

Catherine Christer Hennix [CCH]
Bill Dietz [BD]

CCH Amedeo Maria Schwaller read your liner notes and he thought they were terrible. That’s when I called you about it because I started to get cold feet. I thought, okay, this type of writing is how people do it today, but [Amedeo] sort of convinced me that it was too biased. You really trash Stockhausen. Lawrence [Kumpf] doesn’t think so, but I feel you do and then you say that I sort of save the day for him [Stockhausen]. Well, this I agree with, but the thing is that we simply cannot trash him. You don’t understand this because you never lived in the fifties and sixties, so you don’t understand the pressure of the Second World War that has lingered on in Europe all the way up to the present. I couldn’t understand the scope of it either, but it’s a very prevalent thing for post-war poetry, music, and art. I was just getting around to all these things in the seventies. Initially, I had the impression people had sorted this out and they knew what happened and they all understood. But it was not my subject matter, so I left it to whoever is interested in it. So, as it happened, I didn’t look into it until I got back to Europe, from New York, and I started to read *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. I discovered that practically every week there was an article about past Nazi crimes. *Nazis this and Nazis that*, all from the thirties and forties. Plus, as you know, they tried to cover it up in the fifties and sixties, and then came the Historikerstreit and the avalanche of documentations of the Wehrmacht, Generalplan Ost, and the scandal of the Berlin Mahnmal by the Peter Eisenman–Richard Serra team to which Herr Helmut Kohl acted as a “Dark Horse.” (I actually wrote a piece in 2001 about this in the course of suggesting an alternative, Das Niemandsmal—a model of which was shown at Stedelijk during the Winter/Spring of 2018. No one paid any attention to it, linked as it was to the “Urinary Segregation” LGBTQIA+ cases that have preoccupied courts in the US since 2017 and most probably will end up in the Supreme Court.)

The thing is, [Stockhausen’s] early music was very reflective of that [German] history, specifically what he did in the fifties and for most of the sixties. He was really an amazing composer because he came up with new ideas for every new composition. He was always really fresh with what he was doing. He didn’t rest on any laurels at all, although he was number one already by the late fifties. He just trucked on in an amazing way. Both Hans Isgren and I were very impressed by him. We studied his compositions. We were both percussionists and so we put together a percussion set and did *Zyklus*. I don’t know if you know that composition.

BD Sure, of course.

CCH Yeah. That was in the sixties. First we played jazz, and then we were into Stockhausen, [John] Cage, [Sylvano] Bussotti, and other new composers, and then by 1970 we started to study North Indian classical music. Isgren became a disciple of Ram Narayan, the sarangi player. Do you know Ram Narayan?

BD I’ve heard of him. I don’t really know the work.

CCH Narayan is incredible. Really incredible sarangi player. Incredibly beautiful playing. [Isgren and I] both started to do Indian music, then we got into La Monte [Young], and then we got into my own ideas, and so the group I had was sort of the accumulation of these

influences—including studies in early Renaissance music. And although we stopped playing jazz for the most part, we did not abandon that idiom or its approach to disciplined improvisation.

BD Was this The Deontic Miracle?

CCH Yeah, this is what became The Deontic Miracle. It didn’t have a name until, I think, ’74 or something. The reason why we did this piece [*Unbegrenzt*] was simply that we were so rejected by the establishment that we publicly couldn’t perform my music—which is why the band was named The Deontic Miracle. The name was reflective of the fact that all Swedish music institutions rejected our concept of avant-garde music. Fylkingen, The Royal Swedish Academy of Music, Swedish radio: all of them just said, *don’t come back here*. I concluded that it would be a miracle of ethics were we ever to be given a chance to present my new compositions. So we thought, okay, we will widen the repertoire... We’ll play Stockhausen, because [the Swedes] not only knew Stockhausen, but lionized his work, repeatedly inviting him to perform there. I found this score for us, *Aus Den Sieben Tagen*—I think it was ’71 or ’72 when I found it. At that time I thought it was really, really interesting because it was a completely different take on the word compositions that La Monte and others did ten years before it, or eight years before it—the Fluxus-style thing in New York, you know?

BD In the period when you found the score, you were still enthralled with the early Stockhausen work?

CCH I still am. I think it’s very, very important work, although it now belongs to history and does not mean the same thing. He was pushing the envelope at time. It changed many peoples’ understanding of both the intension and extension of what music could be like. Unlike Cage, he made a routine of taking things to their technical limits; however, having reached these instrumental limits within the equal temperament doctrine, Stockhausen hit an impassable roadblock.

BD I ask in part because I find that by the early seventies, he had already transitioned away from that...heroic period a bit—like *Stimmung*, which was from ’68.

CCH Yeah. I think *Aus Den Sieben Tagen* is from ’68, too, but maybe it wasn’t published until later. I found it later. But yeah, I also found *Stimmung* at that time and I thought it was really a failed piece. I mean, it was really the way you describe it [in your text]. Like colonialists, playing cowboys and indians. I thought it was really offensive. Do you know the piece actually? Have you seen the score?

BD Yes, too well actually. *Stimmung* seems like a turning point in Stockhausen, where that earlier, incredible rigor transforms into something else more prevalent, basically for the rest of his life—that very dubious, corny pseudo-mysticism and whatever else the rest of the music is characterized by.

CCH Yeah. Worse than that, Stockhausen used a choir, but the singers were not initiated into any [of the cultural traditions referenced in the work].¹ Simply on that account, in my opinion, the piece is completely soulless. His earlier work

1 Editor’s note: The score for *Stimmung* refers its reader to 88 deities—“magic names [Magische Namen],” in Stockhausen’s term—representing a number of cultural or religious traditions from across space and time.

could be very soulful, you know; you could really hear that there was something very special happening. But with this piece, all the feeling went out the window, in my opinion. By the way, Hans Isgren participated in a seminar in ’73 with Stockhausen, when Stockhausen was at the Music Academy in Stockholm, which was devoted to a study of *Stimmung*. I never met Stockhausen, I was in New York at the time.

BD So, do you remember if you were aware of *Stimmung* at the time you found *Aus Den Sieben Tagen*?

CCH No, I don’t think so. I was practicing ragas all the time, and I just dropped out of the avant-garde. I didn’t follow it. I had all the Stockhausen records from the fifties and sixties, but then I just stopped listening to that music. I was more into early Renaissance music and practicing raga every day. And then, I started to do my drones, I mean, sine wave drones 24/7 in my studio. I guess I thought that nothing was happening any more out there; it was the same with jazz. After [John] Coltrane passed away, the bottom went out of jazz. I mean, all of a sudden it felt there was nothing more that was alive, with few exceptions. Somehow everything seemed to have disappeared—to the point where nobody was touched by it anymore.

You never had an experience with that. The music in the sixties was so incredible that you couldn’t believe it actually. The energy level was incredible, but it never came back. It just never came back. The original motivation for playing just disappeared with Coltrane passing away.

BD Did you feel that already by the early seventies, when you were approaching doing *Aus Den Sieben Tagen*? Were you aware that something was starting to flag in the music of the time?

CCH Yeah, but you noticed it already in ’67. As soon as Coltrane passed away—July 17, 1967. Everybody felt we were punctured, all of us. The air went out of us. We couldn’t believe that he was gone. music just didn’t happen anymore—his Buddha field shrank to a point. And I also felt that in so-called avant-garde music—like Cage, Boulez, and Berio, and not to speak about Bo Nilsson—all of these people just waned in terms of creativity. Within the equal temperament framework everything seemed exhausted.

BD So with your band, you were trying to maintain some of that old energy, but your compositions were not being accepted, so you turned to the Stockhausen piece as a way of continuing this tendency by other means, through his piece?

CCH Well, not exactly. The idea was that, if you play Stockhausen, big-name Stockhausen, you will definitely get a gig. I didn’t realize that, by then, all the Swedish institutions, all the composers, all thought Stockhausen was as worthless as myself. It was a complete mistake to choose Stockhausen. I should have chosen somebody else—I don’t know, Brian Eno or something. I didn’t circulate with these people anymore because I was home practicing everyday. There was never a time to go out and be social, so I was ignorant of what was happening out there. In addition, I felt that La Monte had bypassed the equal temperament roadblock so decisively that the possibilities offered by just intonation were the way to go.

BD Did you and the band perform the Stockhausen piece publicly?

CCH No, we never performed it in public.

This recording is the only one—not the only performance, but it was the only one we recorded.

BD At the time, had you heard Stockhausen’s own recording of *Aus Den Sieben Tagen*?

CCH Yeah. I listened to those records, and I found them completely without any emotion—there was just nothing happening when he was doing it. He starts with this shiva shakti philosophy—he reads from some tantric book as an integral part of his composition, right? I forgot the name of the author of that text. But here is the same problem as with *Stimmung*. In other words, he was never initiated into any Hindu tantric school. It’s clear he’s not doing the Tibetan version of it. He’s doing the Hindu version of it—heavily Hindu, nationalistic Hindu. I felt it would be more suitable to connect with the Tibetan version of tantra philosophy to call attention to the Chinese interference with the Tibetan forms of life. This is also the time when I’m studying medieval Buddhist logic. I became very interested in that because it’s sort of a precursor to the modal logic that came in the early Renaissance or the Late Middle Ages in Europe. Which in turn was influenced by Arabic traditions. In any case, as you know, I have been initiated in a Hindu Muslim music form, Kirana Gharana.

BD You had already been engaged with that at that time, in the early seventies.

CCH I became a disciple already in 1971 of Pandit Pran Nath on the recommendations of La Monte Young and Terry Riley. La Monte came to Stockholm in 1970 and he brought Guruji’s tambura, and he and Marian [Zazeela] were staying in my apartment. He gave me lessons every day, and also voice lessons, and we practiced together. Then I borrowed a South Indian tambura to practice with after he left, and he arranged with Guruji [Pandit Pran Nath] that I should have my own tambura. So Guruji got me an incredible tambura that he supervised the design of, from Ricky Ram [a music store in Delhi]. That’s why I went to San Francisco—because Guruji came to stay there and brought the tambura. I was taking lessons from him, at that time many times a week. He was staying with Terry [Riley]. Two years later we stayed together, my Guru and I. Guruji got an apartment two blocks away from Terry’s studio—by the way, just another few blocks away from where I first met Maryanne [Amacher], in an Italian cafe.

BD Amazing! Do you recall how that happened?

CCH I came back from Stanford. I had come back with all the papers the mathematicians had given me, and I was having hot chocolate and a piece of an Italian goodie, and I put out the papers on the table to start reading, and she noticed them. So she walked around my table and started up a conversation with me, because she knew all the people I had papers from. This was almost at the end of my stay there. I was on my way back to New York through LA, and a week or so later, that’s when we went together from San Francisco to Los Angeles.

BD Oh yes—and if I remember correctly, Simone Forti was there, too?

CCH Yeah. But a few weeks later we found someone who drove us across the country, Maryanne and me, from Los Angeles.

BD Did you and Maryanne talk about Pandit Pran Nath and music at that time?

CCH Yeah, we probably did. I can’t remember much of the conversation—but you remember the photo I took of her?

BD Yeah, I still have it.

CCH Bryce Canyon, it was. We had an incredible trip, and then I came up to Boston to see her—and oh yeah, now I remember, we were in Denver, and we called [John] Myhill from a hotel in Denver. He was in England. Because I wanted to get hold of Alexander Yessenin-Volpin; she knew Volpin and she even had his phone number, but it was the old number because he had by then moved to [Rohit] Parik’s place, so [Maryanne] got his new number from John Myhill. So I called Volpin from Denver and I had an appointment with him even before I arrived on the East Coast. I then went from New York up to Boston, and I stayed with Maryanne then. And that’s when I met this Spanish architect.

BD Juan Navarro Baldeweg? You stayed with Maryanne at MIT, or she had an apartment separate from the studio at MIT?

CCH She had an apartment on, I think, Mystic Street in Charlestown.

BD Did you meet Keiko [Prince] in that period, too?

CCH No, I didn’t, but I did visit the studio for Advanced Visual Studies at MIT, where she worked. Maryanne took me there, and it’s possible that I learned of Keiko then, but I think I met her in person only in ’73. Because then I came back to study with Volpin full time. We started to see each other very much. I moved in with her just a month or two after we first met.

BD Jumping back to Stockhausen a little bit: all of the training that you had had through Pandit Pran Nath, through your studies of Buddhist logic, and these kinds of things—you consciously tried to insert that into your realization of *Unbegrenzt*? As in the text that you chose for your version?

CCH Yeah, exactly. This is what you missed in your writing. What I had in mind was like a blind movie in the sense that you just have the soundtrack, and you had to imagine the imagery on your own, as the sounds invited. The idea is that there is a person who is wandering. (S)He’s looking for something—(s)he’s trying to find some form of enlightenment, right? Stockhausen starts with quoting these tantric texts, Hindu tantric texts, and then he never mentions them anymore in the whole piece. Then the ensemble just started playing. My concept was sort of, you need to search for these things. In my version there is this person who is wandering around and finally comes to them signaled by the recitations of this text. In the middle there is a first encounter and then another encounter towards the end of the composition. Neither of these encounters is conclusive in the sense that the wanderer is without finality. You see, (s)he’s finding a place where Hevajra texts are being recited, and it may be what (s)he is searching for—or not. The recitation of these Buddhist tantric texts, which are quite astonishing texts, leaves that ambiguous. I mean they are hair-raising in several instances. I don’t know if you looked at that book that I sent you.

BD Yes, of course—the Snellgrove translation.

CCH Right. Most of that stuff is quite hair-raising. Right? I felt that that was the right thing, the right level of engagement here. Although I was not into Buddhist

tantra, I knew Buddhist logic. I mean, the Buddhist tantrics quote Dignāga, and even Dharmakīrti is mentioned in Snellgrove’s translation. In other words, I knew the logical part of it. And I felt that sort of qualified me to do it at this point, although I had no aspiration to do a tantric practice. But Stockhausen had. In other words, for him, that was something to be practiced, although he was not initiated. You see? I used the text for its literary sophistication but not for the purpose of trying to follow its instructions, which, if you were to take them seriously, it would be a tall order and certainly not suitable for someone who was not initiated. That’s why I leave their acceptance or rejection ambiguous.

BD But, see, that’s the reason why I frame my response to [Stockhausen] as I do. In a certain sense, as interesting as *Unbegrenzt* might be, it doesn’t seem so dissimilar to me from *Stimmung*, in the way he appropriates various cultural practices/discourses—how he uses them for his own purposes without actually taking them seriously enough to devote himself to their discipline.

CCH Exactly. The thing about *Stimmung* is that, far in the background, there is an echo of La Monte Young. As you may know, La Monte and Marian visited [Stockhausen] and Mary Bauermeister out on Long Island, at [Bauermeister’s] studio in ’64 or whenever it was. Didn’t I tell you that story?

BD I’m not sure.

CCH Well, maybe I should include that here because it’s sort of a bravura La Monte moment—everything he did back then was sort of bravura. This is how I recall La Monte’s story: First of all, [Stockhausen and Bauermeister] invited [La Monte] for dinner and, as usual, La Monte shows up a couple of hours late, of course. They tried to serve him food and he said, “nah nah nah, I have to smoke first and drink some tea.” He had brought his own tea and snacks as well as a bunch of hashish with him in his stash bag. He opened the whole thing and puts it out on the floor and starts to work on his hashish, and a couple of hours later he feels that he has smoked enough. Now he’s okay at least. And then they tried to serve him dinner again, but he contended, “Well, you know, I’m inspired now to sing. So Marian and I will sing for you.” So they started to sing for another couple of hours, the way they do in *Map of 49’s Dream*. By the time they finish it is like six hours later than the original time for the dinner, but now [La Monte] wants to start to eat. La Monte always eats very slowly, so this is way past midnight. I guess he made them terribly exasperated by the time they left in the early morning hours, but, anyway, they must have been very impressed by what [La Monte and Marian] did [musically]. I mean, it was always pretty impressive what they did, and they did this impromptu recitation without a sustained drone or anything. Marian sings the drone, but no electronic stuff—acapella. But [Stockhausen] could never figure out what La Monte did. That’s what my suspicion is, because when it comes to this *Stimmung* piece, [Stockhausen] claims somewhere that the reason it doesn’t go beyond the 19[th harmonic] limit is because you supposedly can’t hear any of the intervals or harmonics above the 19th. He did not understand the theory of the harmonics, I think. He didn’t understand that you can choose any harmonic that you want—say, the 1,000,037th—and just down-convert it until you get into the octave that you

want to do it in (just keep dividing it by two). I let all that pass in our version of *Unbegrenzt*, and we did our interpretation with only percussion and all kinds of electronic effects. We skipped this just intonation part altogether and tried to do a kind of adventurous music, right? Although it is not just intonation, there’s still an adventure about it, in that each time we did it it came out differently, and we would never know in advance neither how it would begin or end. That was at least the intention.

BD Do you see that adventure aspect as relating to going beyond the limit—in the sense illustrated in the score?

CCH No, not really. See, the other thing about that was that when I saw that score and read the text, I was thinking to myself, *yeah, but we have been doing this [composition] for the last three years here in the studio*. We would play a sound for as long as we wish (in accordance with the Principle of Sufficient Reason) in a space that is open to us for as long as we wish. The studio was open for almost 10 years. In other words, we had already played this piece, but it was The Deontic Miracle that played it except it was in just intonation. We played my compositions. All of them went that way. They all had exactly the same format. So, with *Unbegrenzt*, here I’m basically reading a simplified version of my own scores. In other words, *Unbegrenzt* just fell in my lap. In particular, what attracted me was the open ended form which seemed to be an essential new aspect of Stockhausen’s approach and which LaMonte had practiced with the Theater of Eternal Music.

BD I remember talking ages ago about aspects of The Deontic Miracle and your pointing towards some recognition of the incompatibility of the scale and scope and concept of the music you were doing with the given institutional and social structures around it. I remember you saying that the music you wanted to do wouldn’t be possible until the culture saw it as more important to create a space for permanent sound than to create a bank.

CCH Yeah. Something like that. I came to realize from a pragmatic point of view that my music is not compatible with the conventional concert format, that it cannot tour. Because the music that we made depends entirely on the [acoustics of the] place, the studio, where everything was set up. All you had to do was turn a switch on, and the musicians can sit down and play, just like that. I found that to be extremely convenient for making music. Also, we thought that we could never reach this level of energy that I was after if we were just given a few days to set it up. In other words, the music needed this periodic reinforcement, every week or almost every day at times, in order to build up this incredible sound pressure and exactness of intonation. To integrate all these demands required a “live-in” situation with a continuous interaction with the acoustical properties of the space. By the way, that’s how Maryanne’s compositions also started to evolve—we seemed to have been the only composers besides La Monte who related to this premise.

BD I guess what I’m also trying to get at is some kind of pragmatic difference between you taking the potentially radical aspect of interpreting Stockhausen’s score literally—acting as though you have infinite time, et cetera—as in conflict with institutional frameworks, versus Stockhausen’s own interpretation (and perhaps even limited horizon of intention).

Whatever he’s doing throughout his career, he’s always still thinking in relation to a concert format, bounded in time—discrete presentations that can happen at Donaueschingen or Darmstadt. He’s never thinking beyond a given conceptual framework, and that framework then limits the degree to which he can interpret his own score.

CCH Yes, sure thing. As I just intimated, it would have been impossible to do our version at Donaueschingen or anything like that. But that only gradually dawned on me. It was only when we finally got the chance to do this gig at the Moderna Museet—we spent about three weeks setting up the sound system and doing the sound checks—I didn’t realize that when you scale it up, it becomes very complicated. We couldn’t have taken my equipment, which was okay for a small room, and gone over to the museum. That wouldn’t have sounded like anything.

So what we had were four of the Voice of the Theater speakers, with the 30-inch woofer, plus another battery of 16 Carlson speakers that Stockhausen had used for his concert when he was in Sweden. They came from Fylkingen or the Swedish radio. The system had a massive sound that I had never heard before. I mean, I had heard it at Fillmore East when I heard Jefferson Airplane, or what is it now? Jefferson Starship—and people like that, MC5, and other people playing in New York. I didn’t know that these guys were playing so loud because I had only heard it on record or maybe on the radio. I had no idea that they were playing with this incredible amplification. When I came to Fillmore East on Second Avenue, I was completely blown away by that sound. I thought, wow, this is really happening. This was much louder than what La Monte did when I was still at his place. He had only two Voice of the Theater speakers, but his place was also much smaller than Fillmore East, which compensated.

BD Just to clarify the timeline: this setup of the sound system at the museum—was that after you made the *Unbegrenzt* recording?

CCH Yeah, that was two years later.

BD Oh, okay. Of course. So did you consider including *Unbegrenzt* as part of [the museum] program or were you already beyond it?

CCH No, not at that time; however, we did do [a program of music by] La Monte, Terry Jennings, and Terry Riley, because it was part of an ongoing festival all over town. A spring music festival, which I think the museum was connected with. During some afternoons we played other composers’ music. All evening concerts were by me.

BD But do you remember with the band—after you made the recording of the Stockhausen and you’d been working on it for a while—was there a conscious decision to drop the piece? Because you felt it wasn’t a productive direction to keep going in? I’m just curious how you stopped, how you left it.

CCH Let me think for a second. I guess, by that time, I actually had rejected the avant-garde, the way it played out in the seventies. All the music that was offered was really boring, I mean super boring. And pretentious. It had really nothing to offer me. So I had made the decision that I had to reinvent my sound composition to fill what I was perceiving as a gap. But what I was trying to say before was that

I didn’t realize how incredible my sound was until we set it up in the museum.

That became a whole new layer, and then that’s why I was so disappointed when the museum told us to pack up and get out of the country and never come back again, because this is really something that not even I had heard before, and I had heard almost everything that was worth listening to. This was a truly illuminating sound experience for me to play using that kind of sound system.

BD That makes sense. Hearing that sound and the power, the intensity of that, I can imagine then that engaging with someone like Stockhausen just seemed irrelevant—with something so blindingly new and much more interesting to work towards.

CCH Yeah. And besides that, I became more and more annoyed with percussion sounds. So I took out all transients, very consciously. I felt transients are simply a distraction when you’re trying to listen to harmonics. I felt that a sustained chord was enough for me—it was the only thing for me.

See, I do take this recording [of *Unbegrenzt*] very seriously because I felt that Stockhausen didn’t do a good job with his own interpretation of it. I felt his interpretation was unnecessarily simple-minded, as the whole piece is, for me, as music from a conceptual point of view, one of his strongest pieces. In other words, I thought he was opening up to a whole new way of thinking about music performance. But I never saw that in his own [version], overtly, and it was really puzzling to me that he chose this standard concert format for what he did, for *Aus Den Sieben Tagen*. I thought he would go in a completely different direction. He wrote essays also—the one that you sent me that I read a long time ago, where he said... What was it called? “For the Youth”?

BD Oh yeah, I know what you mean—his “Charter for the Youth” or whatever.

CCH Yeah, and in another piece from that time he said it’s also liberating to drop all things that you had done before, and you start off in a completely new direction; you don’t really know where it’s going, but you follow your nose simply. And you just explore this way of being, completely immersed in the sound, and you don’t care about when it begins, you don’t care about when it ends, you just do it. I felt actually this is how La Monte’s band, The Theatre of Eternal Music[did it]. La Monte’s form was completely open and yet much more disciplined than what became known as free jazz. Tony [Conrad] told me that the original idea was having composer-less music. There was to be no composer. That’s why [Tony] was cross with La Monte, because La Monte later said, “I am the composer.” The same problem infected Stockhausen’s ensemble when he also said, “I am the composer,” to all the other people, but they said (like Tony and John Cale), “Well, yeah, but we are co-composers.” And then he just fired everybody who opposed his authority, like Donald Trump. Now, as it happened, it seems in retrospect that I was the only one with these ideas at that time—but I didn’t know where they were going to lead. I felt that things were getting more and more far out every time we did it, and that was my motivation to press on. But I was never really trying to be a “composer” or “artist” for that matter. I just happened to be very interested in what I was doing.

BD Right.

CCH I feel like you have to perform [the role of] a composer, in other words. [The piece] was my idea. It was my way of setting it up because, I told people, “We have these scores, you know how to do it, blah, blah, blah.” But I still felt that there is really no need for a composer. The sound is so impressive that I forget the composer. It doesn’t matter who composed it, you see...as long as someone composes it.

BD As composerly as La Monte showed himself to be, Stockhausen is of course all the more *the composer*. I think he’d never seriously imagined something beyond—it’s crucial to him to always be in that position.

CCH Yeah, but I felt that in his writing at that time that [Stockhausen] had abandoned that attitude [of sole authorship], and that he sort of found himself more free. I mean, he started to have long hair and everything. He started to look like a hippie a little bit. This was different from La Monte, who shaved it completely—very short hair—because he was under, what do you call it, on parole. He had a parole officer because he was busted.

BD Because he was what?

CCH He was busted. Back then, La Monte was a big time dealer in Manhattan. But he was very lucky because the day before the police came, he had visitors from the mafia that cleaned him out. They stole all his drugs. He also sold spices, exotic spices, but they didn’t want to have anything to do with them so they were spared. So he had nothing except spices when [the police] came. He was very lucky. Otherwise he would have been in jail still. That was in the late sixties, like in ’66. He was living on Bank Street, before he moved to Church Street. I only met him when he was at Church Street, I never saw his place on Bank Street.

Anyway, my impression of Stockhausen then was that he was trying to liberate himself, and basically go with the hip people—that he was tired of this academic style and gave them the finger. But then he pivoted again and he turned around and imitated the academics more than ever before.

BD Exactly.

CCH I mean, he wasn’t avant-garde anymore.

BD Not at all.

CCH See, for me, this is very important. I don’t want to release [*Unbegrenzt*] as a critique. Implicitly, of course, it is a critique of Stockhausen, but it was not really meant as one. What it was meant to show was an opening that he could have potentially taken himself, instead of this very stiff way of doing these improvisations. He never understood jazz. He didn’t understand that you can work with feelings somehow, that everything had to go back to some kind of formalism. Like La Monte’s style of doing things, where you just sit down and play. You have a given set of pitches and then you just get into it, just because you like it, not because you’re making a performance. It’s just because you want to hear it yourself. That was what I understood as the direction [Stockhausen] could have gone in, but it was prematurely aborted. In this connection I cannot refrain from remarking that there are so few composers that really enjoy listening to their own compositions—once a composition has been performed, they all start on a new one—like a chef who doesn’t like his own recipes. I find that difficult to understand.