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Contact: A Journal for Contemporary Music (1971-1988)

<http://contactjournal.gold.ac.uk>

## Citation

Morreau, Annette. 1976. 'Review of *Contemporary Music Network*'. *Contact*, 14. pp. 42.  
ISSN 0308-5066.

## CONTEMPORARY MUSIC NETWORK

ANNETTE MORREAU

The fifth season of the Contemporary Music Network begins in October and will run through to March. 99 concerts will take place, given by 13 different performing groups.

The Contemporary Music Network, established in 1972, is a touring scheme of the Arts Council of Great Britain. The Network was set up to provide high quality concerts of contemporary music relatively economically. The subsidy is generous (the Council covers fees and travel expenses), and promoters wishing to present Network concerts are obliged to accept a programme package. The choice of performing group is made by the British Section of the International Society for Contemporary Music, which is a Committee of the Council's Music Panel. The programmes are 'negotiated' with the groups, the Committee frequently choosing a group in order that some key work can be performed. An example of this was the choice of the London Sinfonietta to perform Berg's

Chamber Concerto which toured in October 1975 with György Pauk and Paul Crossley.

Where possible London performances are linked to tours, although early planning by promoters outside London often means that a London performance emerges as a result of plans for a tour. The Network tries to provide promoters with a wide choice of contemporary music, so jazz, electronic and improvised music, music-theatre and conventional instrumental music is offered. The Council does not promote the concerts, this being left to the individual promoters. Inevitably there have been successes and failures in attracting audiences, which is to be expected in a scheme so new. The number of groups toured is related to the number of concerts that promoters feel able to take on, and so far this number is limited. The opportunities for performing contemporary music outside the scheme are regrettably small, and the Committee is faced each year with the problem of selecting or rejecting groups whose survival may depend to some extent on a Network tour.

Although the scheme predominantly presents British performers, there is no hesitation about programming good foreign works. Foreign performing groups, such as Les Percussions de Strasbourg, Steve Reich and the Philip Glass Ensemble have been invited to tour, offering a repertoire that would not otherwise be heard in this country. Collaboration with the BBC has been important, and it is hoped that in the future some commercial recordings of works toured will emerge.

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