

"REMINISCES OF A DEAD WORLD": NEOCLASSICAL IMPULSES IN STOCKHAUSEN'S GESANG DER JÜNGLINGE

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* ABSTRACT

In the years following World War II, integral serialist composers declared their intent to defy all previous musical conventions and eradicate all "reminisces of a dead world" from their music. Karlheinz Stockhausen was no exception, asserting his desire "to avoid everything which is familiar, generally known or reminiscent of music already composed." However, Stockhausen's *Gesang der Jünglinge*, despite its reputation for technical innovation, bears a strong connection to prior musical traditions. In this regard, Stockhausen resembled the neoclassical school of composers that sought to accommodate antiquated musical materials within a modern context.

To demonstrate these similarities, I apply to *Gesang* a model of neoclassicism developed by Martha M. Hyde, a scholar on twentieth-century music. Hyde identifies two modes by which a neoclassical piece "accommodates antiquity": metamorphic anachronism and allegory. I argue both are present

in *Gesang*. First, Stockhausen adopts elements of the sacred vocal tradition—including a child's voice and antiphonal writing—and morphs them into something modern. Second, Stockhausen uses the Biblical story on which *Gesang* is based as an allegory for his own conflicted relationship with the musical past. This analysis reframes *Gesang's* significance and connects Stockhausen's work to seemingly unrelated trends in twentieth-century musical thought.

1 INTRODUCTION

Karlheinz Stockhausen (1928–2007) is often deemed a musical revolutionary. He claimed that he sought "to compose neither known rhythms nor melodies nor harmonic combinations nor figures."^[12] To this end, he was a major proponent of integral serialism, a compositional method pioneered in the mid-twentieth century that radically departed from previous musical idioms. Consequently, analyses of his works tend to focus primarily on their pioneering qualities. This is particularly true of his 1956 work *Gesang der Jünglinge*, which is commonly considered a seminal piece in the history of electroacoustic music.

However, such analyses obscure the extent to which *Gesang* constructively engaged with prior musical traditions. Far from avoiding the past, I argue that in *Gesang*, Stockhausen sought to integrate antiquated musical and textual materials within his modernist idiom, thus creating a deliberately ambiguous work that is both modern and ancient. To demonstrate this, I will employ an analytical framework developed by Martha M. Hyde to describe *neoclassical* pieces—works that intentionally reference and comment on past musical practices—and apply it to *Gesang*. Hyde, a scholar on twentieth-century music, identifies two modes through which a work might attempt to "accommodate antiquity" and hence be neoclassical: either through "metamorphic anachronism" or allegory.^{[9][a]} Metamorphic anachronism occurs when a composer adopts saliently ana-

^[a]In her article, she listed the two modes of accommodation in the opposite order. I reversed them to better serve the structure of this paper.



chronistic materials and morphs them into something modern. Allegory occurs when a composer uses music to dramatize their relationship to the canonical past. I argue that both modes are at play in *Gesang*. Regarding the first, I will demonstrate how *Gesang* incorporated and transformed elements of the sacred vocal tradition. Regarding the second, I will offer an interpretation of the piece that treats its narrative as an allegory for the conflict between tradition and modernity. In doing so, I aim to challenge the appraisal of *Gesang* solely in terms of its novelty, instead opting for an interpretation in which the novel and the ancient commingle.

2 BACKGROUND

The integral serialists asserted a common motivation: defying the past. Integral serialism eschewed the conventions—including tonal harmony, symmetrical phrase structure, and strictly metered rhythmic gestures—that dominated the preceding Classical and Romantic periods. Instead, musical decisions were governed by a strict series of mathematical proportions. Moreover, serialist composers capitalized on budding technologies to create unfamiliar sound worlds. They extended experiments pioneered by Pierre Schaeffer (1910–1995) in *musique concrète*, a compositional approach founded in 1948 in which sounds recorded with new magnetic tape technology were manipulated to create novel sonic effects.^[20] Likewise, with the advent of synthesizers, composers began to write *elektronische Musik*, an approach emerging in the 1950s in which composers generate unheard timbres from scratch rather than confining themselves to the timbres of traditional acoustic instruments.^[6] Perhaps the most vivid summary of the prevailing *ethos* was given by prominent serialist Pierre Boulez (1925–2016), who claimed that “all art of the past must be destroyed.”^[16]

Stockhausen shared these ideological impulses. He declared his intent “to avoid everything which is familiar, generally known or reminiscent of music already composed.”^[12] Such inclinations are

also reflected in his analytical writing. In his multivolume *Texte* (1963–1971), which contained both theoretical writings and analyses of specific pieces, he sought to develop a new analytical language commensurate to the new musical language.^[13] Like Boulez, Stockhausen took great pains to craft a narrative of historical discontinuity; he sought to break free from, rather than extend, previous convention.

In turn, existing literature on *Gesang der Jünglinge* tends to focus on its groundbreaking qualities. It has been lauded for dissolving the barriers between *musique concrète* (i.e., manipulating extant sounds) and *elektronische Musik* (i.e., constructing new sounds *ex nihilo*), which had previously remained largely separate.^[4] Additionally, whereas prior serial compositions were constructed out of “fixed” values, such as discrete pitches, dynamic levels, and rhythmic values, *Gesang’s* series was comprised of “non-stationary” shapes that evolved from one state to another over time.^[5] *Gesang* also advanced a new “statistical” approach to composition in which smaller musical events are conceived as contributing to large-scale perceptual phenomena called *Gestalts*.^[25] In many ways, Stockhausen’s musical decisions mirrored his ideological assertions.

Such a trailblazing approach directly opposed that of the neoclassicists, more conservative composers who believed the “art of the past” must be revered rather than destroyed. One composer commonly associated with neoclassicism was Arnold Schoenberg (1874–1951).^[b] Emphasizing the connection between his music and his predecessors’, Schoenberg claimed, “my teachers were primarily Bach and Mozart, and secondarily Beethoven, Brahms, and Wagner ...”^[19] Further, his *String Quartet No. 3 Op. 30* (1927) was explicitly modelled after Franz Schubert’s *String Quartet in A Minor, D 804* (1824).^[17] Integral serialist composers were critical of this approach. Boulez, for one, derided Schoenberg’s propensity to model his works on older ones, believing it led to the “decrepitude” of Schoenberg’s works. Rather than hearing connections to a rich his-

^[b] While Schoenberg was “conservative” relative to Boulez and Stockhausen, his music was controversial in its own right. Schoenberg innovated the twelve-tone serial technique, a direct precursor to integral serialism. However, Schoenberg’s reliance on Classical models drew criticism from the later integral serialists, who felt these forms limited the possibilities afforded by the twelve-tone technique.

tory in Schoenberg's music, Boulez heard "remisces of a dead world."^[2]

Given the integral serialists' animosity toward the neoclassicists' approach, one would not expect many similarities between their respective works. Yet I contend that *Gesang der Jünglinge* defies this expectation; it integrates prior traditions in ways strikingly analogous to the works of past-reverent composers like Schoenberg. I will subsequently demonstrate this by analyzing *Gesang* within scholar Martha M. Hyde's model of neoclassicism, which identifies metamorphic anachronism and allegory as common features of neoclassical works. Admittedly, orienting Stockhausen within this framework may seem incongruous, or at the very least unorthodox. Indeed, I *intend* it to seem incongruous. The fact that Stockhausen and the neoclassicists appear so dissimilar, perhaps even antithetical, makes the revelation of their hidden commonalities even more striking. However, I do not mean to claim that there are *no* relevant differences between Stockhausen and the composers who are commonly considered neoclassical. Rather, I intend to demonstrate that Stockhausen drew from the past in remarkably similar ways to the neoclassicists, contrary to what his rhetoric would suggest. Despite his self-proclaimed desire to avoid the familiar, Stockhausen too did not entirely eradicate from his music the reminisces of a dead world.

3 DEFINING NEOCLASSICISM

Analyzing Stockhausen within a neoclassical lens is difficult given the notorious ambiguity of the term "neoclassicism." In its narrower definition, neoclassicism is a *style* most strongly associated with Russian composer Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) and characterized by features like "clarity, simplicity, objectivity, purity, refinement, constructive logic, concision, sobriety, and so on."^[11] Such characteristics, though vague, are generally understood to refer to elements of Classical and Baroque styles, as contrasted with the emotional indulgence of the Romantic era. By this definition, a neoclassical work would be one that seeks to reinstate the order of Classical style.

However, this categorization of neoclassic-

cism as a style creates as much confusion as it dispels. Because different composers elaborated upon the work of the Classical "masters" in radically different ways, the composers who eventually became associated with neoclassicism do not represent any unified style. For instance, both Stravinsky's and Schoenberg's neoclassical works are deeply influenced by elements from the Classical era, yet they bear little stylistic resemblance to one another. It was this vagueness that led many to repudiate the term's usefulness, as when composer-theorist Milton Babbitt (1916-2011) called it a "catch phrase... to be talked about by those who could not and should not talk about the music."^[24]

Hyde attempts to recoup some of the term's value by defining it not as a style, but more broadly as an *ideological orientation*. She claims that "to be neoclassical" is to "striv[e] to be modern *as well as* ancient."^[9] That is, a piece is neoclassical if it saliently attempts to accommodate antiquity within a modern context. This conception of neoclassicism concerns itself less with the Classical in its capital-c sense (i.e., referring narrowly to the Classical era), and more with the colloquial (lowercase-c) definition of a "classic" work: "a past work that remains or becomes relevant and available as a model, or can be made so through various techniques of accommodation."^[9] It is in this broader sense that I will employ the term.

There are two possible objections to this conception of neoclassicism. The first is that by prioritizing ideology over style, Hyde's model departs too radically from the common understanding of neoclassicism and is thus more of a *re-definition* than a definition. However, Hyde's model is built inductively from four musical examples commonly associated with the term. Far from erasing the common sense of the term, Hyde elaborates upon it, observing the characteristics that unify the term's diverse usage.

The second potential objection is that Hyde's conception is too broad to meaningfully describe any unified concept. Scott Messing notes that early twentieth-century European composers almost unilaterally felt "obliged to relate themselves to the history created by their forebears."^[11] As a result, he writes, "almost every major figure composing during

the first three decades of [the twentieth] century was tied, loosely or umbilically, to this term."^[11] By implicating Stockhausen in this trend, I run the risk of complicating matters even further. But, finding that a term is broadly applicable does not necessarily imply it is too broadly defined. Hyde names a specific ideological value and further articulates specific methods by which composers tended to attain it (allegory and metamorphic anachronism). Such elements are by no means universal, nor are they superficial: they have deep implications for the intent and impact of a work. Thus, if we are surprised by the broad applicability of her model, it is not because she defines the model too loosely. Rather, it is because the aesthetic values the model describes are more widespread than we originally supposed.

4 MODE I: METAMORPHIC ANACHRONISM

The first mode of accommodating antiquity is "metamorphic anachronism." Though Hyde frames it as a single phenomenon, it is useful to view it as a composite of two processes. On one hand, *anachronism* entails adopting an incongruously antiquated style or idea; on the other hand, *metamorphosis* entails subjecting a basic material to some form of transformation. These two processes should be understood as distinct, because either could conceivably occur without the other. For instance, if a twentieth-century piece were written in strict imitation of Mozart, it would be anachronistic but not metamorphic. Conversely, Pierre Schaeffer's *musique concrète* piece *Etude aux chimènes de fer* (1948) is metamorphic in that it transformed its constituent materials, but it is not anachronistic since those constituent materials (recorded sounds of trains) were not antiquated.^[14]

Hyde's model of neoclassicism requires the confluence of both processes. That is, a piece exhibits metamorphic anachronism only if it first adopts an anachronistic idea and then applies some metamorphic process by which the anachronism becomes "modern." For instance, Schoenberg's third string quartet is rightfully considered neoclassical because

it adopts stylistic and formal elements of Schubert's A minor string quartet (*anachronism*) and transforms these elements through application of his twelve-tone technique (*metamorphosis*). To establish that metamorphic anachronism is also present in *Gesang*, it must be independently shown both that the piece is anachronistic and that it is metamorphic.

ANACHRONISM

Anachronism entails juxtaposing elements from disparate eras. In the case of *Gesang*, Stockhausen juxtaposes a modernist musical aesthetic against a Biblical story from the Book of Daniel, Chapter 3. In this story, the king Nebuchadnezzar constructs a giant idol out of gold and decrees that people of all nations and languages must worship it whenever they hear "the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music."^[c] He threatens that those who refuse "will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace."^[d] When three Jews—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—refuse to worship the false idol, Nebuchadnezzar orders them thrown into the fire. But instead of perishing, the three young men are protected by an angel and emerge from the flames unharmed. They sing a song praising God; excerpts of this song comprise *Gesang*'s text.

Such a subject matter was a stark departure from previous serial experiments in *elektronische Musik* and *musique concrète*. Prior avant-garde pieces had borne abstract titles, such as Stockhausen's *Konkrete Etüde* (1952) and *Studien I & II* (1953–1954), Boulez's *Études I & II* (1951–1952), or French composer Olivier Messiaen's *Timbres-durées* (1952). With such titles, composers deliberately distanced themselves from any historical references. In stark contrast, *Gesang*'s use of Biblical verse implicated a rich history of religiously inspired artwork. To employ a subject as traditional as Biblical verse, then, would seemingly contradict the serialists' purported desire to distance themselves from past traditions. Yet in Stockhausen's original vision for the piece, the anachronism was even more striking. He initially intended the piece as an explicitly liturgical

^[c] Daniel 3:5 (NIV).

^[d] Daniel 3:6 (NIV).

work to be premiered in the Cologne Cathedral. However, the Cathedral, sensing the incongruity, rejected his proposal on the grounds that loudspeakers would be inappropriate in a cathedral.^[21] Only after being forced to revise his concept did Stockhausen decide upon the story of the youths in the furnace.

The voice that carries this text also bears the mark of the ancient. The human voice—used in Christian liturgical settings since at least 700 A.D.—has a well-established link to antiquity.^[10] The boy soprano specifically recalls the sound of the now-archaic *castrati*, boys who were castrated by the Church before puberty to preserve their pure vocal tone.^[4] Further, the use of several loudspeakers that surround the congregation recreates the spatial acoustics of a cathedral. Indeed, Stockhausen originally intended the speakers to be suspended above the congregation, as if coming from Heaven itself.^[8] Similarly, by sometimes isolating a single vocal track and other times layering many vocal tracks atop one another, Stockhausen mimics antiphony between a cantor and a chorus of singers.^[4] And, as Russell Wallace Chait notes, *Gesang's* fluctuation between clearly audible text and obscured text alludes to the ancient debate over intelligibility of text in church music, dating back to the Council of Trent.^[4] *Gesang's* sonic characteristics thus establish a firm link to the Christian sacred vocal tradition.

METAMORPHOSIS

These anachronistic materials—both the sound of the boy's voice and the text it conveys—were then "accommodated" within modernity by subjecting them to *metamorphic* processes. *Gesang* was influenced by *musique concrète*, which is metamorphic by its very nature. Pierre Henry (1927–2017), one of the genre's pioneers, thought of *musique concrète* as an approach in which sound is used like a physical material, able to be "render[ed]... plastic like sculpture."^[1] Accordingly, *concrète* composition entailed literally transforming a physical material (magnetic tape) by cutting it, reversing it, changing its playback speed, and so on. As a result, the recorded sound was also morphed, so that the new sound might bear some resemblance to the original but would acquire

unique sonic properties distinct from those of its source. In *Gesang*, the source material subjected to such manipulation is the recorded boy soprano. The tape, then, served as a physical proxy for the boy's voice; as Stockhausen spliced the tape, he transfigured the voice. Since the boy soprano's voice *itself* was a proxy for sacred vocal music at large, Stockhausen's tape manipulations represented a metamorphosis of the sacred vocal tradition.

In fact, it is unlikely such a rigorous piece could have been realized at all if not for tape's capacity to transform the boy's voice, for Stockhausen's compositions were demandingly precise. Pitches were expressed not as chromatic notes, but as *frequencies*, while durations were expressed not in beats, but in *centimeters*.^[22] As Pierre Schaeffer later remarked, this musical style made traditional notation "anachronistic through a rigor so absolute that the approximations of traditional scores paled before such precision."^[18] What was truly "anachronistic," however, was not the notation per se, but that Stockhausen would ask a singer (for whom such traditional notation would typically be necessary) to execute such precise music, rather than a synthesizer. At least in part, the limitations of traditional notation reflect the limitations of performers themselves. Thus Josef Protschka, the boy whose voice appears on *Gesang*, could only approximate Stockhausen's vision by mimicking synthesized sine-tones played through headphones.^[12] The remainder of Stockhausen's vision had to be accomplished through tape manipulation. Thus, the demands of serial technique *required* the boy's voice be transfigured into something more "plastic" than human physiology would typically allow.

The addition of synthesized tones further morphed the voice into something altogether foreign, perhaps even inhuman. Stockhausen conflated the sound of the voice and the synthesizer, so that it is unclear where one begins and the other ends. He achieved this effect by creating synthesized analogues of vocal phonemes. Sine-tones (pure electronic tones) were combined so as to imitate the overtone structure of various vowel sounds; filtered white noise imitated fricative and sibilant consonants (e.g., *f*, *th*, *s*, *sh*); and electronic "impulses" (percuss-

sive sounds with a natural decay) imitated plosive consonants (e.g., *p*, *b*, *t*, *d*).^[5] Further, Stockhausen's serial design did not treat these vocal and synthesized phonemes separately. Instead, he integrated them on a single continuum of sounds, so that they would seamlessly blend with one another.^[5] Such blending is at times made explicit, as when the final consonant of the word *Eis* is transformed into a synthesized hiss or when the final consonant of *Mond* is followed by an explosion of electronic sounds resembling plosive consonants.^[23] Stockhausen blurs the distinction between electronic and acoustic, morphing the voice into something that is both familiar and new.

5 MODE II: ALLEGORY

If metamorphic anachronism concerns *how* antiquated materials are employed in modern contexts, then allegory concerns *why*: for what rhetorical purpose are these antiquated materials employed? J. Peter Burkholder suggests that many twentieth-century composers used musical materials and structures as allegories for their relationship with the canonical past.^[3] For instance, he argues Schoenberg's preference for continuous variation rather than direct repetition stemmed from a desire to develop upon, but not to repeat, his forebears. Conversely, John Cage—a composer as far from a neoclassicist as is conceivable—embraced randomness and unpredictability in his music, thus negating any deliberate relationship with the past. Through their music, composers attempted to define their relationship to their forebears.

The same is true of Stockhausen. In fact, *Gesang* contains even greater allegorical potential since it portrays a literal narrative. The story of the three youths lends itself particularly well to allegorical reading in that it deals with the archetypal themes of persecution and perseverance, which can be mapped onto many different situations. The boys broadly represent purity, innocence, and steadfastness. King Nebuchadnezzar and the furnace represent destructive forces that threaten such purity. The ubiquity of these themes makes the story amenable to allegorical readings.

However, its flexibility also raises the possi-

bility of several contradictory interpretations. Indeed, the allegorical subtext of *Gesang* is seemingly paradoxical. On one hand, Stockhausen asserts that modernity—specifically, integral serialism—is being “persecuted” by past-obsessed critics. On the other, it is antiquity that is “persecuted” by modernity which threatens to consume it in a flurry of electronic flames. The contradiction between these allegories demonstrates Stockhausen's complex relationship with modernity and antiquity.

PERSECUTION OF MODERNITY

In a 1998 interview, Stockhausen claimed he personally identified with the youths in the flames. Regarding the composition of *Gesang*, he said:

“...I myself felt like a young man in the furnace at that time. Everything I did was aggressively turned down and damned by the music journalists and musicologists of the time. There was a professor Blume, chairman of the German Musicological Society, who in a large text wrote that Stockhausen was laying the ax to the roots of music and was destroying all of occidental music. Therefore, I felt so like the young men in the furnace, and I could only pray that St. Michael would come and pull me out of the flames.”^[15]

Stockhausen felt persecuted by reactionaries as the youths were persecuted by Nebuchadnezzar, forced to bow to an idol in which he did not believe (i.e., the tastes of journalists and musicologists). While it may seem hyperbolic to compare musical criticism to the religious persecution the youths faced, Stockhausen's aesthetic values were so deeply intertwined with his faith that an attack on one would constitute an attack on the other. He claimed:

“...the proportions in my music have always been related to everything I learn from the nature of the stars and galaxies and, on the other hand, from the atoms and molecules, and the cells. Everything in my music is an extension of what I experience as Creation—how Creation is composed.”^[15]

Stockhausen believed the strict mathematical proportions governing serial music mirrored the orderly, mathematically-precise processes governing the cosmos. To him, serialism was the inevitable result of striving toward a more perfect, God-lier music. Thus, the severe aesthetic criticism levelled at Stockhausen was, in effect, a form of religious persecution.

PERSECUTION OF ANTIQUITY

Although Stockhausen saw serialism as an expression of faith, serialism also posed the risk of obscuring, or even altogether destroying, the message of faith conveyed by *Gesang's* text. While in a more traditional vocal setting the vocalist is made the focal point and the music is subservient to the text, integral serialism is predicated on "the calculated parity of parts" within an ensemble, vocalist included.^[12] In fact, privileging the comprehensibility of the text might "jam the precise inner workings of serial schemes."^[12] So, to conform to serial ideals, the text had to be subsumed within the serial scheme, not served by it. Stockhausen confirmed this conception of the relationship between music and speech in his 1958 article *Musik und Sprache*, in which he advocated for a progressive "transition from speech to music" in serial vocal music.^[12]

For a piece based on Biblical text, this has troubling allegorical implications, especially since the voice delivering said text had such strong ties to church tradition. Strict adherence to serialist principles, in which the vocalist is wholly subsumed by the series, would amount to the youths' metaphorical destruction. In this light, modernism is the furnace into which the boys are thrown. In fact, *Gesang's* wild bursts of electronic impulses strongly resemble bursts of flames. Some critics were inclined to hear the piece in these terms. In a piece entitled "Wider die Natur!" ("Against Nature!"), one went so far as to say that Stockhausen was condemning the youths, a "gift of the divine," to a "hellish" electronic sound world.^[12] Thus, we are faced with two conflicting allegories: one in which antiquity persecutes modernity and one in which the opposite is true.

AN INCOMPLETE STRUGGLE

While these allegorical interpretations might seem irreconcilable, the apparent contradiction demonstrates Stockhausen's desire to simultaneously accommodate the old and the new. As a result, in *Gesang*, neither persecutor prevails. The old, of course, was not able to eradicate the new; if Stockhausen was thrown into the furnace by his critics, he clearly survived the flames. The remarkable success *Gesang* has enjoyed since its premiere proves as much. Nor

was the new able to eradicate the old. Though his serial methods sometimes partially obscured the Biblical text, Stockhausen did not render the text (and its attendant meanings) altogether incomprehensible. By incorporating the text at varying degrees of comprehensibility, he guaranteed that, at least sometimes, the message of the text would be heard clearly.^[5] Moreover, the phrase that is articulated most clearly, *Preiset den Herrn* (*Praise ye the Lord*), is also the most crucial to the text's meaning. Neither the ancient nor the modern successfully destroys the other; they coexist in an uneasy tension.

The sense of open-ended conflict is reflected in the piece's inconclusive ending. Stockhausen originally intended to compose seven sections (labelled A-G), but due to time constraints, he was able only to complete the first six.^[5,15] While it may seem unfair to attribute meaning to compositional decisions made for such a prosaic reason, I contend they have symbolic significance. By eliminating section G, Stockhausen partially compromised his modernist ideal of mathematical perfection; the attention to detail demanded by his serial designs proved too time-consuming to be feasible. Since the serial design was itself incomplete, any destruction of antiquity it might entail would also necessarily be incomplete.

Further, because the end of section F proceeds without transition into the closing gesture, which was originally intended to come later, the piece's ending sounds abrupt and uncertain.^[5] This suggests that the end of the piece is not where the conflict between old and new truly ends; it is ongoing, perhaps even perpetual. The ancient will continue to struggle against annihilation by the modern and the modern will continue to face resistance from an inert past.

Gesang demonstrates that such tension can be constructive. In fact, both antiquity and modernity are reaffirmed having been challenged by each other, much like how the Biblical youths' faith is reaffirmed after being challenged by the flames. By placing ancient traditions in a modern context, Stockhausen revitalized these traditions, demonstrating their continued relevance in the era of electronics. Likewise, by incorporating familiar Biblical themes, he

clarified the religious subtext of his pieces, which had previously been opaque. In *Gesang*, the tension between old and new led to creation, not destruction.

6 CONCLUSION

Stockhausen outwardly presented himself as one who defied convention; he was a “past-destroyer.” Yet, his relationship to his musical forebears was more complex than such rhetoric would imply. In *Gesang der Jünglinge*, rather than destroying antiquity, he sought to accommodate it within a modern idiom. The piece is based on Biblical text and its musical elements are deeply informed by the sacred vocal tradition. Through tape manipulation and the addition of the synthesizer, these elements are transfigured into something that is both familiar and novel. Furthermore, Stockhausen employed the story of the youths allegorically, using it to demonstrate his contradictory identification with both the old and the new. Thus, *Gesang* is simultaneously modern and ancient; in this broad sense, it is a “neoclassical” work.

This account of *Gesang* helps reframe the piece’s significance, both within serial composition and twentieth-century music overall. Early electronic serial compositions, by virtue of their abstractness, remained divorced from the rich network of meanings afforded by tradition. *Gesang* bridged this divide; it brought tradition into the realm of the modern, thereby revitalizing both. Paradoxically, *Gesang* was innovative because it looked backwards. Rather than abandoning the “reminisces of a dead world,” Stockhausen reinvented them to create a world anew ■

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Andrew Faulkenberry is a senior undergraduate at Rutgers studying music composition. As a composer, his works have been premiered by groups including the International Contemporary Ensemble, Rutgers Wind Ensemble, and Julius Quartet. Andrew is also a recipient of the Presser Foundation Undergraduate Scholar Award.

Andrew's research began during an independent study with Dr. Rebecca Cypess and was subsequently completed independently. It was motivated by a broader interest in twentieth-century musical aesthetics and their underlying ideologies. Particularly, Andrew became fascinated by two contradictory narratives that pervaded twentieth-century musical thought. On one hand, composers were concerned with "forward progress" and sounding "modern". Yet, on the other, they sought to demonstrate their connection to a fixed canon of "classic" works. Through his research on Karlheinz Stockhausen, Andrew hopes to demonstrate that these contradictory desires influenced even the most radical composers.