Roger Woodward

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STOCKHAUSEN

KARLHEINZ STOCKHAUSEN was in London about this time last year also as part of the English Bach Festival. This year the Royal Festival Hall seemed to suit his purposes much better. The performance last Friday is his only concert appearance this year in London and he came complete with a massive quadraphonic sound sytem plus a supporters' club for a performance of "Kontakte" for piano, percussion and pre-prepared four-track tape.

Earlier in the evening, though, two of his less recent, and by now almost conventional, pieces were performed — the "Klavierstucke IX," solo piano by Gerard Fremy, with its single chord played relentlessly for about ten minutes, and "Zyklus" for solo percussionist played by Jean-Pierre Drouet, a piece where the percussionist is surrounded by hardware of a type which strongly rivals that of Tony Oxley. In both these pieces the sound projection from the instruments was controlled by Stockhausen himself from a large console within the audience, so that the actual music came not from the piano or percussion but from various points high in the ceiling of the hall. The hall became a total sound environment.

Next "Intervall" played by two pianists Jerzy Romaniuk and Roger Woodward (who is fast becoming an avant-garde superstar and looks as much into rock as he is into Mozart, Beethoven or Stockhausen). This is a kind of contest which ends with the players singing an interval to each other as they wander off stage.

Lastly "Kontakte" in which the delights of an astounding quadraphonic sound sytem were displayed to the full. Awe-inspiring electronic sounds whirring in spirals above the audience and a chance to see and hear live musicians and electronic sounds completely integrated will make the final memory of this concert last. — RUSSEL UNWIN.

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Stockhausen
Festival Hall

William Mann

It would hardly be an English Bach Festival without an appearance by Karlheinz Stockhausen. He duly turned up on Friday to direct the last concert of the festival; and he drew a good crowd to the Festival Hall.

The venue must have been a box office dare, but artistically it was worthwhile for the pleasure of hearing *Kontakte* in acoustically favourable, spacious circumstances. For once the speaker system behaved perfectly, and the quadraphonic electronic sounds wheeled and flashed above our heads to thrilling effect, especially in the "cawing crows" passage, and the deep booming (as of jet engines queuing up to land at Heathrow) when the pianist strikes both gongs.

Stockhausen had brought two new and very satisfying performers for *Kontakte*: Gérard Frémy who also gave a strong and poetical account of the ninth piano piece; and Jean-Pierre Drouet who restrained the bravura of *Zyklus*, stressing his great range of nuance. I feared they might be swamped in *Kontakte*, but not a bit.

The remaining item, *Intervall*, was a world première, a piano duet for Roger Woodward and Jerzy Ronmaniuk. The players are instructed to begin with single notes, gradually adding up to 10-note chords, then decrease to one note apiece (it was a minor third), hum and play it, then leave the stage, humming the while. The performance showed the plan to be viable, though there was a dull patch, full of long silences, on the return journey. The perilously humorous exit turned out to be rather charming; doubtless we shall all be copying it at times of farewell.

Curiously the loudspeakers (or at least one of them) were used throughout the concert. We could see Mr Frémy pounding out those repeated chords; but the sound came from above the ceremonial box. I hope this unnerving practice will not become standard.