

Pierre Boulez Studies

Pierre Boulez is considered one of the most important composers of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. This collection explores his influence, legacy, reception and works, shedding new light on Boulez's music and its historical and cultural contexts. In two sections that focus firstly on the context of the 1940s and 1950s and secondly on the development of the composer's style, the contributors address recurring themes such as Boulez's approach to the serial principle and the related issues of form and large-scale structure. Featuring excerpts from Boulez's correspondence with a range of his contemporaries here published for the first time, the book illuminates both Boulez's relationship with them and his thinking concerning the challenges which confronted both him and other leading figures of the European avant-garde. In a third and final section, three chapters examine Boulez's relationship with audiences in the UK, and the development of the appreciation of his music.

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Preface

A composer studies volume in the Cambridge University Press series is intended to be a compendium of scholarly contributions to the field of study in question, and it is in this spirit that the current project has been designed. Its fourteen chapters, written by twelve authors, many of whom have already produced distinguished work in the field of Boulez studies, comprise a series of substantial essays on a number of aspects of the compositional and theoretical work of composer Pierre Boulez. The contributors are all scholars in the field, a number having written Ph.D. dissertations and monographs on the composer as well as producing authoritative performing and facsimile editions of his compositions. Several others are in the process of completing significant individual projects for publication, and all have produced studies of the composer in publications of international stature.

The list of contributors brings together for the first time within a single volume scholars working in the field of Boulez studies in Belgium, Canada, France, Italy, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. It also reflects a range of approaches to the composer's work. While several scholars focus primarily on what we can learn from sketches, correspondence and other archive material, held primarily in the Paul Sacher Stiftung in Basel, others bypass this material and work directly from published scores, recordings and writings. The editors have attempted to provide a balance between these two approaches which are, broadly speaking, represented by those contributors working on mainland Europe and those working in the UK/North America. In doing so, our aim has been to ensure that the results of a range of very recent European Boulez scholarship, which has hitherto been inaccessible to an anglophone readership, is made available for the first time within a single volume alongside new work from UK and North American scholars.

In line with other Cambridge Composer Study volumes, the current collection of essays makes no attempt to cover all of Boulez's activities. Indeed, the format is a fairly simple one, comprising fourteen chapters grouped together under the headings 'The Context of the Late 1940s and 1950s', 'The Evolution of a Style' and 'Reception Studies'. All of the chapters are substantial and original contributions to Boulez scholarship and approach the composer's work from a variety of angles including

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study of his correspondence, his compositional practice, the key phases in his compositional development, the mix of theory and practice that is manifest in many of his most important works, the changing reception of his work and assessment of his place in the development of twentieth-/twenty-first-century music. While most chapters do not deal with a single musical work, a great number but by no means all of Boulez's compositions are discussed to some extent in the course of the volume, with prominent place being given to works from across his career, from the early *Sonatine* to the middle-period *Pli selon pli* and late works such as . . . *explosante-fixe* . . . There is also discussion of some of Boulez's compositional projects that, while not resulting in finished work, nevertheless offer significant insight into the development of his compositional technique, and several authors approach Boulez's practice of reworking scores, in some cases multiple times. A number of chapters challenge some of the commonplaces of Boulez reception, for example that his *Sonatine* and First Sonata for piano were first produced in the format we have them today and that he is a systems-obsessed composer for whom freedom, choice, preference and the irrational are all alien concepts. Many of the chapters are mutually illuminating and the authors are at times engaged in a quasi- or virtual dialogue as they discuss the same works, concepts or approaches in their own individual ways.

While volumes of essays on Boulez have appeared in French and German language publications in recent years, the last single volume to contain a number of significant essays in English was the book *Pierre Boulez: A Symposium* (Eulenburg, 1986). This new, *Pierre Boulez Studies* volume offers much more recent work from a completely different set of scholars and stems from a growth in Boulez scholarship since the early 1990s, the results of which are now being made available for the first time to the interested reader as well as to the subject specialist.

Edward Campbell
Peter O'Hagan

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References to recordings of Boulez at Darmstadt are made with the authorisation of the Internationales Musikinstitut Darmstadt (IMD).

Abbreviations

AML	Les Archives et Musée de la Littérature, Brussels
BL	British Library
BNF	Bibliothèque national de France
IMD	Internationales Musikinstitut Darmstadt
NLS	National Library of Scotland
PSS	Paul Sacher Stiftung, Basel
UE	Universal Edition