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Since the period of these early pieces, Glass seems to have lost interest in developing structures and has become more concerned with creating agreeable sounds around harmonic movement. *Music in Twelve Parts* (completed in 1974) saw the beginnings of this process, but *Another Look at Harmony, Part 3* and the *Suite from Einstein on the Beach*, both performed on this occasion, did little to convince me that Glass is treading new and fruitful pastures.

Another Look at Harmony seemed, in fact, a pretty old look, based as it is on a repeating sequence of major chords (F, E, D, C, D and E). The phrase lengths and the left hand arpeggios remain unchanged throughout, and the right hand material seems too weak to justify the repetitions. The fragments from *Einstein on the Beach* were also disappointing, sounding as they did on this occasion dangerously like the doodles of a church organist. Perhaps they are fairly unimportant interludes from the opera: if so, why bother to present them as concert music?

Glass finished with the even more recent *Fourth Series, Part 1*, which seemed to redress the balance a little. This is based around a few fairly sparse but well differentiated blocks of material which, while structurally developing very little, are nevertheless effective in juxtaposition, recalling the similarly engaging effect of Satie's *Dances gothiques*. Perhaps, however, Glass did not plan this effect, although his respect for Satie is well known. Another impressive feature of this last piece was the composer's ability to play quite difficult polyrhythms (5 against 6 against 8). Maybe this will turn out to be a fruitful interest in the future.²

NOTES:

¹In *Time Out*, No. 443 (October 13-19, 1978), p. 59.

²For further on Philip Glass see Dave Smith, 'The Music of Philip Glass', *Contact 11* (Summer 1975), pp. 27-33 and Keith Potter and Dave Smith, 'Interview with Philip Glass', *Contact 13* (Spring 1976), pp. 25-30 (Ed).

PHILIP GLASS

DAVE SMITH

Although Julian Silverman advised prospective listeners to have 'nerves of steel, a brain of concrete and the patience of a plastic duck',¹ Philip Glass's solo organ concert in St. John's Smith Square on October 19 turned out to be a rather docile affair. Those who expected the full-blooded energy of his early ensemble music doubtless left disappointed.

Glass evidently preferred to use a pipe organ rather than an electric instrument. Despite, or indeed perhaps *because* of, the venue this seemed inadvisable and a strange decision for a composer who has stressed the importance of volume in his music. The specially hired instrument seemed incapable of attaining a decent mezzo forte and, more annoyingly, it produced a soft-centred, smeary timbre reminiscent of an inferior church organ: this impression was reinforced by the over-use of high harmonics.

Glass began with *Music in Contrary Motion*, an 'early' piece dating from 1969 but less convincing than its contemporaries written in parallel motion. The 'double-mirror' construction of each module would not be very apparent after the early stages if the system of elongation used in the piece were not accentuated by two changing drones in the bass. These drones, however, tend to obscure the rhythms thrown up by the melody, so that the total effect seems flat when compared with the vigorous jerkiness of *Music in Similar Motion*.