

## Questions and answers on Intuitive Music

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*Preceding the discussion, Stockhausen had played a tape recording of ES and after the discussion played a recording of AUFWÄRTS.*

*Stockhausen:* That was IT. As I said before, I call this music Intuitive Music, because with a text like the one for IT, one should exclude all the possible systems which are usually used for any kind of improvisation if one understands the term "improvisation" in the way it has always been used. I therefore prefer the term Intuitive Music. We shall see how Intuitive Music is going to develop in the future. Does anyone have a question?

*Question:* How can you say that when you stop thinking, the mind is open to higher centres? Aren't you doing what the surrealists did with automatic painting in the 1920's? They said that if one stops thinking, one opens the mind to the subconscious to the unconscious, and you are saying you open yourself to higher centres. Is this because the surrealists were under the influence of psycho-analysis and you are under the influence of Eastern philosophy?

*Stockhausen:* I only know from personal experience that Intuitive Music should if possible have nothing to do with psychology, which means nothing to do with the subconscious and unconscious. Rather, the musicians must be influenced by the supra-conscious (we can tell from the results that they certainly are), by something which enters into them. There is certainly nothing in the entire history of music, and nothing in that which we have ever done before that even slightly resembles the results which have come out of these texts. Thus, it must be that which we call the supra-conscious, and not the subconscious or unconscious.

*Question:* You said there were similarities between different interpretations.

*Stockhausen:* Yes, it is interesting.

*Question:* Could you say a few words about the similarities?

*Stockhausen:* In IT, for example, all the different versions which we have played start with very fragmentary short actions and sounds. Then, gradually a longer sound comes into being here and there, and as soon as someone starts, his predecessor immediately stops, so that the sounds cut each other off. In all versions the superimposition of sustained sounds then increases. So, a musician plays something, then another one starts playing a sound or a certain sound pattern, and despite this, the other one can continue to play. Then it goes very quickly. In all the versions I have heard, there is never a slow transition: all of a sudden a situation is reached in which all

players are obviously fascinated by something that is in the air. They are completely absorbed by the sound and act instantly without thinking I mean completely spontaneous action and thus very dense structures come into being which are maintained for some time, until there is a moment when one of the musicians plays a sound which is outside of the context. And then, abruptly there are long silences: the musicians try to carry on with what they were playing before, but it does not work.

I could now give you a description of that which is strictly connected with the development of organisms which develop, in no matter which region higher or lower, and one could go even further and say very distinct things about the layer- and register-changes.

*Question:* Were there ever any performances which in your view were failures?

*Stockhausen:* Do you mean, in which we couldn't play at all?

*Question:* No, in which something was played which to your musicians' creative sense seemed to be rubbish? Or is there such a thing as rubbish?

*Stockhausen:* Absolutely. The first sign of rubbish is the emergence of clichés: when pre-formed material comes out; when it sounds like something which we already know. Then we feel that it is going wrong. There is a sort of automatic recording within us, which also automatically spits out all the recorded stuff also the garbage, and then one stops.

*Question:* Have you any way of eliminating acoustical rubbish from the creative process?

*Stockhausen:* Certainly. While playing Intuitive Music it becomes extremely obvious which musician has the most self-control; the musicians soon reveal whether they are critical, whether the physical and spiritual sides are in a certain balance etc. Some musicians are very easily confused, because they do not listen. That is the usual reason for rubbish in the sense that they produce dynamic levels which erode the rest for quite some time, without realising it themselves. In certain situations some become very totalitarian, for example, and that leads to really awful situations of ensemble playing. The sounds then become extremely aggressive and destructive; they operate on a very low level of communication, and destructive elements prevail (I hope we understand one another: I do not only mean simply "ugly" or "beautiful" when I say "low" level; I mean bodily, physically destroying each other). Then they all play at once. This is one of the most important criteria, that one must constantly remind oneself: "Do not play all the time", and "Do not get carried away to act all the time".

After several hundred years of having been forced to play only what was prescribed by the composers, once musicians now have the opportunity in Intuitive Music to play all the time, they do. The playing immediately becomes very loud, and the musicians do not know how to get soft again, because everybody wants to be heard. I mean, it is easy to get loud, but how can you get soft again? Finally you think: "Nobody hears me anyway, so I might as well stop".

These are the general principles of group behaviour, of group playing.

*Question:* Are you saying that value standards are emerging out of this?

*Stockhausen:* Completely new standards which we have never learned before for playing music; values which we discover for the first time when playing in a group, and especially each time there is a new member. Generally, it takes quite a while for a new member to integrate himself into our kind of ensemble playing.

*Question:* Concerning the collective interaction, there must be a critical number of members for this group?

*Stockhausen:* Right. That is why I always say that the mass begins with 7; with more than 7 all becomes too dense. Exceptional personalities are needed when the group is larger than 7 say 8 or 9 players. The best number is 4 or 5. Even with 6, in my opinion, one needs a lot of self-discipline to stop playing for relatively long periods of time during the performance, and to know exactly when the right moment has come, so that also solos and duos and trios occur not just sextets all the time.

*Question:* Have such attempts been made by groups which have existed for a long time, such as a string quartet, for example?

*Stockhausen:* No.

*Question:* Does the quality of the performance have anything to do with the musicians' technical ability on their instruments?

*Stockhausen:* Yes and no. For example, when one plays awkwardly, the intuition cannot work well; the tool, the instrument is not trained. That means that the musician becomes dependent on his body and he always wants more than it can do. Then rubbish again results. In such a situation someone is best qualified who does not have to think twice about the technical aspect

*Question:* someone who is completely master of his instrument. How about the tam-tam? Is that

*Stockhausen:* Well, you know what I mean: someone who has lived and experimented with the tam-tam for a long time. I do not mean someone who can play all the Liszt études it can even be quite difficult to play with such a person, because he can't get them out of his system any more. It is almost impossible unless he really concentrates on getting away from all these pre-established techniques. Rather, I mean someone who is completely united with his instrument, who knows where to touch it and what to do in order to set it into vibration, so that the inner vibrations which occur within the player can immediately be transformed into the outer vibrations of the instrument. That is the whole secret, naturally, the shortest way.

*Question:* Suppose you were in a group and acted according to an assigned text. You would think nothing. How then, can you make actions to create a sound? And do you classify awareness as a form of thinking, or is it something else?

*Stockhausen:* If I know that I am doing this, and that my co-player is doing something else, this realisation is an act of thinking and I call that thinking. What do you mean by awareness? Do you mean that I think that I am sitting here playing? Or not even that rather, that I just play?

*Question:* I mean, that you are aware of the other sounds

*Stockhausen:* All the time, naturally one is inside the sound

*Question:* So you separate awareness from thinking?

*Stockhausen:* Yes, without a doubt. Thinking is a mental process: pre-planning, remembering, recording, calculating all these different mental activities. For example, there are pieces which

demand that one makes a plan; that one should imagine the next event each time and then play it exactly the way it was imagined. One thus thinks out a musical event, then plays it.

*Question:* But you are reacting to each other, aren't you? That is what I mean by awareness.

*Stockhausen:* Actually we are reacting to or acting in the direction of what is in the air. It is not really re-action: we are busy with the sound we are working on shaping the sound which is in the air.

*Question:* In your theatre piece OBEN UND UNTEN you require the instrumentalists to first play KURZWELLEN, with the actors listening before they perform OBEN UND UNTEN. Why is this?

*Stockhausen:* I thought it would be the best training and the best stimulus. In KURZWELLEN, the players have to react to something that is unforeseeable because it comes out of the radio. They have to respond spontaneously to the short-wave material. And in the theatre piece, I expect the musicians also to react instantaneously to the spontaneous verbal material that comes from the speakers from the man, from the woman, and from the child. In the same way, I expect the man, the woman, and the child to say something intuitively which is evoked by the sounds produced by the musicians. Now in order to train for this, it is best to sit in front of a radio and react to that which is heard, and then always change with whatever comes, immediately doing what occurs to you while listening to the radio because in doing this you cannot cheat yourself.

*Question:* You say that you call this music Intuitive Music because improvisation is always related to a certain system

*Stockhausen:* Style

*Question:* to a pattern. What about improvisation like that of the Globokar group?

*Stockhausen:* He calls it improvisation. I would not recommend calling it that.

*Question:* What would you call it then intuitive?

*Stockhausen:* Yes, I would say so.

*Question:* Do you think Globokar would call it that?

*Stockhausen:* What do you want to talk about now: opinions or analysis?

*Question:* I simply would like to know exactly where the difference between improvisation and intuition lies.

*Stockhausen:* In Intuitive Music, I try to get away from anything that has established itself as musical style. In improvised music, there is always, as history has shown, some basic element rhythmic, or melodic or harmonic on which the improvisation is based.

In the Globokar group it is clear, for example, that although the musicians intend to play "out of the void", and although nothing is prescribed and there also are, allegedly, no prior agreements from time to time the percussion player Drouet plays tabla rhythms familiar to us from Indian music. He once studied tabla playing for a short time with an Indian tabla player, and these

stylistic elements emerge from him automatically. So there is no pre-established style for this music as a whole, but certain stylistic elements come into the music which I would try to avoid, in order to completely concentrate on intuition. The same is true of Portal, the clarinet player. Whenever he gets into a rage when the musicians are "heated up" he plays typical free-jazz melodies, configurations which he, as a free jazz player, has played for years. There are certain idioms that come from the group he played with, and from the free jazz tradition in general. At such moments, one finds oneself therefore in a certain style. Even though the musicians do not intend to play such styles, they have not eliminated them

*Question:* But systematized patterns are a part of improvisation.

*Stockhausen:* Yes, this has been so historically.

*Question:* No, it should be so, and it always will be so or has always been so.

*Stockhausen:* Now, that completely depends on us. If one calls what I do "improvisation", then it must be added: "Be careful, the term improvisation is now very broad and is no longer related to any agreements". But in such a case, I prefer a new term. Therefore, I suggest the following: baroque music, Indian music, some African music for example music from Mozambique is improvised music. Let's call that improvisation and leave it at that.

*Question:* And free jazz?

*Stockhausen:* It is "free jazz" because the word "jazz" means that a certain style is aimed at. Something specific is desired, which sets into motion that which is being played.

*Question:* What I heard on your tape recording today was Western classical music. I could tell that it was played by people whose training was in classical music.

*Stockhausen:* What do you mean by "classical"? I am completely thrown by your comment, because for me, classical music is something which has been composed. It has certain characteristics as regards rhythm, harmony, melody and form, and I do not find any of this in the music which I presented.

*Question:* I could tell by the gestures that the players were socially sophisticated, people who come from this particular culture in which we now find ourselves as opposed, for example, to Eskimos.

*Stockhausen:* That is obviously the case. What shall I say now? I mean I cannot change the situation.

*Question:* Yes, and thus in that sense it is also improvised music, because it is narrowed by the cultural frame of reference.

*Stockhausen:* If someone comes from the star Sirius and hears terrestrial music, he says: "So that's terrestrial music: no matter how hard they try to be intuitive, there is certainly a very typical channelling of intuition on this Earth as compared to Sirius". Naturally one can argue like that, if you wish. We are not yet universal, if that is what you want to say.

*Question:* Would you like to work with musicians who have a completely different musical background?

*Stockhausen:* By all means. I also do it. I am not tied to this group. For years I have been trying to replace certain players, who cannot get away from what you have just described. I realise that their limitations are too great. They have reached a certain limit and now cannot surpass it. I observe that these musicians cannot develop themselves further. Their possibilities seem to have come to an end, because they are not simultaneously working on the further development of their personalities.

*Question:* Don't you also think that this is the right way to find one's true inner culture musically, in the same way as you make your Intuitive Music in a group?

*Stockhausen:* It is difficult to speak about this. Basically it means to make contact with all that has been called intuition. In traditional music we are accustomed to say that a composer has only brief moments of intuition. (Let's say he had an inspiration in a tram or during a walk, and then he worked out the so-called idea or sound-vision for the next few weeks.) One imagines such inspirations like a flash of lightning in the night. At this point, I would like to make it clear that I am searching to discover a technique for myself as composer and interpreter and also for the other musicians who work with me to consciously extend these lightning-like moments of intuition; a technique which can actuate intuition when I want to start working, so that I am not a victim, having to wait until it comes. It often used to come, namely, at the wrong moment, when I had no time, or just when someone else wanted to talk with me. I must find a technique through which the intuition can be started and stopped. And these moments of intuitive working must last longer, as long as I want. But then I have to find a completely new technique for making music. I cannot simply sit in front of a piece of paper with my pencil sharpened and my eraser ready, and then write down what my intuition administers to me, because the intuition has a very particular kind of speed, which is by no means congruent with the speed of writing.

And that is the crux: for 600, 700, 800 years we have learned to translate music which we perceive intuitively into the visual, to represent it by means of a system we have agreed upon. Most of it is mechanical work. As I have said, in all my works there are always only a few intuitive moments which determine entire sections of several minutes, as it later turns out. Then I start working like a mechanic for days and weeks, calculating the details, etc. But I always knew what I wanted from the first moment on, and thus, most of this work is actually industry. As every insider knows, genius is 95% hard work and 5% intuition. I would like to add that this conception ought to come to an end as fast as possible. It is based on the unbelievably complicated process in which we have been trapped since Gutenberg, in fact ever since the first monks started to write down music. It was necessary as a mediation between composer and interpreter to write music on paper, then give it to someone who was like a musical mailman transporting it to another city, for instance, where other musicians could read it and transform it into sounds again. And now this process somehow is coming to an end. Namely, we do not need this mail any longer. I can fly there myself by plane or send a tape.

We must therefore develop completely new processes in order to find the time inherent in intuition and to work within this time of intuition so that intuition can last, and so that one does not always have to interrupt and say, "Wait a minute, first I have to write it down", by which time naturally it has slipped away again. This "Wait a minute", has become a source of frustration for most artists in the field of music, at least for the composers, and I would say that the traditional concept of the composer as a writer of music no longer suffices.

*Question:* What happens if you repeat a piece like ES in the coming weeks? Surely you must be bound, having once played in a certain way, to remember certain details and thus to play it similarly?

*Stockhausen:* No, I do not want to repeat anything.

*Question:* Do you think it would be completely different?

*Stockhausen:* Once you are on the track to follow intuition, you even try to abandon what you have learned the features of the repetition, the mechanisms of the reproduction. Certainly a new realisation would be completely different.

*Question:* In your opinion, is it possible to revive the intuition of the people in the hall?

*Stockhausen:* You mean a feed-back with the listeners?

*Question:* With the listeners, yes. And that, in fact, completes the circle with the intuitive also the meditative with a

*Stockhausen:* Definitely. If there are people in a hall who emit bad waves, nothing works. And the stronger they are, the worse it goes. One feels very bad when one has a destructive public, or when certain elements in the public are simply in an antagonistic mood, emitting destructive waves against whatever is developing. In some places we had to just give up. The people didn't even know why; but we knew that it was not the right place to stay and to work on a process, I mean, to form something. Yes, the public becomes immensely important, but not in the sense that they sometimes imagine. The public thinks that it is a great thing, in emancipated society, that there someone is playing and that the others consume it. That it the public is to be fed with music with my music, which is fixed once and forever, and namely in the traditional one-way information, the most extreme forms of which are records, radio and television.

Those who now wish to "critically" change these circumstances say, "Well, then you'll have to bring along whistles and stomp on the floor and jump around and talk with the musicians: everyone has to participate in the music and take part in the creative process!". Then the whole thing turns into something terribly primitive, because the people are neither innerly prepared, nor do they really want to form something extraordinary; they just want to manifest themselves and participate in a noisy event. So usually when these things have been done and they have been variously tried out in recent years, little instruments were handed out, or it was announced that with the help of the voice, sounds would be made together. Sometimes, someone also gave entries here and there, or tried to articulate the whole thing. Or else there was simply no one, and what happened, happened. Within a few seconds, it normally turned into a very loud din, in which no one could hear himself any longer. And then it simply remained a loud chaos, until the people got tired out.

But there is a completely different method to participate in a new way. Sometimes you find it in Indian music. There, a small group of listeners sits around the players and "comments" using gestures and voice. The players are encouraged in a wonderful way by these signs of the listeners and respond accordingly. There is a communion between those who are listening and those who are playing. Then the separation between those who are helping to build the wave-creation with their inner generators, and the musicians who are plucking the strings, is no longer so important. One forgets about the physicality of the frantically active hands, feet or tongue. Then this incredible feed-back is reached between people who are together and similarly tuned in a wonderful way. When musicians play in the presence of such a public, the most extraordinary things can happen, precisely also be-cause of these people.

*Question:* Do you think it is possible also for people who have no "higher knowledge" to make Intuitive Music?

*Stockhausen:* Yes, certainly. It is like falling in love with someone you did not know before.

*Question:* I would have thought that really good Intuitive Music very much depends on the individual members of a group knowing each other very well.

*Stockhausen:* As the gentleman has just said that can also go wrong. Or, on the contrary, a new player can tremendously inspire. There is also a magnetism which suddenly attracts players to each other; they feel well tuned to one another. But sometimes it suddenly stops, and one feels, "Hm I was mistaken, he can't, or I can't we both can't". Generally it is best if the players know each other well.

*Question:* I would like to return to the relation of style and Intuitive Music. Isn't the last piece that you played for us recognisable in any way as a piece which you composed, as compared to another composer who also writes a text which gives rise to an intuitive performance? Are you not really trapped in some way by something which is recognisable as your piece of music and not that of another composer?

*Stockhausen:* Yes, there is something to that. It is impossible for people who up to now have played something that bore my name to think that I do not exist. The fact that they know I exist and that that which they are doing has something to do with my name, leads them to very specific things. There is no question about it: all the musicians have told me as much. As a name, I am a myth. There is a body, and this body has a tag: a name. When this body does not exist any more, the name will completely transform into a myth, together with all the things which have crystallised around it, including the many opinions and convictions about what it would have done, if it were still alive. There are many minds that have already made a complete picture out of me a myth; and that myth creates something of itself. So I am a myth of myself also to myself. But that means that I am not only interested in this particular body and its biography, because it is only one of many appearances, and the others are actually just as mysterious for me as the one I have now. Nor am I only interested in this one name. The name stands for something that manifests itself through me: that is all I know. Thus, whenever I do something, certain things should be right in the way I think they should be right: there is a certain integrity that manifests itself through me. It must be something with which I can completely identify. And the musicians who have worked with me even those who read a score or an article of mine feel something of this and strive to also achieve it. Even if I were just to say, "Play", I would have said it, as opposed to Mr. X having said it: that makes a decisive difference.

So, someone has come into the world with this myth, and it will remain for as long as people retain the myth or are possessed by that spirit. It is a spiritual force that manifests itself through one human being and affects many others. And this creates a world within the world: there is no question about that. Thus, no matter how "free" the playing instructions are, people will always say, "Well, I cannot help it, it sounds like your music". And even if I say that it is not my music, that I do not own any aspect of it all that does not change anything, because all the works I have composed before are also contained in this one interpretation. They have encircled certain spiritual processes, musical processes.

*Question:* Do you think that in time, your music will be classified as classical music?

*Stockhausen:* It is really a pity, but as long as people want to also pigeon-hole music, yes. Namely, these pigeon-holes have a very special function, particularly in our society, because these classifications originate from people who classify themselves. This also holds true for people who classify themselves into the realm of "pop-culture". It is very difficult for people to get out of the "class" they want to belong to, because they are, in fact, innerly against all other classes as long as



they stick to this system. Actually, that is ridiculous: I belong to that, to which I want to belong. A free man does not need to belong to any class. If someone says to me that I belong to a particular class, he thus really classifies himself, just by using for instance "classic" as a tag. It has economic and social reasons classic people want to be in a classic society, classic employees in classic surroundings, they want to have a classic car, a classic suit and a "classy" partner these things have a lot to do with each other.

I am glad that the music is distributed on records I then become fairly anonymous, just a "name" and that it permeates all layers of taste and all classes. In this I have been very lucky, because my records are bought by pop fans, by lovers of classical music, by people who like modern music and also by people who enjoy oriental music or folk music. At least the record companies say that it is amazing and they actually do not understand why It seems that the music I have produced breaks out of the realms of classification to an ever increasing measure: it does not fit into these pigeon-holes. But we'll see. Perhaps you are right, that in 50 years they may again say: "He is a classical composer".

*Question:* Let's say there is a musician who is highly trained, but knows nothing about the sounds you make otherwise, and you would give him this music to play. What do you think is going to happen? Have you ever tried it? he has heard before. It is really a very decisive turning point in the development of a musician, to break out of his whole environment, training, and technical mechanics. So a very conscious being is needed: he must know the music of the world. He must already be a world-wide informed mind, who has travelled in many countries, or heard records of the music of all other cultures, in order to avoid it all.

*Question:* Would you say that a musician who wishes to play a piece like IT must by all means know your music well before he can play IT?

*Stockhausen:* No, this does not necessarily have to be the case. My instinct tells me that because of my instruction "Do not think anything and then start to play" he would just try out the strings of his instrument, and would stop all the time because of the instruction that he should stop whenever he thinks something. I don't know: we would have to try it. The brain can function as a filter to avoid all stylistic clichés. When therefore, this musician thinks (because the instructions say after all "Do not think, and when you have attained the state of non-thinking, start playing") he can stretch this thinking-process to as long as he likes between the moments of playing . That is what we do when we play this piece. We listen to each other and when someone thinks "What strange stuff he is playing", he stops. Then he tries to return to the state of non-thinking once more and starts again. So thinking is not excluded: it is always active when one is not playing. The thinking acts as a kind of filter: when one thinks during the performance, one can be very critical of what one has played oneself or what the others are playing. And this thinking then conditions after the thinking has been stopped the entire manner of playing during the following phase of non-thinking.

*Question:* I feel that all of us here could stop our thinking and our emotions the things that we are conditioned by, everything that is going on around us to simply achieve a complete calm within ourselves. Then, what there is in each of us will be the same, and the only problem would be to wipe out all the conditions created in us by television, newspapers and advertisements. So, if one took a piece like IT to its logical end, then perhaps it would always sound the same, no matter who is playing it, no matter where it is heard. Since what we have heard is recognisably played by Stockhausen's musicians, I would like to ask if you also feel that you have not yet performed this piece as perfectly as it is actually written?

*Stockhausen:* Please, give us a chance. Just three years of musical history have elapsed since something like this has surfaced or even been seriously considered, and none of the musicians who have participated in this music has dramatically changed his life: that is a pity. They are all continuing to live more or less the way they did before. Nevertheless, all of them have changed to a certain degree, more or less, depending on their personality. It will take time. Not just with this generation but also with the one to come. I have great confidence in what will emerge from these seeds.

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