The infrastructure of contemporary music in Germany is remarkable for its diversity. The very large number of German synonyms for the ‘serious’ music of the last 100 years, as well as its performance and publication, suffices to convey an initial impression of the broad spectrum of art music in Germany today. Contemporary music, music of the 20th and 21st centuries, modernist music, music of our time, present-day music, new music, New Music, newest music, musical modernism: all these and many more have their current German equivalents. The wide range of terms, most of them coined by journalists or concert organisers, has recently been augmented by more inclusive concepts such as Klangkunst (‘sound art’), audio-visual art, performance art, audio art, radiophonic music, ars acustica and music in the web. The associated phenomena often lie in an intermediate
realm between the visual arts and art music. They can take the form of resonant spaces or resonating objects; they can also toy aesthetically with the manifold technical possibilities of the new media, crossing the traditional boundaries between art forms. These modes of expression are likewise often classified as contemporary music and presented as such in the standard festivals and professional journals. The same applies to improvised music, which vacillates between established jazz and the ‘serious’ avant-garde, and to so-called new music theatre, which has parted company with narrative opera and drawn a large following since the 1990s. In short, contemporary music is neither a stable and sharply defined concept, nor does it point to a precisely demarcated aesthetic terrain. Rather, it designates a remarkably broad and varied range of acoustical creations, both of today and of recent decades, as well as a multi-layered, open-ended and increasingly inclusive scene that has thrived chiefly on the spirit of ‘serious’ music – until now, at any rate. For the boundaries separating contemporary art music from established forms of popular music, which is evolving at an increasingly dizzying pace, and conversely those separating popular music from contemporary music, are becoming more and more blurred. The former lines of demarcation are rapidly vanishing, so that the spectrum of what can be termed ‘contemporary music’ will continue to expand in the future.
The steadily growing multiplicity of forms of expression in contemporary music is a striking feature of our times, and one that should be seen in a positive light. Never in the past 100 years has so much contemporary music reached the public as it does today, and never have there been so many specialist ensembles. These developments, however, which have been particularly dynamic since the 1980s, contrast with a diametrically opposite decrease in funding. The sometimes draconian financial cutbacks in the area of culture have not stopped short at contemporary music, which, like every other form of ‘serious’ music through the ages, stands in need of material support. In particular Germany’s municipalities and publicly-funded broadcasting corporations, which have until now served as reliable bastions of funding for Germany’s contemporary music, have been reducing their commitment for years.

In sum, the current status quo of Germany’s contemporary music is ambivalent. On the one hand, there is a steadily growing number of composers, performers, musicologists, producers and journalists in this area, not to mention a constantly expanding audience with a keen interest in present-day forms of musical expression and an ability to engage with them at a high level. On the other hand, this upsurge in artistic creation and reception is being hamstrung by financial cutbacks in the public sector.

CONCERT AND FESTIVAL LANDSCAPE

Public Broadcasting

The large number of publicly funded broadcasting corporations in Germany, virtually every one of which has a separate department for new music, is a driving force behind the great diversity of Germany’s contemporary music, whether in its creation, distribution or propagation. Here a major role is played by the corporations’ own musical formations (i.e. orchestras and choruses), many of which are deeply committed to the music of our time.

The annual Donaueschingen Festival, founded in 1921, is not only the world’s oldest festival of contemporary music, but one of the most prestigious in the world. Since the early 1950s it has been supported mainly by the Southwest German Broadcasting Corporation (Südwestrundfunk, or SWR) in co-operation with
the city of Donaueschingen and other partners. Another major festival, the Witten Days of New Chamber Music, has been held since 1969 by the West German Broadcasting Corporation (Westdeutscher Rundfunk, or WDR) in conjunction with the city of Witten. Germany’s other public broadcasters have festivals and concert series of their own.

Equally central to Germany’s contemporary music landscape are the music programmes of its public broadcasters, which follow a cultural and educational policy and provide a very wide range of information on contemporary music several times a week. Several of their contemporary music departments have developed and launched their own series of broadcasts, setting programming and educational standards for the dissemination of contemporary music and reaching impressively large and varied audiences.

Poised at the institutional crossroads of creation and distribution of their own contemporary music projects (including information and publication), Germany’s public broadcasters have proved to be among the sturdiest infrastructural pillars on the new music scene. Given their additional programming of projects from other sources (live recordings of concerts, productions with freelance ensembles, reports and essays by freelance writers), it is impossible to overstate their importance, at least in the field of radio. In contrast, the amount of contemporary music
shown on their television programmes is almost nil. But even the radio companies reveal a trend toward reducing the amount of broadcast time devoted to contemporary music, loosening their ties to public events and sometimes withdrawing from established co-operations with festivals. The precise consequences for Germany’s contemporary music in this area are impossible to foresee.

Municipalities, States, Federal Government

Almost every major German city, as well as many smaller cities and communities, has highly regarded festivals, concert series and/or initiatives for contemporary music. Indeed, since the 1980s their number has even increased rather than decreased. More than 100 such activities can be found in a very wide range of towns and cities. Many are short-lived; others have existed for years and become institutions in their own right. (Still other large-scale events, such as Berlin’s two Klangkunst retrospectives of 1996 and 2006 under the title ‘sonambiente’, focus their programmes exclusively on expanded concepts of music and art, thereby transcending the bounds of normal festival operations.) Sometimes contemporary music is integrated in community festivals, music festivals or concert series, where it forms a programming highlight alongside other forms of music. Examples include the International Beethoven Festival in Bonn, the MusikTriennale in Cologne and the Altstadt Herbst (‘Autumn in the Old Town’) in Düsseldorf. Mu-
sic festivals with a regional slant, such as the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, the Rhinegau Music Festival, the Saar Festival or thematic projects along the lines of the Ruhr Piano Festival, are likewise often known for their contemporary offerings, sometimes placing brand-new and older material side by side on their programmes. The same can be said of events that cover several art forms at once, such as the Berlin Music Festival, where contemporary music forms a central item on the programmes alongside other artworks of our time. These hybrid concepts are relatively well-funded and have their own infrastructures. In contrast, festivals that focus entirely on contemporary music in a wide range of towns and cities usually owe their existence to a single benefactor or association and frequently have a hard time holding their own in the long run. Nonetheless, in 2002 the federal government instituted an annual ‘festival of current music’ – MaerzMusik – within the Berlin Festival, which is wholly financed with federal funds. MaerzMusik is now one of the best-equipped festivals on the contemporary music scene. In contrast, other festivals, one example being Inventions, founded in the 1980s and jointly run by Berlin Technical University and the Berlin artists’ programme of the German Academic Exchange Service (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, or DAAD), have had to grapple with steadily dwindling budgets. On the positive side, the establishment of the Federal Cultural Foundation (Kulturstiftung des Bundes) in Halle (Saale) has ensured long-term support for several festivals of contemporary music and Klangkunst, some of which would never have come into existence without it. This institution, created and sustained by the federal government, is unquestionably among the most important and best-equipped funding tools for promoting contemporary music, and has also developed programmes of its own. In 2007 the Federal Cultural Foundation created the Netzwerk Neue Musik (‘new music network’) project, which will use its over € 10 million in funds to promote, organise and co-ordinate the administration of several large-scale contemporary music projects and their propagation until 2011 in 15 German cities and regions selected by a jury. Moreover, Netzwerk Neue Musik has assumed the task of functioning as an intermediary, initiator and platform in the field of contemporary music. There is, of course, no telling how things will look after 2011, when the subsidisation is scheduled to run out, but since the initiative began several regions and municipalities have become more actively and lastingly involved in this field than ever before.
ORCHESTRAS AND FREELANCE ENSEMBLES

Besides the ensembles associated with Germany’s public broadcasting corporations, Germany’s other art orchestras funded on the municipal or state levels (the federal government is partly involved in the funding of only two ensembles) present greater or lesser doses of contemporary music. Some of these orchestras have a firm commitment to contemporary music; others occasionally play works composed in the last 100 years, and still others only rarely. Most concerts of today’s music are given by some 200 freelance ensembles based in Germany and specialising in the performance of contemporary music. According to a study conducted by the Institute for Research in Cultural Innovation (Institut für kulturelle Innovationsforschung), the German Music Information Centre (Deutsches Musikinformationszentrum, or MIZ) in conjunction with the Contemporary Music Promotion Projects of the German Music Council (Deutscher Musikrat, or DMR) and the German section of the International Society for Contemporary Music, these ensembles gave a total of more than 1,200 world premières in 2005 and 2006.¹ Despite this impressive and aesthetically forward-looking commitment, very few of these ensembles are able to work on a more or less solid financial basis. Among these at the moment are Ensemble Modern (Frankfurt am Main), musikFabrik (Cologne), ensemble recherche (Freiburg im Breisgau), Kammerensemble Neue Musik Berlin and Neue Vocalsolisten (Stuttgart). All the others, including many of international stature, must struggle to survive. All in all the number of new ensembles is even increasing, though we should not let this blind us to the dire pecuniary straits prevailing amongst most of them.

PUBLICATIONS AND ARCHIVES

Germany’s public radio companies report regularly on contemporary music in miscellaneous broadcasts, some devoted entirely to new music. Articles on contemporary music also appear regularly in the arts pages of Germany’s daily newspapers. Apart from these, information on the subject is chiefly found in specialist journals that report mainly or exclusively on new music. Among these are Neue Zeitschrift für Musik (founded in 1834, published bimonthly in Mainz), neue musikzeitung (founded in 1952, published ten times per year in Regensburg), Musik-Texte (founded in 1983, quarterly, Cologne), Positionen (founded in 1988, quarterly, Cologne).
Mühlenbeck near Berlin) and *Musik & Ästhetik* (founded in 1997, quarterly, Stuttgart). Some of these journals, such as *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (NZfM) and *neue musikzeitung* (nmz), maintain their own up-to-date web sites. The internet also has many important and interesting portals and home pages on contemporary music, some maintained by publishers, associations, societies, concert organisers or other institutions, others by private individuals. Especially worthy of mention is the ‘Neue Musik’ portal of the German Music Information Centre, which provides not only a detailed overview of the infrastructure of Germany’s contemporary music scene, but a variety of sources for further information. Also worth mentioning is the journal *KunstMusik*, which has been published semi-annually in Cologne since 2003 and consists entirely of (auto-)poetological articles by composers and sound artists. Incidentally, basic information on aesthetic, political, social and other aspects of contemporary music can also be found in festival programme booklets, some of which are quite large.

Another ambitious publishing project based in Germany is the internationally aligned biographical dictionary *Komponisten der Gegenwart* (‘Composers of the present’), which has been publishing biographies of composers, lengthy introductions to their music, and bibliographical references on an ongoing basis since 1992 (Munich: Edition text + kritik). Equally informative, especially for musicologists,
is the 12-volume *Handbuch der Musik im 20. Jahrhundert* ('Guide to 20th-century music'), which contains cohesive discussions of larger subject complexes (Laaber, 1999-2008). Among Germany’s large publishing houses with a longstanding interest in publishing modern music – or those with a branch office in Germany – are Bärenreiter, Boosey & Hawkes, Bote & Bock, Ricordi, Schott, Sikorski, Breitkopf & Härtel and Peters. In addition there are a number of smaller publishers committed to contemporary music, such as Edition Modern/Tre Media and Edition Juliane Klein. But many composers tend to publish their scores themselves. Among publishers of books on contemporary music, special mention should be made of the publishing firms Pfau, Wolke and Kehrer, the latter specialising in writings on sound art. In contrast, Germany’s large literary and non-fiction publishers rarely carry books on contemporary music, just as its wide-circulation popular magazines rarely report on it.

Turning to the recording industry, the leading German labels devoted partly or entirely to contemporary music include *inter alia* Wergo, Cybele, Neos, Edition Zeitklang, edition RZ, Maria de Alvear World Edition and Winter & Winter. Moreover, the German Music Council issues two CD series of its own:

a) *Edition Zeitgenössische Musik* ('Contemporary music edition'), which has issued 70 portrait CDs of German composers, male and female, on the Wergo label since 1986. Two or three portraits are added to the series every year. The composers, who may apply for inclusion, are selected by a jury specially appointed by the German Music Council. The choice of works on the CD and the contents of the accompanying booklet are the responsibility of the composer concerned.

b) *Musik in Deutschland 1950-2000* ('Music in Germany from 1950 to 2000'), a series of more than 130 CDs documenting the evolution of contemporary music in both German states (the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany) up to 1990 and in reunited Germany up to the turn of the century. Besides works by German composers, this series also presents pieces by composers from other countries who did most of their creative work in Germany or whose oeuvre impinged on Germany’s own musical evolution. The choice of pieces and the commentaries in the richly detailed booklet that accompanies each CD are
the responsibility of an authority on the subject who is appointed by the editorial board. This project reached completion in 2010.

Two major archives specialising in contemporary music are the Darmstadt International Music Institute (Internationales Musikinstitut Darmstadt, or IMD), which also serves as Germany’s information centre for contemporary music and maintains a large specialist library, and the Hellerau European Centre for the Arts (Europäisches Zentrum der Künste Hellerau), which maintains the German Composers’ Archive (Deutsches Komponistenarchiv) collecting posthumous papers of composers since 2005. Darmstadt is also the home of the Jazz Institute (Jazzinstitut Darmstadt) with its large specialist research archive on improvised music. In addition several academies, such as the Berlin Academy of Arts (Akademie der Künste), preserve large collections of posthumous papers by various modern-day composers, performers and musicologists.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Many activities associated with contemporary music take place at Germany’s musical institutes of higher learning (Musikhochschulen). All of them have degree programmes in composition, and many offer a degree in electronic or electro-acoustical music. However, these offerings are seldom organised so as to create a special degree in contemporary music and are rarely gathered into a separate contemporary music department. A comparison of these institutions reveals sharp contrasts in their emphasis on contemporary music, which depends greatly on the commitment of their teaching staff and, of course, of their students. As a result, centres of contemporary music at the university level can vary greatly over time. Contemporary music is also taught at a few public music schools, one being the Rhenish Music School in Cologne. However, Germany does not have a tertiary-level musical institute that focuses its curriculum exclusively on contemporary music. Nor is there a department of musicology at a German university that devotes its teaching and research entirely to this subject. That said, since 2006 the International Ensemble Modern Academy (IEMA) and the Frankfurt University of Music and Performing Arts have offered a one-year master’s programme in contemporary music as a joint educational project. Moreover, since the 1990s the department of musicology at Cologne University has had a chair of ‘music in
the 20th and 21st centuries’ – at present the only one of its kind in Germany. Nevertheless, academic musicology, which has been shrinking nation-wide for years, has currently taken a large interest in contemporary music, as can be seen in the growing number of dissertations and theses in this field.

Special degree programmes in *Klangkunst* and audio-visual art have been established *inter alia* at Cologne Academy of Media Arts, Braunschweig University of Art and Saar University of Art and Design. The degree programme in ‘sound studies’, introduced at Berlin University of the Arts in 2002, not only promotes the training of freelance sound artists, it also teaches acoustical possibilities and forms of participation that can be of use in business and industry. Similar projects at many tertiary-level academic institutions probe the relations between contemporary music and architecture, sound design, sound art and radio art on a practical and/or theoretical basis, though often selectively in the form of lower-level academic appointments or guest professorships.

Special importance attaches to Germany’s electronic and electro-acoustical music, which maintained a position of international leadership for decades. In
the 1950s and 1960s several electronic music studios were founded by public broadcasting corporations and institutes of higher learning. In the new millennium, however, many of these studios have had to be completely or partially shut down. There are many reasons for this: lack of money, new conditions of production, new options of realisation. In the near future, developments in this area must be viewed with a very watchful and critical eye in order to respond promptly to poor decisions and hasty changes. At least the Berlin Artists’ Programme, established by the German Academic Exchange Service (Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst, or DAAD) at Berlin Technical University in 2001, has made possible the Edgard Varèse Guest Professorship of Electronic and Computer Music, which is given to an internationally acclaimed composer or theorist for one semester at a time.

A special instance of Germany’s educational offerings in contemporary music is the unique International Summer Courses for New Music (Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik), founded in Darmstadt in 1946. Here roughly 300 students gather together every two years to be taught composition, performance and musicology by some two dozen lecturers. In 2003 Ensemble Modern, founded in 1980, set up the International Ensemble Modern Academy on its own initiative in Frankfurt am Main in order to pass on their experience in dealing with new music within the framework of interdisciplinary artistic forums. Further, the Baden-Württemberg Ensemble Academy in Freiburg, in existence since 2004, has likewise held events in an effort to teach practical and theoretical aspects of contemporary music, partly in conjunction with the ensemble recherche and the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra. Another important independent teaching facility is the Darmstadt Institute of New Music and Musical Education, which has held multi-day working conferences on different aspects of aesthetic and educational positions in contemporary music every year since 1946. There are also several devoted to children and young adults. One is the composition class for children founded at the Händel-Konservatorium in Halle (Saale) in 1976 and still in existence today. Another is the ‘Jugend komponiert’ (‘Youth Composes’) projects introduced in various regional branches of the German Music Council, for example in Berlin, Brandenburg, North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland and Thuringia and, since 1986, in conjunction with the nation-wide ‘Jeunesses musicales’ competition in Weikersheim.
ASSOCIATIONS, SOCIETIES, INITIATIVES

Established in 1992, the German section of the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) – the Gesellschaft für Neue Musik (GNM) – is the oldest and largest umbrella organisation for all persons and groups interested in contemporary music in Germany. Its members include private individuals from a very wide range of professions as well as several institutions and companies (e.g. radio stations, concert halls, professional associations and publishers). In various cities and regions the GNM has so-called regional groups actively involved in promoting contemporary music in concerts and round-table discussions on issues of aesthetics and cultural policy. Another member of the GNM is the German Society for Electro-Acoustical Music (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Elektroakustische Musik, or DEGEM), whose members come from the field of electronic and electro-acoustical music, and which issues its own CD series and maintains its own WebRadio. The GNM is in turn a member of the German Music Council, which it advises in matters involving contemporary music. Moreover, the GNM or one of its members has organised the annual ISCM World New Music Days in Germany on several occasions, most recently in Stuttgart in 2006.

All in all, the number of societies and initiatives involved with contemporary music in Germany is very large and spread over many cities and regions. Many are active locally or regionally; others, such as the GNM, are for the most part national or international in scope. Several of these varied initiatives have been short-lived, while others are continually springing into existence, often with fresh concepts and ideas. In the final analysis, contemporary music, like any other current art form, is not a static construct but one in a constant state of flux, as are the undertakings associated with it, which are almost always based on private initiatives.

PRIZES, SCHOLARSHIPS, GRANTS

Like other forms of artistic expression today, contemporary music in Germany has many prizes, scholarships and grants as well as temporary composer-in-residence positions, which are often publicly advertised. This is not the place to list them all, particularly as many have had to be abandoned while others have arisen to take their place and still others are in the process of being created. Detailed
information on them can be obtained from the German Music Information Centre, especially via its calendar of invitations to apply, which offers an overview of various forms of financial assistance in Germany’s contemporary music scene, with application deadlines and categories considered. Contemporary music projects generally receive assistance (with financial or equivalent means) from public institutions and facilities within the framework of their respective statues. These include the Federal Cultural Foundation; the Centre of Art and Media Technology in Karlsruhe (ZKM), which awards working scholarships; Germany’s performance rights organisation, the Gesellschaft für musikalische Aufführungs- und mechanische Vervielfältigungsrechte (GEMA), which awards the German Music Authors’ Award and a scholarship for European Music Authors; the Karl Sczuka Prize for Acoustic Art, awarded by Southwest German Broadcasting Corporation in Baden-Baden; the German Klangkunst Prize, awarded by the Marl Museum of Sculpture; the Klangkunst Scholarship of the Berlin Senate; the foundations of each federal state, such as the Art Foundation of North Rhine-Westphalia; various cultural foundations sponsored by German business firms (e.g. Siemens, Aventis, Allianz and Deutsche Bank), and the grant programme ‘Concert of the German Music Council’ (Konzert des Deutschen Musikrats).
CONCLUSION

Contemporary music in Germany no longer leads a wallflower existence. The number of people in Germany interested in listening to and critically engaging with topical, progressive and subtle creations of acoustical art has steadily grown, especially in recent years. This positive development is the result of decades of commitment on the part of composers, performers, musicologists, journalists and concert organisers. Yet it is a commitment that still requires broad-based support as well as sustained material and conceptual assistance from German society.

Granted, the socio-economic infrastructure of Germany’s contemporary music scene is neither desolate nor underdeveloped. But ‘contemporary music in society’ has always been a delicate subject, and it invariably requires the utmost in attention, care, commitment, vision and imagination as well as the best possible structural underpinnings. What is called for now is to design and discuss independent and future-oriented conceptions of contemporary music on a very wide range of levels in cultural life and, ultimately, to give them a solid footing in society as a whole.

1 See Freie Ensembles für Neue Musik in Deutschland, ed. Reinhard Flender (Mainz, 2007).

List of Illustrations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Image Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
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