

composition, as well as using them to produce harmonic progressions.

The analyses of individual works that make up the bulk of this book are very brief (even the most substantial and well-known works receive no more than four pages), but each provides sufficient key details and references to assist anyone seeking more information. The music examples and diagrams are concise and clearly illustrate Dixon's points.

Schnittke's film music is the subject of the final chapter, in which Dixon discusses select scores by director instead of chronologically, focusing on the composer's work with five of them in particular: Igor Talankin, Andrei Khrzhanovsky, Alexander Mitta, Larisa Shepitko and Elem Klimov. Dixon concludes with a complete listing of Schnittke's works, combining catalogues by Alexander Ivashkin and Schnittke's publisher Sikorski, as well as a very thorough bibliography. This book is a significant contribution to the newly burgeoning English-language Schnittke literature. It is an invaluable reference source for both its consolidation of existing research and for Dixon's original work.

Nathan Friedman  
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Eldritch Priest, *Earworm and Event*. Duke University Press, 2022, 200pp. \$24.95.

I must confess that I made a number of assumptions about the content and style of this book based solely on the author's name. The word 'eldritch' is exclusively associated, in my mind, with the work of H. P. Lovecraft. Additionally, I knew that this book was published by Duke University Press, implying that there would be a creative approach to critical theory and cultural criticism that challenges easy categorisation. These assumptions combine to suggest that Eldritch Priest was a member or part of the extended network of the Cybernetic Culture Research Unit (CCRU), a renegade group of academics, philosophers and musicians at Warwick University from the early to the late 1990s, a hotbed of experimentation in continental philosophy, specifically Deleuze, which was and still is uncommon in anglosphere academic philosophy. The most famous alum is probably Mark Fisher, and the most infamous is certainly Nick Land, who has since taken a political turn to the hard right. Other figures include Kodwo Eshun, author of *More Brilliant than the Sun*, Steve Goodman, who creates music as Kode-9 and is the founder of Hyperdub Records, and Reza

Negarestani, author of *Cyclonopedia*. The latter is an extraordinary book, an example of so-called 'theory fiction'. In it, the Deleuzeo-Guattarian notion of nomadology (among others) is developed and explored in the context of a fictional quasi-narrative, Lovecraftian in style, in which Oil is a sentient entity explicitly trying to eradicate humanity by ensnaring it in addiction and bringing about the climate catastrophe. As I would discover, Priest is a member of The Occulture, a group of four authors who contributed essays to a book edited by the aforementioned Steve Goodman, so there is a direct connection. My expectation was that Eldritch Priest would write something within this style, and in a sense he has.

There are, in fact, two books contained in this volume, bound *têch-bêche* like an old science-fiction double shot. *Earworm* is a book of cultural criticism circling the titular theme, while *Event* is a collection of creative writing – not necessarily essays or short stories, but perhaps long-form musings. *Earworm* is, to be blunt, a difficult read. Andrew Hugill in this journal's review of Priest's earlier book, *Boring Formless Nonsense*, wrote 'keeping going is the hardest thing, since in almost every paragraph the book presents us with reasons to stop'.<sup>1</sup> Priest will often reference arguments – that capitalism seeks finer control over our emotions, for example – without really crafting the logic or making an argument. The most cogent writing is typically found between quotations marks. Priest reads Suzanne Langer's theories of feeling and music to develop the idea that earworms are 'felt as thought'. What exactly that means doesn't seem to be as important as creating a conceptual land bridge away from earworms, because this book is not really about the phenomenon of an earworm per se, but rather circles it, using it as a touchstone or motivic reference point. The best chapter is the last, a reading of the film *Upstream Color*. Priest introduces it as 'a series of impressionistic responses to the film'. As the prose drifts away from formality, logic and argumentation, one feels the author becoming more comfortable and the writing more interesting.

Unsurprisingly, *Event* is a much more enjoyable book. These five chapters are each little gems of what might be called pataphysical academic papers. Each is very much its own piece and has its own character. The second chapter, 'Beating a Dead Beetle', is the most successful piece of the whole

<sup>1</sup> Andrew Hugill, 'Boring Formless Nonsense: Experimental Music and the Aesthetics of Failure', Eldritch Priest. Bloomsbury, 2013. £18.99'. *TEMPO*, 69, no. 271, 98–99.

volume, filled with Derrida-like wordplay. The question under consideration is ‘do animals get ear-worms?’. Impossible to tell, but we can observe strangely compulsive behaviour that is isomorphic with an earworm, or at least so the thinking goes. Yet there is an unresolved internal tension in presenting this as a chapter in a book, which might be why one can find the author delivering it as a paper on YouTube at an unconventional conference in 2016. Reference is made to a beetle walking in circles for minutes on end, a kind of kinetic earworm. In the live delivery, a video of this beetle is projected to the speaker’s left, along with some other visual counterpoints (unfortunately, the screen is only partly visible in this particular video). Simply reproducing the text removes a charming bit of context, character and personality, but it also flattens Priest’s charismatic and reserved delivery. Of course, the visual of sitting at a table reading a paper with a projection to the side leaves something to be desired as well. I hope to see continued experimentation with this material – perhaps eventually some kind of theory-film.

Eldritch Priest is an interesting individual, composing chamber music, producing records as a jazz guitarist, working with The Occulture and having now written two books. I wonder, though if there isn’t a meeting point between all these various modalities. Defined forms seem to pose unproductive problems for him, so is there something between a free-jazz album and a book – something both and neither but completely its own thing?

Alex Huddleston

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Julia Eckhardt, *Éliane Radigue: Intermediary Spaces*, Umland Editions, 211pp. €20.

I first encountered the very special music of Éliane Radigue (1932) more or less in reverse. Around 2011, I heard Charles Curtis’ recording of *Naldjorlak*, and a live performance of harpist Rhodri Davies performing *Occam I*. These are instrumental works from a composer famous for her electronic output. Over the subsequent decade I heard several more live performances of pieces from the *Occam ocean* series, and heard stories from musicians who had visited Radigue in Paris to learn them. I heard a few works for the ARP synthesiser from the 80s, and *L’île re-sonante* from 2000.

But it has only been in the last year or so that I’ve been able to listen to her feedback-based

tape pieces from the late 60s now that these recordings have been digitised and made more widely available. In 2019, Julia Eckhardt’s volume on Radigue, *Intermediary Spaces*, was published, comprising a long interview, Radigue’s 2008 essay ‘The Mysterious Power of the Infinitesimal’ and a list of works and discography. In reading it, a complete picture of Radigue finally swims into view. Thus, despite knowing it for over a decade, it’s only been in the last year that I’ve been able to fully grasp the nature of her music, its singularity and consistency, and the magnitude of her achievement.

For me, it has been understanding her approach to feedback, and the nature of her early work, that has been revelatory. It holds the key to the way she thinks about musical construction, the way she listens and (arguably) the way she works with instrumentalists. In particular, it’s crucial to understand the distinction between *larsen*, and ‘feedback’, used as an English loanword in French.

*Larsen* is used to describe the more conventional feedback between microphone and speaker cabinet. But when Radigue refers to ‘feedback’, she generally means not *larsen* but ‘injection’ feedback – the process by which a tape loop, containing some initial base sound, is fed between two tape machines. ‘This continuous process results in a very dangerous effect for the tape recorders if they aren’t scrupulously controlled with the mixing console,’ she says (p. 88).

Gradually, I established my initial vocabulary, developing a particular way of formulating these electronic sounds. I felt myself to be in the time of the Arcadian shepherds and Greek philosophers discovering the laws of natural acoustics and developing the principles to which we owe so many wonders in Western music. I felt the same question of what other musical foundations could be, in regard to this new language (p. 89).

Radigue’s first tape compositions – *Jouet Électronique* (1967), *Élemental I*, *Accroméga* (1968), *Ursal*, *Stress Osaka*, *Omnht*, *Vice-Versa etc.*, *Opus 17* (1969) – were all constructed from loops of tape treated in this way, mixed together in intricately planned formal schemes.<sup>1</sup> In these early compositions she established the working parameters that determined the rest of her compositional life. A piece would begin in her mind with an idea or an image. The piece’s form would be worked out. Its materials would be

<sup>1</sup> Many of these works have been released through the Éliane Radigue bandcamp site, hosted by Ina GRM. The recordings have extensive notes provided by Emmanuel Holterbach, <https://elianeradigue.bandcamp.com/> (accessed 20 September 2022).