



The world's best classical music magazine. [Subscribe now >](#)



beta

GRAMOPHONE

The world's authority on classical music since 1923

[Members Log in](#) | [Not a member? Register](#)

14 June 2010

[HOME](#) [NEWS](#) [BLOGS](#) [AWARDS](#) [FORUM](#) [CHART](#) [FEATURES](#) [ARCHIVE](#) [FESTIVALS](#)

[HOME](#) | [BROWSE BY ISSUE](#) | [CURRENT ISSUE](#) | [COMPOSER OF THE WEEK](#) | [ARTIST OF THE WEEK](#) | [THE CLASSIC REVIEW](#) | [ARCHIVE EXPLORER](#) | [MY ARCHIVE](#)

[ABOUT THE ARCHIVE](#) [Browse By Issue : January 1969 : Page 103](#)



[Spot an error?](#) | [Send Via Email](#)

MOZART. Dice Composed Waltzes and Contredanscs, KS! 6. Solidac Experimental Computer directed by T. H. O'Beirne. Barr and Stroud Q SD888/1 (12 in., 32s. 6d.). Barr and Stroud Ltd., Caxton Street, Anniesland, Glasgow, W3.

A favourite eighteenth-century musical game, played by Mozart, Haydn and others, was to write a simple dance-piece with eleven melodic variants for each bar (in which however the harmony remained unchanged): dice were then cast for each successive bar of the composition, and according to the numbers obtained the appropriate variants were selected. In this way a 16-bar piece was capable of producing —so Mr O'Beirne tells us, and I haven't the time for the moment to count up on my fingers to see if he's right—something like a thousand million million variants. With the help of a small digital computer (certainly quicker than throwing dice), some three dozen variants of a waltz and of a contredanse by Mozart have been put together, and they are here played by the computer itself, using a rectangular wave "not unlike a clarinet" though with a distinct "chuff" at the start of each note. To lessen the aural monotony of this modestly interesting exercise, the variants are split up into groups of four, each group being presented at a different pitch— though the computer's key-sense differs radically from mine, and I am reconciled to our not agreeing on what, for example, the note D is—and the tuning is not in equal temperament but in closer approximations to just intonation. Not something one can listen right through a side to; but quite ingenious. Melodically it's noticeable how much more satisfactory the contredanse is than the waltz; but the music, such as it is, loses a good deal by omitting everything but the top line. L.S.



100 - 101 102 - 103 104 - 105

Search the Gramophone Archive



[Advanced Search >](#)



Related Links

[Making strides in Stroud](#)
Specialist UK hi-fi company AV International is widely admired for its finely crafted and excellent sounding audio products. Ivor Humphreys visited...

[GLASS o](#)
The Hours - original soundtrack Michael Riesman pf Lyric Quartet (Rolf Wilson, Edmund Coxon vns Nicholas Barr va David Daniels ye); Chris Laurence...

[Dohnanyi String Quartets No. 2 in D flat, Op...](#)
Kodály Intermezzo". Lyric Quartet ("Patricia Calnan, Harriet Davies, vns; "Nick Barr, va; "David Daniels, ye).

[John Barr](#)
S.r.s..anksy's The Rite Of Spring featured in Disney's film Fantasia, which saw as a youngster That section made a terrific impression. Here was a...

