

If one hears what one composes -- by that I mean not just paper music -- how can one not be seduced by the sensuality of the musical sound? It is unfortunate that when this sensuality is pursued we find that the world of music is not round, and that there do exist demonic vastnesses when this world leaves off.

Noise is something else. It does not travel on these distant seas of experience. It bores like granite into granite. It is physical, very exciting, and when organized it can have the impact and grandeur of a Beethoven.

The struggle is between this sensuousness which is elegance and the newer, easier to arrive at excitement.

You have no idea how academic music is, even the most sublime. What is calculated is for me academic. Chance is the most academic procedure yet arrived at, for it defines itself as a technique immediately. And, believe me, the throw of the dice may be exciting to the player, but never to the croupier.

Recently I heard news from Europe that Boulez is adopting the chance techniques of John Cage and perhaps myself. Like Mathieu, he is going to show us Katzenjammer kids how an ambitious Frenchman can really do it. It was easy for Napoleon to reach Moscow. And it will be curious to observe Boulez straggling home to Damstadt.

Is noise actually so easy to arrive at? Noise is a word of which the aural image is all too evasive. On the one hand sound is comprehensible in that it evokes a sentiment, though the sentiment itself may be incomprehensible and far-reaching. But it is noise that we really understand, and it is only noise which we secretly want, because the greatest truth usually lies behind the greatest resistance.

Sound is all our dreams of music. Noise is music's dreams of us. And those moments when one loses control, and sound like crystals forms its own planes, and with a thrust, there is no sound, no tone, no sentiment, nothing left but the significance of our first breath -- such is the music of Varese. He alone has given us this elegance, this physical reality, this impression that the music is writing about mankind rather than being composed.

Boulez, on the other hand, has neither elegance nor physicality. His sound consists of a million gestures, all going upward (certainly not to heaven) -- an etude, a caricature of our times, a homage to Artaud and Franz Liszt.

Nevertheless, he is a magnificent fake, and it will be thanks to his success that we will be able to hear more of Varese, John Cage, Christian Wolf and myself.