

CMPCP 3

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Biog

Dr Sean Williams is a Leverhulme Early Career Research Fellow at the University of Edinburgh researching early electronic music practices at the West Deutsche Rundfunk Studio for Electronic Music, Cologne, and the music of Karlheinz Stockhausen and associates.

Title

Strict serialism or structured improvisation? The performance practice inherent in the technical realisation of early electronic music in the WDR Studio, Cologne.

Abstract

Through full and part re-realizations of Stockhausen's *Studie II*, and *Gesang der Jünglinge*, some affordances of '50s electronic instruments are highlighted, and feedback paths shown between practical technique and compositional approach. Relying on a combination of archive research, examining the original realization tapes, interviews, and creative practice I I try to identify and reassess the contributions of the technicians and technologies, and illustrate how specific practical considerations rebalanced *Gesang der Jünglinge* from serial order towards structured improvisation.

Opportunities and necessities for performance practice to contribute to a realisation are apparent even in what appears to be, in the case of *Studie II*, a set of dry technical instructions. With the development of more complicated and demanding sound production techniques, performance practice contributed more and more to the sound of electronic music, and as such needs to be considered as an essential rather than an accidental part of the creative process.