

## Friedrich Hommel: The Secret of his Success?

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In 1981, Ernst Thomas, the second director of the Darmstadt New Music Courses, came to retire. His directorship had been a long one, having held responsibility for the courses from 1962, following the death of the founder and first director of the Ferienkurse, Wolfgang Steinecke, at the end of 1961. Yet despite their longevity, the Thomas years had not been happy ones for Darmstadt, either from the perspective of the courses themselves, or for the city itself, which remained the primary financier of the project as a whole. The 1960s were damned with faint praise, when Cornelius Cardew observed that the courses had "become an excellent Academy, [where] problems like Notation and Electronic Sound are competently handled in a rather academic way."<sup>1</sup> The 1970s were, if anything, rather unhappier. Protests from students and journalists alike characterized the courses between 1970 and 1974. These largely focused on the desires of many participants to take a more active role in determining the musical direction Darmstadt was taking rather than remaining in abeyance to perceived diktats from above, which seemed to come either from the corners of Thomas or from Karlheinz Stockhausen, according, as it were, to taste.<sup>2</sup> There were concrete results of these protests: in the first place, the courses endeavoured to preserve their increasingly limited resources by taking on a biennial pattern from 1970; more significantly, Thomas invited a new, younger composition faculty to fill the power vacuum in the wake of Stockhausen's unceremonious dethronement from the head of the Darmstadt courses: between 1976 and 1980, Brian Ferneyhough, Gérard Grisey, Helmut Lachenmann, Tristan Murail, and Wolfgang Rihm all began to take on central roles in the teaching of composition at the courses. Yet the damage to Darmstadt caused by the protests, and especially by Thomas's weak handling of those voices of dissent raised in journalistic quarters, was seemingly irrevocable. Even if the staffing of the courses had changed, with Thomas at their head, there was little chance of the press reporting signs of recovery. With Thomas's retirement, therefore, there was a slim chance that things could change, if the right person could be found.

Despite the difficulties of the Thomas era, the city of Darmstadt seems to have taken certain lineages of succession into account in the ultimate decision to invite Friedrich Hommel to take on the role. Hommel's pedigree was, in this sense, impeccable. He had not only succeeded Ernst Thomas as music critic for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, but he had also more recently been editor of "serious music" for the *Südwestfunk* in Baden-Baden, a post that Otto Tomek, one of Ernst

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<sup>1</sup> Cornelius Cardew, "New Music Has Found Its Feet," *Financial Times*, 31 July 1964, reprinted in Gianmario Borio and Hermann Danuser (eds.), *Im Zenit der Moderne*, vol. 3 (Freiburg-im-Breisgau: Rombach, 1997), p. 509.

<sup>2</sup> For further details, see my "The Haus that Karlheinz Built: Composition, Authority and Control at the 1968 Darmstadt Ferienkurse," *Musical Quarterly*, vol. 87 (2004), pp. 87–118, "Trying to Speak: Between Politics and Aesthetics, Darmstadt 1970-72," *Twentieth-century Music*, vol. 3 (2007), no. 2, pp. 255–75, and "Pamphlets and Protests: The End of Stockhausen's Darmstadt," *Musikkulturen in der Revolte. Studien zu Rock, Avantgarde und Klassik im Umfeld von '1968'*, ed. Beate Kutschke (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2008), pp. 55–63.

Thomas's staunchest supporters, had previously held.<sup>3</sup> Thus, Hommel combined an understanding of both press and broadcast journalism and, since it had been miscalculation with both that had ultimately caused Thomas such serious problems, Hommel's appointment was seemingly designed to prevent such errors occurring again. Hommel himself felt what had really brought him into serious contention for the post of director was his staunch defense of Thomas. As he stated in a later interview with Reinhard Kapp: "My appointment to the role in Darmstadt was, in part, a result of the strength of support I offered in print for the continuation of the courses during the 1970s. In a sense, I brought it on myself [...] I also said yes to the job offer without hesitation."<sup>4</sup>

Hommel's leadership was pivotal in Darmstadt's return to a perceived central position of importance in the international new music community in the 1980s. Indeed, though many may regard Ferneyhough as Darmstadt's central personality in this period, Ferneyhough's own observation was, by contrast, that "it would not be going too far to say that Friedrich Hommel *was* Darmstadt. His personal presence was its core source of energy."<sup>5</sup> In order to understand more fully the vital impact that Hommel's accession to the leadership had, and, vitally, the crucial distinctions between Hommel's leadership and that of Thomas, it is important to examine more closely the techniques used by Hommel in his first years, techniques which seemed to kick-start an explosion in participant numbers. It will become clear that Hommel shrewdly utilized almost exactly the same media techniques which caused such harm to the Thomas administration to enhance perceptions that his directorship represented an entirely fresh beginning for Darmstadt, despite the fact that, on the compositional side at least, he retained a central selection of lecturers extremely similar to those that characterised the latter years of the Thomas administration. These lecturers are considered more fully below.

Hommel's own appointment coincided closely with another that certainly eased his task: Heinz-Winfried Sabais was replaced as mayor by Günther Metzger.<sup>6</sup> Günther Metzger's father, Ludwig, had been mayor in 1946, and was directly responsible for having given authorization for the very first Ferienkurse. As a result, Wolf-Eberhard von Lewinski, amongst others, spoke of the younger Metzger having a "special interest" in the Ferienkurse.<sup>7</sup> Certainly, Metzger was quick to promise that the city of Darmstadt's support would remain undiminished. Metzger was keen to stress that this promise should not be taken as the words of wishy-washy politicking, but that his support would take the tangible form not only of continued, but increased financial backing.<sup>8</sup> By March 1984, far from simply maintaining the budget at its

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<sup>3</sup> The concepts of "Ernst-Musik" or E-Musik and "Unterhaltungs-Musik" or U-Musik, meaning "serious music" and "music for entertainment" can hardly be adequately translated. However, in the West Germany of the 1970s, this distinction was becoming ever more prevalent. Where previously, if one was "music editor" it was implicit that this referred to, very broadly, classical or "art" music, in the 1970s it became necessary to specify for which of the two "forms" of music one was editor. This is indicative of growing feelings within the radio companies of West Germany that "serious music" had been excessively privileged.

<sup>4</sup> Markus Grassl and Reinhard Kapp (eds.), *Darmstadt-Gespräche: Die Internationalen Ferienkurse für Neue Musik in Wien* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1996), p. 208.

<sup>5</sup> Brian Ferneyhough, interview with the author, 19 November 2001.

<sup>6</sup> Sabais had died in 1981 and is buried near Bruno Maderna in Darmstadt's Alte Friedhof.

<sup>7</sup> Wolf-Eberhard von Lewinski, "John Cage kommt wieder zu den Ferienkursen," *Darmstädter Tagblatt*, 24/25 March 1984.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, "Protest mit der Trompete," *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 18 July 1984.

present levels, Metzger had increased the courses' available funds by roughly 20%.<sup>9</sup> Since West German inflation stood at around 2.4% in 1984 and had, indeed, been dropping consistently since a peak of 6% in the middle of the 1970s, this represented a massive financial investment on behalf of the city.<sup>10</sup> Inevitably such a huge increase in funding enabled Hommel to take measures that would bolster the numbers of participants at Darmstadt, and a large proportion of these monies was diverted for precisely this purpose. Monika Lichtenfeld stated that two-thirds of the participants in 1984 received some form of financial assistance from the Internationales Musikinstitut Darmstadt's resources,<sup>11</sup> while Brian Ferneyhough opined that Hommel's "very close relationship to successive Mayors of Darmstadt was a key factor in keeping the courses viable after the major radio stations had withdrawn their support."<sup>12</sup> Metzger's attitude stands in complete contrast to the approach of Sabais, who in the main appears to have felt that the level of cultural activity in Darmstadt was incompatible with a city of its size, and took too great a portion of the city's budget. In 1978 Sabais had suggested that Darmstadt could even manage without the prestigious Büchner Prize for Literature.<sup>13</sup>

It is certainly worth querying the accuracy of Christopher Fox's suggestion that 1982 "was the first year without any representation from the old guard among the instrumental teachers."<sup>14</sup> Though this statement is partly true, it obscures subsidiary elements of continuity amongst the instrumental staff: Armin Rosin had been directing courses for brass instruments since 1974, and Herbert Henck assisted Kontarsky in the piano courses for 1974 and 1976, before taking over direction of the keyboard studio for 1978 and 1980. Though this means that only two of the nine members of the performance faculty were regulars at Darmstadt, clearly here there is evidence of continuing relationships with the past, specifically in the form of performers introduced to Darmstadt under Thomas's leadership, in addition to the discontinuity implied by Fox's statement. More vaguely, Fox wrote of a "new spirit" in the composition courses. Plausibly this may have been the case. Yet, the individuals who made up the composition faculty could hardly really be taken as representatives of trends previously unheard at Darmstadt. Indeed, even though for some it was the first occasion on which they had taken part as a member of the faculty, in most cases the members of the composition faculty had played prominent

<sup>9</sup> From DM240,000 to DM295,000 according to Heinz Zietsch, "Neue Noten, Namen und Ideen," *Darmstädter Echo*, 24 March 1984.

<sup>10</sup> Lothar Kettenacker, *Germany since 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 278.

<sup>11</sup> Monika Lichtenfeld, "Aufbruchstimmung in Darmstadt—eine kursorische Bilanz der Internationalen Ferienkurse für Neue Musik 1984," Hessischer Rundfunk second programme, broadcast 29 January 1985 (transcript: IMD).

<sup>12</sup> Brian Ferneyhough, interview with the author, 19 November 2001.

<sup>13</sup> Heinz-Winfried Sabais, "Normales Lebesgröße," *Darmstädter Echo*, 4 November 1978. Büchner, most famously the author of the fragmentary play *Woyzeck*, is of course the best-known writer to have hailed from Darmstadt, and the Büchner Prize is arguably Germany's most prestigious literary award. Moreover, the prize itself had some very strong links with the new music courses. In its earlier guises, it was a more general prize for the arts than for literature, only becoming dedicated to literature specifically in 1951, with an award to Gottfried Benn. Following the reinstatement of the prize in 1945, after the years of Nazi rule in which it was not awarded, Hermann Heiß, one of the courses' earliest members of lecturing staff, received the prize in 1948. Sabais's feelings in this regard are perhaps emphasised by the fact that he was, himself, an amateur poet; his collection *Mitteilungen—Communications* was published in a bi-lingual edition in 1971 (Heinz-Winfried Sabais, *Mitteilungen—Communications*, tr. Ruth and Matthew Mead (Darmstadt: Eduard Roether, 1971)). For a comprehensive history of the Büchner Prize, see Judith Ulmer, *Geschichte des Georg-Büchner-Preis: Soziologie eines Rituals* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006).

<sup>14</sup> Christopher Fox, "Darmstadt 1982," *Contact*, no. 25 (Autumn 1982), p. 49.

roles at Darmstadt in previous years. Almost half of the lecturing staff had given lectures, and thus been counted as faculty members of a fashion at least, at Darmstadt before: Ferneyhough, Lachenmann, Rihm, Grisey, and Murail. Indeed, in the cases of Ferneyhough, Rihm, and, above all, Lachenmann they had lectured extensively at Darmstadt, and had been brought to Darmstadt in that capacity by Thomas in the wake of Stockhausen's departure. Of the other composition lecturers, most had participated in some manner in the past. Clarence Barlow's *çogluotobüsisletmesi* (1978) had won the Kranichsteiner Prize the previous year in 1980.<sup>15</sup> Péter Eötvös had been a member of the Stockhausen contingent in 1974: he took part in the ill-fated performance of *Herbstmusik* (1974), perhaps the moment at which Stockhausen's continuing presence became untenable from the perspective of the Darmstadt leadership, and returned in 1978, conducting the Radio Symphony Orchestra of Stuttgart in performances of Cristobál Halffter's *Mizar* (1977) and Lachenmann's *Les Consolations* (1967–78). Horatiu Radulescu had been involved in performances of his *Nest Wy, Paraconscious music '74* (1974) and *Joy 10.10-10.43* (1976), in 1974 and 1976 respectively. Zimmerman's *Gelassenheit* (1975) and *Beginners Mind—Anfänger sein* (1975) were both performed at Darmstadt in 1976. Therefore, of the twelve composition lecturers, only Hugues Dufourt, Michaël Levinas and Erhard Grosskopf could be said to be new to Darmstadt. Even here, since Dufourt and Levinas worked exclusively as a part of the Groupe l'itinéraire with Grisey and Murail, and Levinas had also taken part in the Composition Studio run by Lachenmann and David Johnson at the 1972 courses, there is little that is suggestive of radical innovation on this front at least. Some years after his review for *Contact*, which praised Hommel's new beginning, Fox himself agreed that "with the benefit of hindsight, the courses in 1982 were conspicuously similar to those of 1980."<sup>16</sup>

Despite the fact that his staffing remained, in retrospect perhaps unsurprisingly, very close to that brought in by Thomas in the mid-1970s, it was Hommel's personal approach and, indeed his personality itself, that marked out his version of Darmstadt as being of an entirely different nature from that of his predecessor. In 1980, the young British clarinettist, Roger Heaton, had attended the Ferienkurse, and written a scathing review of it for *Contact*.<sup>17</sup> It is not difficult to imagine that Thomas would have simply taken the view that, if Heaton had not found the experience to his taste, then the best solution for all concerned would be for him not to repeat it. Hommel's reaction was entirely different. Rather than allowing Heaton's criticism to stand unchallenged, he instead invited Heaton to direct the clarinet studio in 1984. Thomas's stance had been, broadly speaking, that decisions taken by the director were largely immutable. For all Thomas's excellence as an administrator on the level of infrastructure, his handling of criticism was consistently poor. Hommel made it clear that, if an individual felt something was wrong at Darmstadt, then the correct solution was to put that individual in a situation where they could have an opportunity to change it. Whether this stance was wholly intended for the egalitarian purpose of improving the qualities of the courses, or as a method of

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<sup>15</sup> Barlow's title, belying his obsession with spellings and re-spellings, contains a far greater variety of diacritics than are given here, unavailable to most commercially available typefaces. This interest is most evident in Barlow's continual variations of his own name. In Fox's review of Darmstadt 1982, he laudably endeavours to keep pace with Barlow's own fertile reinventions naming him successively, Clarence Barlowe, Barleugh, Klarhenz Balo, Clarlow and Barlot.

<sup>16</sup> Christopher Fox, quoted by Gisele Gronemeyer in "So klein ist die Welt: Die 38. Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik in Darmstadt," *MusikTexte* no. 66 (November 1996), p.76.

<sup>17</sup> Roger Heaton, "30<sup>th</sup> Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik," *Contact*, no. 22 (Summer 1981), pp. 33–36.

diverting criticism is hardly clear. Indeed, it hardly matters. In his first edition of the *Darmstädter Beiträge*, Hommel, as editor, appeared to validate his own decision with the caption, beneath a photo of Heaton: "one of the great discoveries of the summer of 1982."<sup>18</sup> Whatever else may have changed, Heaton certainly did not write another critical review of Darmstadt.

Indeed, Hommel quickly adopted a straightforward method of dealing with controversy of all description, which followed a basic pattern of giving, especially to the press, a positive reaction to almost any event which could have been construed as a failure. This penchant for positive "spin" stands in stark contrast to his predecessor. In 1984, on only the second occasion on which he directed the courses it was reported that there had been, during the courses, "a state of near warfare."<sup>19</sup> The oboist, Nora Post's performance of Robert Moran's *A Survivor from Darmstadt*, was herself responsible for one of the greatest scandals of the 1984 courses, outlined below. She recounted that, given the plurality of compositional styles on offer:

Hardening of the categories was an inevitable—albeit lamentable—fact of life. The Ferneyhough group was accused of being so complex and abstract as to add up to an uninteresting zero for the listener. The minimalists (nearly anyone not related in some way to serialism) were written off as "too simple." The neo-tonalists were pretentious and self-indulgent. Hespos was barbaric. As one composer put it, "Pick your poison."

The worst aspect of this stylistic polarisation was the sense that instead of learning from other styles, some composers and performers took on the role of aesthetic exterminators, organizing factional groups, preparing the boos, bravos and paper aeroplanes before the first note of a piece was played. One young English serialist was booed so severely by the minimalists after the premiere of his string quartet that he broke down publicly and cried.<sup>20</sup>

So early in Hommel's reign, this sort of activity must to some have seemed reminiscent of the wrangling of the early 1970s. Worse, it might easily have looked as if the damage that those events had done to the public perception of Thomas's Darmstadt could be repeated, but this time with a much less well-established director. Under Hommel's leadership, though, there were two key differences. First, in no small part owing to the reforms forced by these earlier protests, the Darmstadt of 1984 saw several clearly defined compositional stylistic trends, essentially those outlined by Post: the "New Complexity," spectralism, the "explosive Romanticism" of Rihm, Wolfgang von Schweinitz, Hans-Christian von Dadelsen, and others, and a certain species of minimalism. Rather than there being a binary opposition between the participants and the course leadership, as had been the perception in the early 1970s, Hommel shrewdly set up oppositions between the various participant factions, or at least did not take any steps to prevent them developing. The perceived objects of discontent were thereby kept entirely within the participant circle. Vitaly, Hommel had gone far further in the way of pluralism than Thomas (and his advisory panel of Aloys Kontarsky, Siegfried Palm and Christoph Caskel) could have imagined, not least by adding minimalism into a mixture that already contained various strands of "New Complexity" and "New Simplicity." Rather than a binary confrontation

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<sup>18</sup> [unsigned], "Konzertveranstaltungen," *Darmstädter Beiträge*, no. 19 (1984), p. 91. "Eine der großen Entdeckungen des Sommers 1982."

<sup>19</sup> Peter Reynolds, Review of Kevin Volans, *Summer Gardeners*, *Tempo*, no. 160 (March 1987), p. 45.

<sup>20</sup> Nora Post, "A Survivor from Darmstadt," *Interface*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (1984), pp. 149–59. The rather forced "hardening of the categories" is a quotation from remarks made by Morton Feldman at Darmstadt 1984.

between the clear polarities of simplicity and complexity, Hommel ensured that there were at least three parameters. Indeed, the presence of L'Itinéraire arguably provided a fourth pole, and composers—and performers too—were able to affiliate themselves to one, or more, of several stances.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, having allowed oppositions to develop between the various participant factions, Hommel positioned himself, not as *above* such a debate, but simply *outside* it. Indeed, he went further, suggesting that, in his opinion, such conflicts should be regarded as a positive factor. Hommel's upbeat, optimistic outlook, despite the adversity of violent factionalism amongst the participants appears to have been infectious. The programming of Moran's *A Survivor from Darmstadt* was certainly ultimately Hommel's responsibility. Its reference to Schoenberg's *A Survivor from Warsaw* was felt by many of the German participants to be in extremely poor taste and led yet again to widespread distribution of pamphlets of the sort that repeatedly led to precipitously dangerous situations under Thomas. Seemingly oblivious to the feelings of these German participants, or keen to fan the flames of controversy, in her review of Darmstadt 1984, Post even referred to these events as a "near holocaust."<sup>21</sup> However, Hommel showed once more his ability to create a media success from a potential crisis. According to Post, his response was that

I intentionally created certain inevitable tensions [...] There were moments when I thought maybe all of those tensions could not be resolved.

On the other hand, I know what was the best moment of the course for me. At the final concert, when you [Post] played the last note of Moran's piece [...], *Survivor from Darmstadt*, symbolizing in many ways the survival of all of us. I suddenly realized that nothing remained unsolved. There were no enemies – only friends. There was a promise by all to go on.<sup>22</sup>

It would be foolish however to mistake Hommel's easy manner with the press for complete sincerity. His claim that 1984 was "the first time in twenty years that we have had East Germans here" is true only because he spoke of East Germans in the plural. Tilo Medek hailed from East Germany and had lectured at the courses in 1976; in 1980, there was a single East German participant. In 1984, there were still just two East Germans: the composer, Georg Katzer, and the musicologist, Frank Schneider.<sup>23</sup> Again, on some level this sort of revitalization of the courses began before Hommel took over the position of director. Yet Hommel's great strength was often to have a clear-sighted view of what the important issues for particular groups—in this case both West German participants and the West German press—were and to find ways of capitalizing upon anything positive that could be said. It is worth remembering in this context that, as Hommel himself confessed, the German press was much more sceptical of his "new" Darmstadt than the international press.<sup>24</sup>

Although Hommel's original consideration for the role of director may have come from his spirited defense of the courses and its leadership in the early 1970s, he

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Reinhard Oehschlängel, "Darmstadt lebt wieder," *General-Anzeiger*, 25 August 1984.

<sup>24</sup> Hommel recollected to Post that, "after attending two concerts, for example, a major German paper condemned the entire course." It is, however, unclear to which particular newspaper this refers. The most obvious candidate, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, was largely positive in its comments.

was nonetheless careful to ensure that two of the journalists central to the 1972 protest against Thomas—Ernstalbrecht Stiebler and Reinhard Oehlschlägel—were involved in some fashion. Hommel's solution actually ensured good relations with the media in general. 1982 saw a sequence of live radio broadcasts at the courses, under the collective title Funkpanorama Neue Musik. As well as reintegrating Stiebler, as broadcast editor for the Hessischer Rundfunk, and Oehlschlägel, acting for the Deutschlandfunk, Josef Häusler, Ulrich Dibelius and Wolfgang Becker-Carsten were also invited to be involved in the broadcast series. All five held important positions with their respective broadcasting companies and, indeed, were highly influential in the new music community in general. While Oehlschlägel had clearly not forgotten the events of the early 1970s—indeed he made sure to remind Hommel that they had disagreed starkly on the subject of Ernst Thomas—it would be he who would counter the implicit attack on Darmstadt by a concert at Århus as a part of the World Music Days, titled "Is Darmstadt Alive?," with a newspaper article entitled "Darmstadt Lives Again."<sup>25</sup> As had been the case with Heaton's attack on Darmstadt under Thomas in 1980, Hommel's approach to such problems was to allow former dissenters like Stiebler and Oehlschlägel to have a say in correcting what they saw as being wrong at Darmstadt. Indeed, in truth, in this way Hommel found a way to introduce the demands for *Mitbestimmung* (co-determination) which had characterized those earlier protests, but without any lessening of his personal authority at the head of the courses. Moreover, the financial assistance that could be provided by the major radio stations was not inconsiderable and, as well as supporting concerts that would otherwise have been too expensive for Darmstadt to consider when operating on its own, this allowed Hommel to prioritize his budget in favor of bringing a greater number of participants to the courses, as mentioned above.

Though not seemingly especially important, Friedrich Hommel made a further change which, without making any fundamental alterations, gave a clear indication that attitudes had changed: he redesigned the format of the *Darmstädter Beiträge*. A cover in full color replaced the earlier olive version, with its stark Helvetica script.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, his first edition of the *Darmstädter Beiträge* integrated photographs more widely than ever before, many of them in colour with "witty" captions.<sup>27</sup> The indication that Darmstadt had become significantly less earnest was clear. Furthermore, the new volume emphasized the international nature of the courses, with three articles in French and two in English, alongside the five German contributions. Although the courses of the 1970s had also been tri-lingual—the complaint at the time was really that German, English, and French were hardly sufficient—the dominant language was certainly German. Here, too, German remained the primary language.

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<sup>25</sup> Oehlschlägel, "Darmstadt lebt wieder." Oehlschlägel also took the opportunity to create a little unadvertised self-publicity in mentioning that the question 'Is Darmstadt Alive?' was taken up by the "young German music periodical, *MusikTexte*," of which Oehlschlägel was, and is, the here-unacknowledged co-editor. Questions relating to the theme 'Is Darmstadt Alive?' were sent to many figures involved in New Music in Germany. It is obvious that Oehlschlägel's actions in 1972 had not been forgotten by everybody: Kagel sent a letter to Hommel, dated July 7, 1984, after having received Oehlschlägel's questions, stating: "I've been wanting to send you a copy of the attached set of questions from the High Inquisitor for some time. I think it's important for you to know what's being cooked up behind your back." (see Björn Heile and Martin Iddon, eds., *Mauricio Kagel bei den Internationalen Ferienkursen für Neue Musik in Darmstadt* (Hofheim: Wolke, 2009), p. 95).

<sup>26</sup> Since the original design was introduced by Steinecke, it seems likely that, had Ernst Thomas made the decision to revise the format, he would have been heavily criticized for it.

<sup>27</sup> One might think particularly of the photograph of a sleeping Wolfgang Rihm, captioned, "The Secret of Creativity?" *Darmstädter Beiträge*, vol. 19, p.15.

The key difference was that Hommel made an active demonstration of the secondary course languages, which Thomas had rarely done.<sup>28</sup>

It would be amiss to close these remarks on Hommel's accession to the directorship of the Darmstadt courses without mentioning another near coup achieved for Darmstadt 1984. In March 1984 many of the newspapers, both local and national, printed the news that John Cage would be in attendance, to hear his *Thirty pieces for String Quartet* (1984), performed by the Kronos Quartet alongside Morton Feldman's mammoth Second String Quartet.<sup>29</sup> In getting to this stage, however, Hommel had had to rely on the support of figures such as Oehlschlägel and Stiebler who, through their respective radio companies, played no small part in creating the financial conditions that would make it possible for Cage to come once more to Darmstadt. Indeed, as Beal suggests, it may well have been the case that, without Stiebler's support, both financial and personal, neither the performance of Cage's *Thirty pieces* nor that of Feldman's Second String Quartet could have taken place at all.<sup>30</sup> In the end, however, on grounds of ill health, Cage was unable to attend. Heinz Zietsch speculated that perhaps he really had little actual desire to come back after 26 years.<sup>31</sup> It would only be in 1990, again largely through the ministries of Oehlschlägel and Stiebler, that Friedrich Hommel would eventually be successful in enticing Cage back to Darmstadt for only the second time.

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<sup>28</sup> In fact, in *Darmstädter Beiträge*, vol. 14, two of the contributions to the series "Komponieren 1974" are in English, and one is in French. Ernst Thomas had earlier been damaged by rumors that one of his main objections to American composers was that he himself spoke no English (see Amy C. Beal, *Patronage and Reception History of American Experimental Music in West Germany, 1945–1986* (PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 1999), p. 166). However, in the editions of the *Darmstädter Beiträge* edited by Wolfgang Steinecke, the language used was exclusively German. The first English text in the *Darmstädter Beiträge* was written by Earle Brown, in *Darmstädter Beiträge X*. Jorge Peixinho's report on his experiences during the *Musik für ein Haus* courses was the first submission in French, and Salvatore Sciarrino's article on his First Piano Sonata was the first Italian article. Although Hommel's two editions of the *Darmstädter Beiträge* do bring languages other than German to the fore, it was, perhaps surprisingly, Thomas who first allowed composers to submit foreign language texts.

<sup>29</sup> The version performed at Darmstadt 1984, which had already been cut to allow its broadcast on Canadian radio, nonetheless ran to some four hours.

<sup>30</sup> Amy C. Beal, *New Music, New Allies: American Experimental Music in West Germany from the Zero Hour to Reunification* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006), pp. 242–43.

<sup>31</sup> Heinz Zietsch, "Märchen vom schönen Schein der Kunst," *Darmstädter Echo*, July 30, 1984.