility of new artistic directions.

These observations attempt to articulate important conditions present in the immediate post-war era that defined the trajectory of music and musical trends in the following decades. To that end, the groundwork has been laid for discussing how minimalism in Europe formed and coexisted within these constraints while acknowledging said constraints' contribution to accepted historical narratives. In an interview conducted by this author with composer and scholar Michael Fahres, he offers the following summary concluded from his extensive research gathered from his European Minimalism project in the 1980s:

> In Europe, after the 2nd World War, the music market, mainly the publishers and the concert producers, are more or less interested in closing the gap between 1933 and 1945. This means that after the 2nd World War they promoted the post-serial music. Young composers as Boulez, Stockhausen, Nono, Berio were supported because they belonged to "this world". Other music ideas didn't get any chance; not on the bigger podia, their scores were not printed, they got no attention at all. Only later, when Stockhausen composed the piece "Stimmung" (1968), these ideas slightly changed. The composition " Tabula Rasa" by Arvo Pärt, at het end of the 70s, changed the European music market totally, because the Zeitgeist was different and tonality and the perception of time got another significance.[50]

The remainder of this chapter will look closely at actors in the music industry, primarily two of the three previously mentioned agents: radio broadcasts and music festivals, to further consider Fahres assertions. With the exception of some anecdotal evidence, the discussion of publishing houses has not been examined due to a lack of substantiated research on the topic.

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[49] Guldbrandsen, *PIERRE BOULEZ,* 10.
[50] Michael Fahres, *Interview*, (2018.)

We will look broadly at the history and development of these two agents following the war. Later, returning to Fahres to articulate how these circumstances impeded the spread and acknowledgement of European minimalism during the 1950s and 1960s.

**The History of European Radio Broadcasts**

In her 2012 book *On Air*, writer Suzanne Lommers traces the history of European radio from the early 1920s to the beginning of the 2nd World War. In doing so, she provides insight into the complex relationships, ideologies, and agendas that riddled the industry. Competing interests between various actors, coupled with differing views on the essential role of radio, highlight the industry's necessity while illuminating its fractured underpinnings.

At the end of the 19th century, the International Broadcasting Union (IBU) understood the need to develop what Lommers calls 'attentive' listening: a phenomenon that had first emerged in 19th century theatre. The IBU community, in conjunction with cultural elites, saw attentive listening as a way to 'educate' and 'civilize' the individual. Broadcasting agencies across Europe organized programs that explored and fulfilled these agendas. Agencies like IBU and the cultural elites agreed that the radio's purpose was to spread 'high culture' art music to its listeners. Lommers writes:

> Essential to educating the masses, was the premise that a musical culture for broadcasting should consist of high art and high-culture music, rather than popular entertainment music[51]

The new century, along with the rise of popular music styles, began to splinter these united efforts. Broadcasters and cultural elites alike continued to agree on the role of radio as a cultural institution and as an effective means of transmitting musical culture across European borders. But the 1920s and 1930s brought new challenges, such as questions of authenticity and of cultural understanding. To this end, Lommers explores Europe's successful National Night programme which ran for several decades and attempted to introduce the

[51] Suzanne Lommers, *Europe - On Air: Interwar Projects* (Amsterdam University Press, 2012), 266.

music of different countries throughout the continent. The radio's accessibility and prevalence in private homes meant that listeners experienced works within their own individualized environments. This led to listening experiences that undermined the National Night programme's intention. For example, a concert featuring the music of Jean Sibelius might be heard by a listener in France, who, instead of coming to understand the Finnish experience, envisions the music as a description of the French countryside. A listener in Italy might conflate it with images of Italian vineyards. If the goal was to create cultural understanding, this concert format did little to educate listeners on the specific cultural and localized qualities of the music.[52] This severely undermined the integrity of the European radio project, further bolstering discourse on the need of popular music, and with it, the representation of various languages and customs from across the continent.

As the IBU moved to programs featuring more popular music, a direction they felt continued to uphold the international goals of broadcast, cultural elites in Europe held firm that the radio programming was meant solely for serious art music. By the 1930s, composer Bela Bartók and writer Karel Čapek had entered the discourse, qualifying both arguments with a 1931 resolution that upheld the importance of popular and dance music while acknowledging that these forms should be 'reworked' into high art music. Lommers summarizes of Bartók and Čapek:

> Together dance and folk music formed "the true popular music." Their idea, however, was that these popular influences would have to be raised to the level of art song. Fragments of popular music should be reworked into high art music rather than remain popular.[53]

Lommers notes the modernist approach taken by the two while illuminating their continued stress on the importance of high art music.

The discourse on cultural expressions intensified in the mid to late 1930s, leading the head of the Intellectual Co-Operation Organization (OCI) to announce in a 1935 meeting that, "It seems as if civilization were caught in a net from which it was trying in vain to escape....civilization seemed unable to save itself."[54] In the onset of the coming war, European radio struggled to find consensus in

[52] Lommers, *On Air*, 278.
[53] Ibid, 270.
[54] Ibid, 216.

programing efforts while every attempt was made by the OCI, "to give its view of civilization and culture a new and hopeful impetus."[55] Over the thirty-year long development, Lommers concludes that "by the time war broke out, broadcasters and cultural elites still had different opinions about what high-culture music was and how it should be formatted."[56]

This systemic gridlock that the IBU, OCI and cultural elites faced would only be stalled by the war A return to prewar conversations, weighted by new and ongoing crises, would continue playing a considerable role in the shaping of the broadcast industry during the coming decades. after the war, cultural broadcast programming would return to prewar trends and traditions while simultaneously expanding to include music that uphold Boulez's commentary that serialism and other modernist trends were only beginning to spread.

One such example of this can be seen in a 1952 review of Belgian broadcast programming by Paul Coaller and Denis Stevens published in *Tempo Magazine*. In it, they discuss the goals and attitudes of the country's broadcast network while providing insight into the music favorable among listeners. Referring to both popular and art music styles, the writers contend that there are two types of music lovers, but uphold the views expressed by Bartók and Čapek, and more generally, the cultural elite when they write:

> it would be unfair to deprive the more hearty and adventurous section of the public from hearing really difficult works, on the grounds that these do not appeal to a very great number of listeners. It is, in fact, a good thing to contribute towards the formation of intellectual groups, for no matter what type of social structure exists within a state, these groups will always lead the rest.[57]

This excerpt suggests that programmatic considerations had not varied considerably in the six years following the war from those reported by Lommers as early as 1931.

The question then becomes one of content. What were those contemporary music works that satiated this 'adventurous' cultural elite? As Boulez points out, the immediate war years saw the proliferation of the Second Viennese school in France, while Fahres emphasizes the institutional' need to

[55] Lommers, *On Air*, 271.
[56] Ibid, 272.
[57] Paul Coaller and Denis Stevens, *Music in Belgian Broadcasting*, (Tempo, 1952) 17.

close the cultural gap from the mid-1930s onwards. In line with these discussions, Coaller and Stevens' write-up emphasizes the relevance of 'modern' works in Belgian broadcast, beginning with those by Debussy and Ravel, among others, before noting the 'intrinsic worth' of a contemporary like Schoenberg. They write of Schoenberg's reception by Belgian audiences, that from "1945 it [had become] become more readily appreciable." They continue, "thus the Concertos for piano and the Theme and Variatations for Orchestra, are easily assimilated by the elite of the musical public."[58]

The review notes that little to nothing of the younger German composers had been performed, attributing this to a slow rekindling of relations following the occupation.[59] However, a scan of the article reveals that few truly contemporaneous composers of any nation are mentioned. Almost all highlighted by the two authors are born on or before the year 1900, limiting the scope of their review to a certain established composer aged of 52 years or older. The one major exception is the mention of British composer Benjamin Britten, born in 1913. In large part, this observation aligns with Fahres' critical assertion that a certain select pool of composers were favored by the post-war music industry.

This is further verified in the review's penultimate paragraph when the authors begin discussing the careers of young Belgian composers, its second major exception. Here, two interesting observations arise; the first, Coallers and Stevens recognition of the significance of Belgian radio for these composers, given the state's lack of "music publishers, concert agencies, [and] state propaganda."[60] Second, that of these composers, most show a stylistic and aesthetic trajectory from the Second Viennese School, in line with efforts by Boulez, Stockhausen, Nono, and Berio. For the former, it exemplifies the varying conditions of the music industry across European nations while simultaneously reconfirming the importance of radio broadcast in the cultural rebuilding, preservation, and dissemination of new music domestically and abroad. The latter, more to the point, underscores the type of composer visible and promoted by Belgian broadcasting. If we look closely at those mentioned, including

[58] Collaer, *Belgian Broadcasting*, 17.
[59] Ibid, 17.
[60] Ibid, 18.

Raymond Chevreuille, Victor Legley, Renier van der Velden, and Karel Goayvaerts, one can see a clear connection between their works with that of the developing modernist trends in Europe. Here again, Fahres larger claim is supported; that for Belgian broadcasting, a primary player in the state's musical sphere (given the aforementioned lack of agencies and publishing houses) it saw to close the cultural gap and encouraged works in line with what the cultural elite saw as appropriate; those that belonged to the modernists' ancestral line. One might condemn the fact that other contemporaneous composers such as Peter Cabus and Didier Van Damme go unmentioned. While never belonging to the minimalist repertoire directly, these two composers saw a return to tonal doctrines that informed the development of minimalism across Europe and influenced New Simplicity. That such composers are unnamed in the review might suggest a larger effort to editorialize the material to control audience reception.

The editorialization of radio was even stronger in Eastern Europe where many countries, like Hungary, suffered under strict media control by the state. Certain influences critical to minimal development, such as jazz, popular music, as well as other experimental and electronic music were banned. Composer Istvan Lang wrote a notorious open letter to then Hungarian leader Gyorgy Aczel stressing the benefits in exposing the Hungarian peoples to electronic and popular music.

In contrast to the development of radio in Europe, we might briefly consider its parallel development in the United States to better understand how it may have enabled diversity that would later aid and promote the spread of minimalism. In a 1931 article in the *North American Review* (the same year as Bartók and Čapek's resolution,) James Harbord focused on discussing the privatization of American radio, encouraging graduating youths to engage in the quickly advancing technology. Core to his assessment of American radio broadcast is his opinion that it reflects the whims and interest of its listeners. He writes:

> Radio has contact through broadcasting with music and literature, living history, government—in fact it is a mirror of contemporary life. Broadcast programmes succeed or fail in the measure in which they touch the interests and needs of the persons who hear them.[61]

This paints a decidedly different picture than that of Lommers. Whereas prewar European radio abided by the guidance of agencies and the cultural elite, American radio's privatization helped encourage an independence of programming that was listener centric. This programming ethos prompted the incorporation of popular music styles without the fear of backlash from a cultural elite.

In turn, certain questions in the United States regarding the broadcast of art music also varied wildly than those in Europe. Whereas the Belgian-state was reliant on radio broadcast to disseminate its musical culture—the United States argued whether or not contemporary art music was even fitting for the radio. Julie Dunbar, in her research on American music education, notes the offenses taken by both music educators and composers regarding the broadcast of contemporary art music.[62] Dunbar's findings purport that early broadcasts of classical music in the United States focused on educating American youth on canonical European standards. A typical program in the 1920s and 1930s might include for example Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Brahms.[63] As radio broadcasting advanced, certain actors saw to establish performances of the then current American art music, efforts which were opposed by both music educators and composers alike. Dunbar paraphrases the views of Max Butting first published in *Modern Music:*

> Butting reminded readers that composers had created music for concert halls, not radio studios. He cited a number of technical problems, including lack of musical climax, imbalance of winds and strings, and lack of clarity.[64]

The text, in line with Harbord's, demonstrates that American broadcast culture was cast more widely and that it was not engaged with the same issues of post-

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[61] James Harbord, *Radio*, (The North American Review, 1931), 532.

[62] Julie Dunbar, *Art Music on the Radio, 1927-37: Conflicting Views of Composers and Educators*, (The Bulletin of Historical Research in Music Education, 1998), 165.

[63] Dubar, *Art Music*, 166.

[64] Ibid, 168.

war development as in Europe. Accessibility of the radio coupled with its subtle populist agenda may have in fact contributed to the rise of minimalism in the United States. Its influence of jazz and popular music styles, and a disregard for the academic or modernist music aesthetic, reflect a well-attuned generation of composers that grew up listening to American radio.

For Europe, however, critical cultural losses and strict dogmas from various broadcast agencies meant a very different listening experience. What was described in Belgium was a phenomenon that existed across the continent, differing dependent on its own local context and circumstances. While Eastern Europe lay hidden under shadows of state regimes and media control. What must be acknowledged is that underneath this cultural sheath, European pluralism was alive and well as composers explored the medieval polyphony and return to tonality that were discussed in the previous chapter. These efforts were slow to unite given the barriers either intentionally or unintentionally imposed by the European music industry. Given European broadcasts crucial role in circulating musical efforts and ideologies, it permits a high level of criticism and skepticism of its equality in the spreading the idea of post-war Europe.

### The Contemporary Music Festival: The Case of Darmstadt

As with the radio, contemporary music festivals played a large role in framing the European discussion of contemporary music. It stood as another important actor of the music industry while influencing the visibility and awareness of certain music and trends. One such significant festival was, and remains, the *Darmstadt Summer Course* held bi-annually since 1946. The influence of Darmstadt, especially in its formative years, has been so strong that scholars have coined the term *Darmstadt School*; referring primarily to composers such as Boulez, Stockhausen, and Nono that share certain stylistic affinities with each other. Largely, the Darmstadt School has been associated with European Modernism and the avant-garde. In Martin Iddon's scholarship, he presents a more nuanced consideration of the aesthetic principles that comprise the Darmstadt school. Arguing that, like with minimalism, it has fallen trap to a historically Anglo-American view that purports it as a playground for modernist advancement. Iddon reminds us to consider the Germano-Italian view which

explicates that many of these composers could have not been further apart in their ideological and aesthetic differences.[65] To that end, this paper acknowledges the diversity that was present at Darmstadt. However, for the purposes of this paper, it will consider the differences between them much in the same way as it handles the difference between minimalists—that while modernism is a widely cast term for a variety of unique and interesting trends, it all amounted to critical unity in aesthetic ideology as observed by the outsider. The other critical acknowledgement to make is that many of these composers also engaged in practices of the New Simplicity, Goayvaerts and Stockhausen having already been named as examples. For now, I only wish to show that this school of thought—be it an over simplification—did direct a certain attention within Europe that negated, much like the efforts of the European radio Industry, the true plurality that was existent in the immediate post-war years.

1951 to 1961 was an important period in the history of Darmstadt and for European music more generally. This decade encompassed much of the first interactions had between American and European composers following the war, as well as Darmstadt's inclusion of American music to its teachings. How then did the Darmstadt experience frame this education and to what end did it or did not foster New Simplicity? Amy Beal presents a well-documented overview of the American music lectures and seminars that were held in the early years of Darmstadt. She expresses that in total, it remained marginal, comprising very little of the overall programming. The earliest course, she notes, was taught by Wolfgang Rebner. Instead of focusing on the most current trends in American music, he provided a historiography of American modernism, one that connected Cowell through to Cage. He observed that in America music was interested more in sound rather than in structures and systems. Of the course, Beal summarizes:

> "Wolfgang Edward Rebner 1954 American Experimental Music was the first to tie Cowell, Ives, Varese to present Cage. It provided the contemporary music scene in west Germany with its first narrative of American music with Rebner explaining that American modernism was focused more on the nature of 'sound' rather than "system"[66]

[65] Martin Iddon, *Darmstadt Schools: Darmstadt as a Plural Phenomenon*, (Tempo, 2011), 2-8.
[66] Beal, *Patronage and Reception*, 91.

This narrative taught by Rebner was later expanded by Wolpes, whose teachings at Darmstadt included more contemporary works and composers like that of the New York School: "Earl Jones, Morton Feldman, Cage and Indeterminacy." David Tudor, a former pupil of Wolpe (as well as Feldman), was present for these lectures, playing excerpts that showcased the styles and aesthetics of these composers. It was a job that Tudor took offense with, feeling that the music was best understood when listened to in its entirety. These courses preceded the long-attendance of both Tudor and Cage at Darmstadt. From 1956 until 1961, Tudor was largely responsible for exposing Darmstadt attendees to the music of American composers. These teachings and offerings, however, remained marginal, representing only a portion of the festivals programming. American lectureship was briefly suspended in 1964 after Milton Babbit was the last American to teach until Wolff in the 1970s. Of course, performances of American music continued, with Riley's *In C* receiving its infamous premier in 1969.[67]

In an interview carried out by this author with Beal, she acknowledged the enigma of the Neue Einfachkeit that had emerged in West Germany and connected their aesthetic interests to these few sparsely programmed lectures and their introduction to the music of Morton Feldman. She also acknowledged the general curiosities of Darmstadt composers with American music despite mixed reactions. What these programming and seminar trends shows is an extreme editing, intentional or unintentional, of certain musical advancements that were occurring.

It is interesting to note, however, that this music seemed more readily digestible for the European music community and music industry after Stockhausen's 1968 *Stimmung*. By the 1970s, the inclusion of minimalists in festival programming seems to have blossomed. Beal, reporting of the 1972 *Pro Music Nova Festival* in Bremen, that they played Tudor, Meredith Monk, Reich as well as performances by the Sonic Arts Union (including Alvin Lucier.) Reich's music was even performed in collaboration with the Laura Dean Dance Company showing the true plurality of minimalist trends.[68]

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[67] Beal, *Patronage and Reception*, 93-100.

[68] Amy Beal, *A Place to Ply Their Wares with Dignity: American Composer-Performers in West Germany, 1972*, (The Musical Quarterly, 2002): 329-48.

As for Eastern Europe, the *Autumn of Warsaw Music Festival* in 1956 was significant in that it exposed many of those composers to the aesthetic trends that had been developing and proliferating since the fall of the war. Largely unaware, this music festival was the impetus for a rush of creative work by Eastern European composers to 'catch up' and respond to its Western European and American counterparts.

The examination of Darmstadt shows that there was a favoring of certain type of music in line with that preferred by the cultural elite—what institutions like broadcast radio and new music festivals felt were acceptable or even purposeful for the people. It also shows the development of American influence and complicate the often-made assertion that minimalism was strictly an American movement. While its influence was certainly present, it was entering an already vibrant cultural context were similar ideologies were forming for their own reasons.

## III. Conclusions

> *"Other Europeans—Ligeti, Goeyvaerts, Simeon ten Holt and Hans Otte receive brief mentions as composers who had drunk from the American minimal fountain as an antidote to European modernism"— Ian Pace*

While the scholarship on minimalism has expanded, as evident in the writings of Ian Pace, it remains largely hindered by American-centric viewpoints. The development of minimalism as a unique practice in Europe, in tandem with parallel developments in America, seems self-evident when considering the large and diverse output of European composers. The review of chapter II showed that while there was a plurality of aesthetics among them, certain principles and practices seemed widespread, suggesting larger influences that had moved across the continent.

Of these influences, one that becomes readily apparent in the works and literature is the use of Medieval and Renaissance forms. This research finds that the interest in older pre-baroque music originates already in the pieces and aesthetical concerns of Eric Satie. For a return to tonal idioms without the hinderance of European tradition, Medieval music provided an escape source that could be hybridized in a variety of forms and styles. It was innocent in that it did not participate as readily in the developmental narrative of Western art music beginning with Bach. It therefore provided an external source of inspiration much in the same way as Eastern music.

Present in both the music of Gorecki and Andriessen are the simple canonic and formalistic structures familiar, at least in essence, to the austerity and simplicity echoed in Medieval and to some extent, Renaissance music. This influence is crystalized in the music of Frans Geysen who pulled from his years as an organist to mature a uniquely contrapuntal style that mutated Netherlandish Renaissance polyphony into a uniquely European form of minimalism that then matured in the works of Joep Franssen. For Pärt, the medieval mysticism looms throughout his repertoire even if more theoretical than formative.

A second influence was the neoclassical ideology that proliferated after the end of the 1st World War. Certain composers of the New Simplicity movement

were interested in approachable material and unified form—to that end, simplicity in the music of certain post-romantic composers like Britten and Hindemith might be traced as an artistic forebearer while Stravinsky, Eisler, and Brecht provide a basing.

Trends in the visual arts also provided stimulus for the minimalist practices of European composers. Just as Zygmunt Krauze tried to imitate the unicolored paintings of Syymanski so did Colin Matthews compose his *The Fourth Sonata* to imitate large brush strokes of color. Yves Klein's experiments with micro-fluctuations on long and sustained pitches echoed the same experiments of Young and of other Fluxus artists.

In terms of European minimalism's acceptance, this paper finds appropriate correlation between the assertions of Fahres and the realities of the post-war music industry. To no fault of their own, these industries struggled to rekindle and preserve artistic practices dormant during the war. In their efforts, composers who fell outside of certain mainstream trends appeared less frequently on the European stage.

The radio broadcast industry faced bureaucratic hurdles while large portions of Eastern Europe remained under rigid dogmatic control by the state. The consequence of this was a rather conservative culture which promoted what they saw as high art and high culture. Therefore, any music that might show simplistic or reductive tendencies would have been met with reluctance. In terms of the New Music Festival, it too, through its choices in programming and seminars, framed an environment that very much mirrored the broadcast industry in terms of its favoring. When these ropes finally broke, so to speak, only at the beginning of the 1970s, the dominant American narrative was already established.

**Further Research**

This paper leaves the reader with a few points for further research. First, a more expansive analytical analysis on the presence of Medieval and Renaissance influence in the music of New Simplicity composers. Second, more extensive research should be done on the post-war music industry in Europe, including universities and publishing houses, to determine if more trends can be

observed that support the claim that certain composers or aesthetics were ignored. This can be compared to similar circumstances in America. For example, the early expansion of ethnomusicology programs in the American university versus their later establishment in Europe. And finally, an examination of American modernism versus European modernism and its effect on the development of minimalism. Beal's text, looking at the reception of American music in Germany, seems to suggest that it too, like minimalism, got a 'head start.' Beal writes:

> "On Saturday, 5th of March, 1932, the conductor Nicolas Slonimsky led the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra in a performance of Cowell's Synchrony, Charles Ive's Three Places in New England, Carl Ruggle's The Sun Readers, and Edgard Varese Arcana. A critic took these works as evidence that "something is happening over there in America, while we Europe are astonished by our own stagnation." This performance was a milestone in the early history of what later came to be seen as the American Experimental Tradition. Slonimskys grouping of Ives, Cowell, and Varese (…) announced a musical approach that would come to be recognized as tradition in west German music circles barely 10 years after the war.[69]

This leaves much critical research still to be done to better understand the developments of minimalism in Europe.

[69] Beal, *Patronage and Reception*, 45.

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