

Luigi Nono, *Écrits* [Anthology, 2007]

Edited by Laurent Feneyrou and published in 2007, this volume is divided into two parts. The first part brings together 114 texts by Luigi Nono (including published and unpublished articles, lectures, letters, questionnaires, and interviews), translated from Italian and German into French and presented in chronological order. The second part contains a catalogue of his works, introductory texts written by Nono, and liner notes and program notes from discs and concerts. The CD included with the book allows the reader to also hear the composer's voice, recorded at a lecture given in 1983 under the auspices of a concert by the Ensemble Contrechamps.

This is the most exhaustive edition of Nono's writings to date. It draws upon the four prior editions, published in German (1975), French (1993), and Italian (2001 and 2007). The critical apparatus from those editions is recapitulated in the present volume, to which new notes have been added relating to historical, analytical, and philological questions. Some of these notes refer to books in Nono's library, complete with their marginalia. Philippe Albèra's introduction, drawn in part from an article published in *Le Monde* in 1987, offers a remarkable portrait of the composer, and presents one of the most important ambitions of this edition: "to place technical texts dealing with purely compositional questions side by side with his ethical and aesthetic stances and his numerous responses to political circumstances, motivated by his activism" (p. 17).

If the scope of themes broached by Nono appears disconcertingly broad at first blush (including serial technique, Marxist dialectic, Wittgenstein's philosophy, the political situation in Latin American nations...), together these texts, which cover the period from 1948 to 1989, demonstrate how the composer's reflections are in direct response to current events of his time.

Without attempting to summarize even the guiding principles of these writings—the issues raised are simply too numerous—it will suffice here to highlight a handful of articles that discuss primarily musical questions. In a lecture given at Darmstadt in 1959 and titled, "Présence historique dans la musique d'aujourd'hui" ["The Presence of History in the Music of Today"] (p. 71-79), Nono condemns the habit of considering artistic phenomena independently of their historical context—or even, of refusing the notion of historicity altogether—targeting Joseph Schillinger and John Cage. Here, Nono discusses collage technique, which he views as emerging from a "colonialist form of thought" (p. 75). Meanwhile, in "Texte - Musique - Chant" ("Text-Music-Song") (p. 80-101) Nono illustrates his conception of the relationship between sound and word, using several musical examples. He states that the act of fragmenting a text into its phonetic elements does not entail severing it from its meaning, as Stockhausen believed, but rather bestows upon it a "semantic signification [...] in the composer's musical language" (p. 101). In "Le

pouvoir musical” [“The Power of Music”] (p. 312-323), dating from 1969, Nono reflects back on his participation in the Darmstadt courses, and analyzes the stances of various composers of his time regarding the relationship between music and politics. He identifies five perspectives: the first three are represented by Boulez, Kagel, and Stockhausen; the fourth is that of certain leftist groups, which in his view gave up on music’s revolutionary potential; and the fifth, in which Nono places himself, conceives of culture as “a moment of taking consciousness, of struggle, of provocation, of debate, and of participation” (p. 319). One of his final writings, titled, “D’autres possibilités d’écoute” [“Other possibilities of listening”] (p. 544-559), helpfully illustrates Nono’s new conception of sound rooted in the notion of intuition, and represents a captivating, sometimes visionary, introduction to his final compositions.

Given its concern for completeness and its methodological rigor, this collection stands out—even within the crowded bibliography of works on Nono—as an indispensable reference volume.

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