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**Political Sound  
National Socialism and Its Musical Afterlife**

Hallam, Huw

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*National Socialism and Its Musical Afterlife*

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# **Political Sound**

## **National Socialism and Its Musical Afterlives**

Huw David Hallam

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.  
Submitted to the School of Arts & Humanities, Department of Music,  
King's College London, University of London.

October, 2013

## **Abstract**

*This thesis examines the political significance of music (and sonic expression more broadly) in National Socialist Germany and the shadow cast by it over subsequent music history. I argue that sonic expression in the Third Reich held much greater political significance than has elsewhere been recognized, featuring as a prominent component of the Reich's sovereign command structure. The thesis attempts to shed light on this intercourse between the musical and the political at a theoretical level and to trace its impact on various developments in post-1945 sonic arts practices.*

*Part I explores ways in which sonic expression was manipulated as part of the National Socialist regime's articulation of sovereignty. It reframes Walter Benjamin's phrase 'aestheticization of politics' in relation to various forms of sonic (often vocal) activity in the Third Reich. It then analyses the National Socialist radio broadcasting system as a unique, technical and bureaucratic medium of sovereign command. This gives new insight into the place of sonic expression and music in modernity and raises questions about the quality of the relationship between music and political power and how that relationship might be modulated through creative practice.*

*Part II then considers the musical 'afterlives' of this meeting of politics and sonic expression. It explores how different sonic arts practices have subsequently (since 1945) rethought and reworked the political form of sonic expression, guided by the experience of National Socialism. Chapter Four analyses work by Luigi Nono and Bernd-Alois Zimmermann in relation to language and historical testimony. Chapter Five explores Karlheinz Stockhausen's and Christina Kubisch's engagements with technology. Finally, Chapter Six examines Mauricio Kagel's treatment of the musical 'work' form's temporal implications. Together, these analyses reveal the outline of an historically transformative approach to critical, politically self-reflexive music making.*

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## **A note on the text, images and musical examples**

**Please note that all images and musical examples referred to in the body of this text are to be found in the appendix: Images and musical examples**

Non-English language sources are generally cited within the main body of the text in English translation. Where it has seemed warranted, by virtue of the significance or linguistic complexity of the citation, the original text is given in the footnotes. All translations are the author's own unless otherwise stated. In certain cases original dates of authorship or publication are given within square brackets in the in-text citations where such dates seem relevant to tracing the course of a particular history.

Various abbreviated or short-hand terms are used throughout the text that are too familiar to warrant scholarly explication, notably: Nazi, short for National Socialist, pertaining to the *Nationalsozialistische deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (NSDAP); the Third Reich (or sometimes just 'the Reich'); Weimar, meaning the Weimar Republic; and Propaganda Ministry for the *Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda*. Several key words from the Nazi lexicon are also used without translation. 'People', 'community' and 'leader', simply cannot capture the ways *Volk*, *Gemeinschaft* and *Führer* have been inscribed by history. I use the word 'Auschwitz' as a metonym for the atrocities wreaked by Nazism. This usage is explained in the first footnote to the Introduction.

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## Introduction

This thesis explores the meeting of music and politics in 1930s Germany. It traces the implications of that meeting and how the histories of music making that have followed have been shaped through them. It is thus also about the fate of music in modernity – as well as the fate of modernity in music.

National Socialist Germany and the catastrophic events it produced have cast their shadow over the theorization of modernity. If unbridled scientific progress and technological development were modernity's signature, then their place in the propaganda machine that brought Hitler to power and the mass-production of corpses that followed are a part of its story. If modernity was defined by social transformation, then its narration must grapple with the dramatic reception of Hitler, in 1930s Germany, as a kind of secular god with the power to remodel human society like a sculptor at work on soft clay. It is not that modernity led to the Third Reich and to Auschwitz in any clear, teleological sense: history did not run a straight line from Hobbes to Hegel to Hitler. The relationship between Auschwitz and modernity remains deeply ambiguous. This is part of the reason why National Socialist Germany continues to trouble and confound.

Auschwitz<sup>1</sup> has elicited contradictory readings. For many intellectuals and political reformists, it became a sign that the Enlightenment project – humanity's liberation from hierarchy, convention, and superstition; its 'exit from self-incurred immaturity', as Immanuel Kant memorably put it (1996: 17, trans. modified) – had not gone far enough and demanded heightened vigilance. For others, it was the worst of many signs that the project had been dangerous and rotten from the start; further dreams of utopian social transformation were to be held in check. Of the many who tried to comprehend National Socialism through its mobilization of a 'new technique of myth', Ernst Cassirer was one of the best versed in Enlightenment thought and culture (1946: 282). He was adamant that the latter's patrimony was the most powerful weapon against fascism's harnessing,

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<sup>1</sup> I use the word Auschwitz as a metonym for broader Nazi atrocities. I prefer this to the more commonly used word Holocaust, a word that evokes sacrificial burning and has a long history, stained with violent anti-Semitism, of being used as a euphemism, behind which massacres were perpetrated (see Agamben, 1999: 28-31).



through myth, of the unthinking enthusiasm of the masses and the erosion of individual responsibility that went with it. Yet he also saw that this patrimony had prepared the soil for the new mythic approach to politics in decisive ways (notably in the work of Hegel).

Hannah Arendt went a step further in her groundbreaking early work, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1973 [1951]). In an epilogue to the work penned in 1953, she explicitly linked the philosophical conceptualization of history in Karl Marx's thought to the terroristic aspect of totalitarian politics, most evident in the camps. 'Terror', she wrote, 'is the realization of the law of [historical] movement; its chief aim is to make it possible for the force of nature or of history to race freely through mankind, unhindered by any spontaneous human action' (*ibid*: 465). The link to Enlightenment thought was made even more bluntly by Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno in their *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (2002 [1944]). 'Enlightenment is totalitarian', they asserted repeatedly (*ibid*: 4, 18); its ever expanding net of scientific rationalization eradicates critical reflection and 'amputates the incommensurable' – the life of thought (*ibid*: 9). Whatever modernity and Enlightenment actually were or are, whatever their limitations, Auschwitz stands by them, obliquely, in judgement.

What significance does this bear for the discussion of music and music history?

National Socialism – as well as fascism and totalitarianism more broadly construed – is receiving increased prominence in surveys of twentieth-century music.<sup>2</sup> This supplants an earlier tendency to divide the century of music making into an early part (possibly commencing in the late nineteenth century) and another that beginning in 1945. Ulrich Dibelius's *Moderne Music nach 1945* (1998 [1966]: 23-34) and Paul Griffiths's *Modern Music and after* (2010 [1995]: 1-2), the German and Anglophone exemplars of this older tendency, are laden with pathos in their opening pages. The date 1945 reads like an ethical imperative, demanding political intelligence and transformation. Music's 'acceptance or problematization of reality are...political factors', Dibelius wrote.

Every art demands decisiveness from its practitioners; it always 'means' something – otherwise it's worthless. This conclusion is clearly supported by our most recent past. And as long as we keep obstinately trying to explain away

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<sup>2</sup> Alex Ross's acclaimed popular history, *The Rest Is Noise* (2009), dedicates chapters to music in both 'Stalin's Russia' (*sic*) and 'Hitler's Germany'; Richard Taruskin devotes the 59<sup>th</sup> chapter (volume four) of his monumental *Oxford History of Western Music* (2005) to music and totalitarianism.

music as a refuge for withdrawal from the world, our negligence will be greater than any intelligent response to the destruction should allow.<sup>3</sup>

The invocation is never followed through. It marks the historical singularity of the music discussed thereafter, but the specific musicological implications of National Socialism and the complex ways in which reflection on those implications shaped post-1945 musical practices are barely touched upon.

What were those implications? How have they transformed music making over the last sixty years? Those are some of the questions this thesis explores. Remarkably, not a single monograph or anthology has taken the latter, the question of the Third Reich's significance vis-à-vis the subsequent history (or histories) of music, as its main subject.<sup>4</sup> In this, musicology has proved curiously out of step with other areas of research in the cultural humanities.<sup>5</sup> Discussions of literature, film and visual art production in postwar Germany have emphasized the problem of critically engaging with the National Socialist past (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*) almost to the point of cliché and self-

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<sup>3</sup> 'Ihre Annahme oder ihr Infragestellen der Wirklichkeit sind... Faktoren des Politischen... Doch jede Kunst erfordert von dem, der sie übt, Entschiedenheit; sie 'meint' immer etwas – oder sie ist wertlos. Dieser Zusammenhang ließe sich durch Beispiele aus unserer jüngsten Vergangenheit leicht belegen. Weil man Musik aber hartnäckig zum Asyl für Weltflüchtige erklären will, ist leider auch die Vergeßlichkeit größer, als wir uns im Interesse jener Klugheit, die der Schaden lehrt, eigentlich leisten dürften' (Dibelius, 1998 [1966]: 33).

<sup>4</sup> Several narrowly focussed texts are to be acknowledged as partial exceptions. Kerstin Sicking's *Holocaust-Kompositionen als Medien der Erinnerung* (2010) attempts to theorize music as a medium of remembrance, examining a range of postwar compositions that have engaged thematically (mostly through textual references) with the Holocaust. Matthias Kontarsky's *Trauma Auschwitz: Zu Verarbeitungen des Nichtverarbeitbaren bei Peter Weiss, Luigi Nono und Paul Dessau* (2001) analyses the musical contributions to Peter Weiss's 1965 play *Die Ermittlung*, based around the 1963-65 Frankfurt Auschwitz trials. Matteo Nanni's *Auschwitz – Adorno und Nono: Philosophische und musikanalytische Untersuchungen* (2004) parses the relationship between the aesthetic thought of Theodor Adorno and Luigi Nono, framing that relationship around the problem of historical testimony. A handful of other texts (notably, Riethmüller, ed., 2006, and Thacker, 2007) have considered the music-historical aftermath of National Socialism much more broadly, but with a restricted focus on the decade immediately following the Reich's defeat.

<sup>5</sup> The conspicuous absence of music and musicology from the broader, cross-disciplinary field of research into cultural '*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*' (coming to terms with the past) is exemplified in Peter Reichel, Harald Schmid and Peter Steinbach's 2009 edited anthology, *Der Nationalsozialismus – die zweite Geschichte: Überwindung – Deutung – Erinnerung*, which comprises essays on historiography, literature, drama, film, television, the visual arts, photography, memorials and architecture, but not music.

parody.<sup>6</sup> The enormous production scales of Anselm Kiefer and Gerhard Richter, the two painters most frequently cited in connection with the tendency, bolster criticisms that political interrogation has transmogrified into a commodity and tourism-oriented ‘memory industry’ in Germany (Hansen & Huyssen, 1997). As far as musicology is concerned, no such second-order objections could be made. A startling dearth of scholarship raises more basic questions.

By contrast, the problem of music’s significance *within* the Third Reich has been the subject of substantial and rich historical research over the last two decades (the newer historical surveys that treat the topic extensively clearly reflect this).<sup>7</sup> We now have detailed accounts of multitudinous musical activities from the Reich. We have a much greater sense of their economic conditions and of the complexities – and inconsistencies – of both musical censorship and the ideological steering of artistic patronage and practice.

In various ways, this research has affirmed music’s importance in Nazi Germany. Rejecting the image of National Socialist ‘cultural barbarism’ (promulgated by Adorno [2002: 373-390], among others), it suggests that music maintained its status as the ‘most German of the arts’ (Mann, 1961: 123; Potter, 1998) in the Third Reich. And notwithstanding the murder and forced emigration of huge numbers of exceptionally talented artists of Jewish descent, or otherwise deemed enemies of the state, we now know that aspects of many musicians’ situations in the Reich – across the economic and

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<sup>6</sup> Major contributions include Huyssen (1995) and Santner (1990; 1992). The self-parodic saturates the œuvre of the late Christoph Schlingensiefel. See especially his ‘German Trilogy’ films: *100 Jahre Adolf Hitler – Die letzte Stunde im Führerbunker* (1989), *Das deutsche Kettensägenmassaker* (1990), and *Terror 2000 – Intensivstation Deutschland* (1992).

<sup>7</sup> Potter (2007: 627-638) provides a valuable critical history of Germanic and Anglophone musicology’s engagement with Nazi Germany. Joseph Wulf’s lone, incendiary dossier, *Kunst und Kultur im Dritten Reich. Bd. 2: Musik im Dritten Reich* (1963), was eventually followed by Fred K. Prieberg’s often accusatory *Musik im NS-Staat* (1982) and H.-W. Heister and H.-G. Klein’s broad and moving anthology, *Musik und Musikpolitik im faschistischen Deutschland* (1984) after the mobilizing intervention of an important 1981 *Gesellschaft für Musikforschung* symposium on music in the 1930s. A relatively continuous wave of monographs then began in the early 1990s with Meyer (1991 – following his 1970 doctoral dissertation), Steinweis (1993), Levi (1994), Walter (1995), Kater (1992, 1997, and 2000), Potter (1998), Currid (2006) and Painter (2007); major anthologies have included Sonntag, Boresch & Gojowy, eds (1999) and Kater & Riethmüller, eds (2003).

cultural spectrum, though particularly those of elite concert artists – actually improved during the early years of Hitler’s rule (see, especially, Potter, 2007: 649-651).<sup>8</sup>

Creative autonomy was supposed to be a part of this. On various occasions both Hitler and Joseph Goebbels (the head of the Reich ministry that oversaw propaganda and culture – or racial Enlightenment, as its official name, the *Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda*, suggested) publicly affirmed the necessity of artistic freedom in the interest of racial expression.<sup>9</sup> The political discourse they pushed framed racial superiority as something that had to actualize itself. It was not something given, but rather would prove itself, under the right conditions, through spontaneous activity. Accordingly, recent scholarship reveals a socio-political and cultural reality that is altogether more freeform than the constricted and conformist ‘totalitarian’ culture sometimes evoked in accounts of the period (see especially Potter, 2005 & 2007). This reality often seems to match the rhetoric of autonomy.

Coupled with extensive evidence of contradictions, antagonism and aporia argued to have muddied the ideological machinations of the top strata of Nazi officialdom, this sense that musical activity within the Reich was multiple, messy and marked by

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<sup>8</sup> During the later years of the Reich, the cultural balance increasingly shifted toward lighter ‘entertainment’ music (see Ross, 2011; this transition will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter Three).

<sup>9</sup> At a major Party conference on the future of artistic production in the Reich in 1933, Hitler (2004: 50) stated: ‘The received impulse, the constructive capacity of the present, as much as technical material, are the elements out of, and with, which true creative spirit fearlessly shapes its works, employing what has been discovered and delivered over as good from previous experience with enough courage to newly bind it with the good he discovers in himself’. (‘Der gegebene Zweck, das konstruktive Können der Gegenwart sowie das technische Material sind die Elemente, aus denen und mit denen der wahrhaft schöpferische Geist seine Werke gestaltet, ohne Angst, das gefundene und überlieferte Gut der Vorfahren zu verwenden, mutig genug, das selbstgefundene gute Neue mit ihm zu verbinden’.)

A decade later Goebbels would defensively repeat the sentiment, excusing the then prevalent invasive censorship measures employed by the regime as a temporary measure: ‘I have decided to lift these restriction on German intellectual life [*Geistesleben*] as soon as possible after the war. Every act of censorship by officials threatens the free development of cultural life. It also contradicts the idea of the Reich Culture Chamber, which is to guide cultural production, not micromanage it’ (Kater & Riethmüller, eds, 2003; cited in Potter, 2007: 637-8 and 2005: 438).

Alfred Rosenberg (1930: 292) had also affirmed the value of freedom in the service of racial expression in his 1930 tract *Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts*, quoting from Friedrich Schiller’s *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*: ‘...man plays only where he is man in the full sense of the word, and he is only wholly man where he plays’. (‘...der Mensch spielt nur, wo er in voller Bedeutung des Wortes Mensch ist und er ist nur da ganz Mensch, wo er spielt’.)

heterogeneity has led the most important scholars in the field to downplay its political significance. Michael H. Kater, echoing a refrain that music's meaning is essentially ineffable, has surmised that the politicization of music 'remained incomplete...due less to any policies set by Hitler or Goebbels than to the fact that by its very nature true art remains inviolable' (1997: 39). Pamela Potter has gone much further, arguing that National Socialist ideology was more a myth conjured by the post-1945 generation than a functional reality of the Reich; that it was a licence for artists, who 'could justify virtually any artistic direction' by claiming it to be 'new and untainted' (2005: 435); and that the artistic production of the Third Reich should consequently be re-evaluated on more neutral terms.

If these appraisals were sound there would be little need for this thesis. But they are not – and grasping why is relatively easy. What has been strikingly absent from two decades of research into music in the Third Reich is any substantial effort to link empirical detail to theory, to bring them into mutually challenging dialogue. Unfortunately, Potter's Nazi 'myth' is just that: a myth. She attributes to Arendt the notion that the National Socialist Reich entailed a totalitarian society, where all facets of social and cultural life were administered in accordance with a fully formed ideology (1973; Potter, 2005: 436). Yet Arendt, who hardly dreamed up the term 'totalitarian', explicitly stated that 'all serious students of the subject agree at least on the co-existence (or the conflict) of a dual authority, the party and the state. Many, moreover, have stressed the peculiar "shapelessness" of the totalitarian government' (1973: 395). Potter's Nazi myth bears no relation to political theory. She does not give a credible account of the workings of power and sovereignty within the Reich and consequently, when she – like many others – tries to deconstruct Third Reich culture, whatever it was that made Nazism the catastrophic, genocidal monster that has so indelibly marked the history of modernity falls out of the picture. We cannot claim that the politicization of music was incomplete without first developing a conception of politics appropriate to the context of the Reich. Until we do this, we cannot hope to grasp either music's significance with respect to National Socialism or what that significance and its implications might be within the broader frame of music history and theory.

I have given three of the bases from which I have pursued this study of music in the Third Reich, its historical resonance and its musicological significance. The first concerned the theory of modernity, on which Nazism bears in complex and still partly

obscure ways. The second was the striking fact that the cultural study of music has almost entirely neglected how post-1945 musical practices negotiated critical relationships with the fascist past, a neglect that sharply contrasts with other areas of the cultural humanities. The third was as a corrective to a body of empirically oriented research that has presented musical experience within the Reich in a way that detaches it from the sphere of political activity – without, however, engaging a credible theory of the political. There is also a fourth basis: we may be witnessing a fascist resurgence.

During the Cold War era, totalitarianism was often regarded (at least on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization side) as National Socialism's defining factor. Thus fascism could be aligned, politically, with Soviet-style communism as the antithesis of liberal democracy (Brzezinski, 1965). By this rationale, the problem with National Socialism was not its deficit of Enlightenment rationality *per se*, but that it exemplified a form of state power that quashed the social polyphony supposedly correspondent with a free market economy (see Foucault, 2008: 106-15). This was another way of reading Auschwitz; although it made fascism peripheral to the main show of modern politics: the clash between US capitalism and Soviet communism. As the ideological clouds of the Cold War have started to recede, a markedly different interpretation has emerged that emphasizes the ways National Socialism moved biology and racial difference to the centre of politics. Under Nazi rule, the human was recoded as a quantum of biological potential – legally stripped, in the context of the camps, of any civic identity (Esposito 2008).<sup>10</sup> Contemporary neoliberalism, even though it explicitly frames the human subject as an individual, rather than as part of a race or *Volk*, largely maintains (or has returned to) this conception. The political subject is less a member of civil society, than a living and dying animal-entrepreneur, born into a world stratified by difference (Brown, 2005; Foucault, 2008; Marazzi, 2011). Its principal decisions are made with respect to the physical and economic health of itself and its kin, as it responds to an

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<sup>10</sup> A substantial portion of Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1973: 158-221) already examined the precedent set by colonialist imperialism for the organised massacres of the Nazi extermination camps. It was particularly in the British colonial administration of India and the Dutch experience in southern Africa – and not 'exaggerated nationalism' – that she saw the development of the racialist and bureaucratic thinking that disastrously fused in National Socialism (*ibid*: 221). The German attempted genocide of the Herero and Namaqua peoples of 1904-7, although not comparable in scale to the concurrent extermination of the Congolese under King Leopold II of Belgium, are today increasingly acknowledged to bridge the two phenomena (Olusoga & Erichsen, 2010).

environment shot through with myriad restrictions and affordances (or politically mediated debts and credits). What appeared to be modern politics' main feature – the showdown between capitalism and communism – was, by this reading, mere appearance. It was an appearance, moreover, that occluded a more essential drama of transformation, the trajectory of which remains uncertain as it moves into the twenty-first century.

Over the last two decades, across Western Europe, votes for extreme right minority parties have climbed continuously.<sup>11</sup> Some of these parties have direct historical links to the fascist parties of the 1920s and 1930s; others have expressed sympathy for aspects of their political programmes. Many, however, have emerged in response to particular socio-economic contexts or events and have sought to dissociate themselves from Nazism (in part for cosmetic reasons, or 'branding'). Most political scientists follow suit; they prefer to call these motley parties 'extreme', 'radical' or 'populist', rather than 'fascist', and insist that their concerns are thoroughly contemporary (Minkenberg, 1992; Betz, 1994; Weinberg, Eubank & Wilcox, 1995; Ignazi, 1992; 2010: 202; Schain, Zolberg & Hossay, eds, 2002: xv; Merkl, 2003). The most common theme among them is, however, strikingly redolent of Nazi racism: curbing, if not reversing, immigration (Mudde, 1996; Ivaldi, 2004: 24-26; Schain, 2006; Hainsworth, 2008: 70-71). These parties may no longer be (primarily) anti-Semitic (many are instead explicitly 'islamophobic'); yet they generally exult in the kind of divisive biologically-oriented thinking that was Nazism's hallmark.

Perhaps more alarming than the steady climb of the hard right's popularity, however, is that the political 'centre' is increasingly appropriating its intolerant line on immigration to maintain an edge at the ballot box.<sup>12</sup> As long as immigrants are viewed

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<sup>11</sup> Piero Ignazi, a professor of comparative politics at the University of Bologna and leading authority on the new European extreme right, has collated results from nine countries (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland) where extreme right parties gained seats in either regional or European parliamentary elections during the 1980s or 1990s (2010: 197-200). He shows that the mean electoral support for the extreme right has more than doubled from 4.75% in the 1980s to 9.73% in the 1990s. Updating his data set reveals a similar rate of increase in the 2000s (to around 13.5%).

<sup>12</sup> As Ignazi and others have argued, the extreme right in Western Europe found its initial foothold in the centre-right's double movement of radicalization and de-radicalization, as it went from promoting ethnic-based themes while in opposition during the early 1970s-80s to focussing on neo-liberal market economics when in power (Ignazi, 2010: 201-204; see also Kitschelt, 1997 and Veugelers, 1999). Tim Bale, in an

as coming from ‘elsewhere’, it would seem that the majority populations of most neoliberal societies are content to have their governments – of whatever stripe – manage the ‘problem’ they pose in ways that contrast starkly with how those populations otherwise consider justice and fairness amongst themselves. Of course, the most cursory reflection on the conceptual and politico-legal integration of what economists and business consultants call the ‘global labour market’ should suffice to clarify that migration is *immanent* to neoliberalism, not something the latter is against. And not just keeping out the poor is at issue, either; adjusting taxation levels (and in Britain’s case immigration requirements; see Ross & Rigby, 2011) to attract the mobile rich – or not, in the case of France’s Jean-Luc Mélenchon – has equally become a part of the political routine.

In turning my gaze back to National Socialism, my aim here is essentially exploratory. But I do set out from the premise that fascism is not dead and buried, or quarantined in the history museum.<sup>13</sup> It (or something very much like it) remains an active force. It is contemporary. When this is acknowledged, the question of how different music cultures have engaged with fascism’s legacy since 1945 – critically and not – takes on an altogether different light.

The thesis has two quite distinct parts. The first (Chapters One to Three) deals primarily with music and other forms of sonic expression in the Third Reich. The second (Chapters Four to Six) engages with a number of different junctures from the stretch of music (or ‘sonic arts’) history that has followed, examining what I have referred to in my title as National Socialism’s musical ‘afterlives’ (a term I explain below). I focus there on cultural objects – musical works, opera, sound installations and so forth – as sites where creative agency, guided by historical reflection and critique, can contribute

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astute analysis (2003) of the contemporary European tendency toward bipolar political bloc formations, has narrated a second part to the story. The scenario dialectically inverts. The centre-right reinvents itself around the vote-winning potential of its radical offshoots. It primes the media landscape for their anti-immigrant and welfare-chauvinist agenda and follows through on their policies, both rhetorically and substantively, to the point where qualitative difference between centre and extreme right dissolves. ‘Cinderella and her ugly sister’, Bale writes, ‘become each other’s fairy godmother’ (*ibid*: 69). See also: Williams, 2006; and Hainsworth, 2008: 75.

<sup>13</sup> As Eric Michaud (2004: xii) wrote back in 1996: ‘behind the interest that National Socialism continues to attract, there remains a taboo at the heart of our “democratic” system that complacently regards Nazism and its leader as the incarnation of an evil now fortunately vanquished’.



in unique and important ways to processes of world making. History lives through its interpretation. It lives as a site of reflection, where meaning is excavated that can shape decisions in the here-and-now – decisions that may in turn lead us to recalibrate our reflections and understanding. National Socialism, with its extermination camps, has often appeared to mark the transgression of some form of limit; yet its relationship to modernity is oblique, seeming to shift with historical understanding and awareness. The two-part structure of this thesis serves, accordingly, to balance direct analysis of the political function of sonic expression within National Socialist Germany against exploration of how musical activity has subsequently responded to that dark episode, not just of Germany's history, but of its own.

As I have noted, recent scholarship on music in the Third Reich has been severely hampered by its failure to adequately conceptualize the political. Part I attempts to rectify this by drawing the findings of music historical research into closer interdisciplinary dialogue with political theory and philosophy. The core objective of this part of the thesis is to establish, against the grain of that scholarship, that sonic expression did indeed constitute a major political force in the Reich, and to model and bring theoretical understanding to how it functioned. I do not attempt to present a history or overview of musical practices in the Third Reich. Nor has my aim been to identify favourite works, key figures or to demarcate a 'Nazi' style. This has all been tackled many times elsewhere.<sup>14</sup> Rather, my concern is to capture how sound came to feature as a component of the sovereign power structure. I ask how Hitler's regime harnessed diverse forms of sonic expression in its effort to accrue and stabilize sovereign power; and I explore the conditions – historical, legal, technical, subjective – whereby sonic expression was able to work as a complex political instrument in Nazi Germany. This represents a new departure with respect to existing scholarship on music in the Third Reich, one that I hope will open the way for a deeper understanding of music's place within the Reich and within modernity more broadly: an understanding more attuned to the complex – and in the case of the Third Reich, highly problematic – ways in which music is able to lend sense to the political world.

My inquiry begins, in Chapter One, with Walter Benjamin's famous thesis that fascism constituted an *aestheticization of politics*. I consider the emphasis Benjamin placed on *expression* with respect to the dual rise of the mass media and the popularity

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<sup>14</sup> See note 7 above.

of fascism in interwar Europe (1973: 234-5). Drawing from sources ranging from political speeches to photo books and films, I argue that, in the context of Nazi Germany, Benjamin's thesis was best exemplified by sonic expressive activity, rather than the visual forms to which cultural theorists have generally turned to illustrate it. In making this argument, I do something that remains relatively novel in music studies: I treat music and other more quotidian cultural forms in which sound plays a defining part as functioning on overlapping planes of intellection and experience. I take my cue here from the emerging field of sonic studies, but also from the material under observation, which quite strikingly suggested experiential continuity between music and the voices of political speech and laudation, and in doing so positioned sonic expression as a privileged, metaphysical medium of *Gemeinschaft*.

The following two chapters are more strongly oriented toward theory. Chapter Two focusses primarily on the relationship between music and ideology, while Chapter Three examines how the National Socialist radio system put sonic expression to work as a technology of charismatic power. In Chapter Two, I argue for a revised understanding of how music's production of aesthetic sense is able to interact with ideology. Ideology always seeks to position the individual subject politically by offering it an interpretative framework that makes sense of the world and its place in it. I propose that the experience of aesthetic sense, through music, can work to affirm a given ideology's claims. Moreover, I suggest that music's capacity to project complex experiences of temporality may shape how it does this in significant ways.

Approaching the music-politics relation in this way avoids a major theoretical and methodological pitfall, one that is associated especially with Adorno's influential writings on music. Adorno claimed that music's 'social legitimacy' rested solely with its 'truth content', as expressed through its 'autonomous' aesthetic form. He insisted, moreover, that this way of understanding music's social value needed to be vigilantly defended against the danger of music's legitimacy 'being confused with its social function, that is, with its impact and popular appeal in society as it is actually constituted' (1999: 3). The fallout of his way of thinking is that it frames music as speaking to politics merely through *analogies* to the social world suggested by its formal configurations (*ibid*: 2, 4). The more integral, deeply rooted links that I identify between music and politics as domains of human activity and experience go unrecognized.

Still, the quality of the interaction I propose between music and politics is far from mechanistic (in this respect, my approach is in keeping with Adorno's exhortations not to reduce 'products of the intellect to social circumstances'; *ibid*: 2). Indeed Chapter Two stresses the historical dimension of the partnership ideology formed in National Socialist Germany, not only with sonic expression, but also with law. Yet the key emphasis of the theoretical framework I develop lies with sonic expression and the part it plays in the interaction. I am concerned with the *agency* of musical sound: an agency understood in terms of the potential that music's particular projections of sense hold to help shape the political world, beyond merely metaphorizing or suggesting analogies to aspects of it. Accordingly, while Chapters Two and Three draw on a wide range of political theory that has addressed ideology, sovereignty and different aspects of National Socialism but said little directly to music, I try to avoid the trap of analogizing distinct spheres of activity. I endeavour to pursue a more original reflection on music's defining qualities and how its production of sense positions it *within*, rather than alongside, the world the theory describes.

Moving from the theoretical to the concrete (then back to the theoretical), Chapter Three considers the National Socialist radio broadcasting system as an instrument of sovereign power. I defend an interpretation of the radio's political use that stresses its importance not merely as a conveyer of political information or 'propaganda' (as it is conventionally construed), but as a tool that promised to help stabilize and vastly extend the *Führer's* commanding, 'charismatic' presence. Harnessing aesthetic expression as a political tool is not, however, a particularly straightforward matter. The radio's administrators could not simply produce content and deterministically expect it to cause its listeners to think or act in certain desired ways. I clarify why this was so at a theoretical level: not, however, to debunk the claim that the radio was a significant technology of sovereign power – I maintain that it was – but so as to better elucidate the complexities of its use and the strategies developed to politically neutralize those exceptional forms of listening that threatened to evade its command.

My analysis here performs two functions. Firstly, it sheds light on some of the key machinery of National Socialism's aestheticization of politics, showing how the radio was used to marshal sonic expression as an integral part of the Reich's sovereign command structure. Secondly, through this, a theoretical model of expression is developed that clarifies its political structure. Expression is inadequately conceptualized as the externalization of an interior, subjective content; expressive forms are complex

sites of power: of commanding and ordering. This inherently political, and potentially highly dangerous, aspect of expression was exposed and made brutally palpable by the National Socialist radio. The core question asked in Part II will be how successive generations of musicians would subsequently grapple with this newly revealed political aspect of sonic expression after 1945, changing the course of modern music.

I use the term ‘afterlives’ to signal the relationship between the material examined in the first part of the thesis and the various episodes of later music history treated in the second part, which I argue were shaped by, and in response to, National Socialism’s aestheticization of politics and its technologized, charismatic voice. The term comes from art historian Aby Warburg, who used it to refer to the survival (*Nachleben*) of images across historical time through complex, anachronic relayings of pictorial gestures. It draws attention to how past cultural forms enter into artistic production in the present in ways that are unsystematic and at odds with linear historical narrativization. ‘*Nachleben*’, Warburg scholar Georges Didi-Huberman has written, ‘is impure in much the way *Leben* [‘life’] itself is. Both are messy, cluttered, muddled, various, haphazard, retentive, protean...impervious to analytical organization’ (2003: 282).

My use of the term is looser than Warburg’s. It differs, notably, insofar as the afterlives of concern here are not the sonic equivalents of images relayed across time, but the afterlives of an historical (and musicological) problem born out of the nightmare of fascism. I gloss this problem as *recomposing the voice*: the project of creatively rethinking sonic expression with regard to its political form.<sup>15</sup> The overarching aim in

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<sup>15</sup> My concern in Part II lies exclusively with the political profile of the form given to sonic expression through compositional activity, not with its mediatization or institutional framing, and not with measuring the social ‘effects’ of diverse compositional approaches. Investigating, for example, how approaches to radio broadcasting in the Federal Republic responded to the use of the radio in the Third Reich would likely provide very different, though undoubtedly valuable, insight into the sonic afterlife of National Socialism. What I wish to capture, however, is how particular approaches to musical construction are able to engage the political through their projection of sense – a level of activity that tends to be sidelined in studies emphasizing institutional mediation.

I am cautious not to frame this level of activity in terms of a measurable social impact. Actions and deeds, the fabric of politics, may hold an integrity not borne by the responses that greet them – by their ‘effects’. That integrity is endangered by a thinking that views politics through the cause-and-effect lens of technology (i.e. as the power to produce determinate outcomes), a thinking that in no small way contributed to the worst

Part II is to establish the coordinates of that project – a project that has not been something undertaken systematically, by a self-identifying body of musicians acting in concert and following a clearly defined purpose, but the concerns of which, I hope to show, can nevertheless be traced and pieced together from significant episodes of post-1945 music history.

The three chapters of Part II each focus on a different aspect of sonic expression's political make-up. Chapter Four considers the voice as a site of historical testimony. Chapter Five addresses musical sound's intercourse with technology. Chapter Six meditates on the temporality of the musical work. The testimonial, the technological and the temporal all feature prominently in Chapter Three's modelling of the National Socialist radio, and it is my contention that together they constitute the key elements that lend political dimensions to music's production of sense.

The three chapters are structured around a series of analyses of carefully chosen works and creative practices that relate to important developments, or points of dispute, in late twentieth-century music making. Chapter Four examines Luigi Nono's *Il canto sospeso* (1956), Bernd Alois Zimmermann's *Die Soldaten* (premiered 1965) and then Nono's *Al gran sole carico d'amore* (premiered 1975). These are works that engaged in complex ways with the legacy of Arnold Schoenberg and the 'emancipation of dissonance' in music, while also rethinking and challenging the conventions of opera and the operatic voice. Historical testimony and questions of authority intersect noticeably in them and my analysis focusses on how their particular treatments of the voice negotiate and frame that intersection.

Chapter Five examines Karlheinz Stockhausen's much maligned 'Happening' *Originale* (1961) and a range of works dating from the mid-1970s through to the present by pioneering sound artist Christina Kubisch. *Originale* was written during a period in which Stockhausen was rethinking the temporal structure of music (as 'moment form') as part of his own effort to grapple with the implications of emancipated dissonance. Around two decades later, Kubisch's work would contribute to developing a whole new

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horrors of the National Socialist regime (on this, see the discussion of Arendt's treatment of ideology in Chapter Two). The all-too-commonly held notion that music must be 'popular', holding mass attention, to do political work (see, for example, Kutschke, 2009), reveals a version of this thinking and, as will be seen in Chapter Three, counted Goebbels among its champions. Part of the methodological value of the concept of the afterlife is that it reminds us that, especially in the domain of culture, action and reaction need not follow immediately or linearly; past cultural forms may hold potential to influence present creative thought and as yet unknown futures.

approach to the artistic presentation of sound in the form of participatory sound art installations. In both we find a recourse to technology as a tool of revelation, met with a problematization of the relationship between art and life. Here my analysis homes in on the different ways Stockhausen and Kubisch have responded to how the artist/composer's social function is brought into question by this meeting.

Finally, Chapter Six examines a single project: Mauricio Kagel's *Ludwig van* film and score (1969, 1970). This project featured significantly in the development of quotational practices, soon to become associated with the rise of a musical postmodernism. It was also closely aligned with Kagel's experiments in 'Musiktheater', through which he worked to foreground the social scenario of musical performance and experience as a malleable part of the content of the musical work. What makes the *Ludwig van* project of particular interest here is the way it frames the relationship between the musical work and historical time, satirically and subversively presenting the former as holding a peculiar and problematic charismatic power that acts across time.

By focussing on significant historical developments and junctures in this way, my hope is to convey a sense that the project of recomposing the voice, after National Socialism, has constituted a core part of recent music history – albeit one obscured in existing historiography. Though all of the material studied points back to the experience of fascism in one way or another, my aim has not been to compile a history of works invoking the National Socialist past. It has been to consider how different developments in recent music history have responded to National Socialism's framing and exploitation of sonic expression as a complex site of power: responded by recrafting the ways music projects temporal experience, the structure of the artist-audience relationship it proposes, and the forms of understanding it promotes. I do not claim that the recomposition of the voice has occurred in a linear, accumulative and coherent fashion, or try to position it as the dominant project of recent music history.<sup>16</sup> Nor do I treat it as having been brought to a conclusive end. The works and practices I examine are chosen to reveal how different aspects of the task have guided pivotal moments of that history. But those moments have been scattered. What I attempt, in Part II, is to

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<sup>16</sup> I also do not think the project's relevance has been exclusive to the history of art music (and sound art), as will be apparent from my references to various examples from the domain of popular music in the conclusion to Part II. Unfortunately, more comprehensive treatment of this point has not been possible here due to size constraints.

draw them into a kind of constellation, such that a new way of hearing and conceptualizing what has been at stake in musical developments over the course of the last sixty years – what has been achieved, what have been some of the limitations – might begin to emerge. And so that this, clarified through analysis, might in turn guide further creative activity, further afterlives.

## Part I.

### Music and politics in the Third Reich

*In place of a wearying listlessness that would surrender before life's gravity and disavow or flee its truth, comes that heroic attitude to life that today sounds forth from the march-step of brown columns. It accompanies the farmer as he plows the soil; it gives back meaning to the worker and heightens his fighting instinct; it stops the unemployed from despairing and serves the momentous task of rebuilding Germany with a rhythm that seems almost soldierly.<sup>1</sup>*

– Joseph Goebbels, Reich Culture Chamber inaugural address  
15 November, 1933

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<sup>1</sup> ‘An die Stelle einer zermürenden Schlawfrheit, die vor dem Ernst des Lebens kapitulierte, ihn nicht wahr haben wollte oder vor ihm flüchtete, trat jene heroische Lebensauffassung, die heute durch den Marschtritt brauner Kolonnen klingt, die den Bauer begleitet, wenn er die Pflugschar durch die Ackerschollen zieht, die dem Arbeiter Sinn und höheren Zweck seines Daseinskampfes zurückgegeben hat, die den Arbeitslosen nicht verzweifeln läßt und die das grandiose Werk des deutschen Wiederaufbaues mit einem fast soldatisch anmutenden Rhythmus erfüllt’ (quoted in Anon., 1933: 780).



## Chapter One. Orientations: vocalizing politics

‘Fascism’, Walter Benjamin wrote, ‘sees its salvation’ – its *‘Heil’*, he punned – ‘in giving [the newly created proletarian] masses...a chance to express themselves’. It refuses their right to reorganize or eliminate property relations; instead, it ‘introduc[es] aesthetics into political life’ and in doing so, can only lead to war (1973: 234). Where did the sonic lie in this ‘aestheticization of politics’? How can its political significance be grasped and assessed? This chapter will grapple with these questions, seeking to orient the analysis of the place of the sonic in the Third Reich, by turning, counter-intuitive though it may seem, to images: images of the voice. It begins, however, by considering the core term of Benjamin’s thesis, and its relevance to National Socialist Germany, in more general terms: that is, the *expressive*.

### Situating expression

The above cited essay, ‘Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit’ (initially translated as ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’), needs little introduction. Benjamin began drafting it in July 1935 (in conjunction with an outline of his unfinished *Arcades Project*) while exiled in Paris. It first appeared the next year in the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* (edited by Max Horkheimer, who had already emigrated to New York) in French translation, with the help of philosopher and artist Pierre Klossowski, and caused an immediate stir.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Walter Benjamin, ‘L’Œuvre d’art à l’époque de sa reproduction mécanisée’, trans. Pierre Klossowski, *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* 5 (1936): 40-66. This first published version was modified in the course of translation from the ‘first version’, which is published in German in the 1980 collection of Benjamin’s *Gesammelte Schriften* (1972-1999, Bd I.2: 431-469). A subsequent version was drafted by Benjamin between 1936 and 1939 and published posthumously in the 1955 collection of Benjamin’s *Schriften*, edited by Theodor and Gretel Adorno. This ‘second version’ (sometimes referred to as the third) is the one published in English translation in the collection edited by Arendt, *Illuminations* (1973: 211-244), and known to most readers of Benjamin’s work.

The translation into French seems to have been done to help Benjamin ingratiate himself within his new (temporary) milieu. He wrote to Horkheimer on August 10, 1936, of interest it had generated, including a presentation by André Malraux at the London writers festival (Scholem & Adorno, eds, 1994: 529-531).

The essay's account of what fascism's aestheticization of politics actually consisted of is, however, minimal. Benjamin fleetingly mentioned the *Führer* cult around Adolf Hitler and quoted an exultant litany on the beauties of war by Italian Futurist poet Filippo Tommaso Marinetti. In the first version of the essay, he referred to the weekly newsreel screenings and how mass gatherings of all kinds had come to take the eye of the camera as their reference point. In the second version, he merely noted 'the violation of an apparatus which is pressed into the production of ritual values' (1973: 324).

Yet Benjamin's attestation of a link between fascism and aesthetic expression was not casual or desultory. As early as 1930, he had pointed to the same link in a critical review of a collection of essays edited by Ernst Jünger.<sup>2</sup> The *Kunstwerk* essay now sketched a kind of historical etiology for this eclipse of 'right' by 'expression' (*Recht* and *Ausdruck*, emphasized typographically in the first version; 1972-1999, Bd I.2: 467). Benjamin's opening gambit located the emergence of fascism within the context of a crisis conditioned by uneven rates of social and economic transformation. But the essay fixates on technology – specifically cinema, the exemplary form of the new-born mass media: the 'immense technical apparatus of our age' (1972-1999, Bd I.1: 445) – as the pressure valve between the two levels. With extraordinary lucidity, Benjamin examined the potential of technically reproducible media, such as film, to transform the ways individuals orient and perceive themselves socially.

The defining feature of these media is that they are 'non-auratic': mobility and repeatability set them adrift from place and tradition – like the 'scattered' viewer (*der Zerstreute*) with which Benjamin paired them.<sup>3</sup> He saw in the cinema a tool for newly habituating<sup>4</sup> this quintessentially modern subject to novel, emancipatory modes of apperception that would be actively critical and participatory. And it is in relation to this

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<sup>2</sup> Walter Benjamin, 'Theorien des deutschen Faschismus: Zu der Sammelschrift "Krieg und Krieger"'. Herausgegeben von Ernst Jünger', originally published in *Die Gesellschaft* 7.2 (1930): 32-41; republished in Benjamin, 1972-1999, Bd III: 238-250. Available in English translation as Benjamin, 1979.

<sup>3</sup> *Der Zerstreute* has been rendered as the 'distracted' or 'absent-minded' viewer in English translation, though this poorly captures the sense of scattering or dispersal conveyed by the German verb *zerstreuen*. When Benjamin sought to explain the concept of aura, he likened it to a measure of distance (1973: 216). It is a category of perception whereby the subject is positioned in time and place (socially as well as physically) through its relation to a particular object. This positioning no longer functions in the same way with the mass media. Hence, following Benjamin's argumentation, the existential condition of the masses is literally that of being *scattered*.

<sup>4</sup> Similarly, the root of *Gewöhnung* (habit) evokes a relation to place.

that expression emerges as a point of crucial, though equivocal, significance in Benjamin's essay: '*Everyone today claims a right: to be filmed*' (*ibid*: 455).<sup>5</sup> Mass mediatization was already profoundly affecting political practice; Benjamin even claimed in the first version of the essay that '*[t]he democratic crisis can be understood as a crisis of the conditions of presentation of political man*' (*ibid*: 454).<sup>6</sup> Fascism's answer to this crisis, he insisted, was to yoke the media into the service of ritual. If the problem of expression – the 'presentation of the political man' – had roots in a dream of emancipation that wanted to see all forms of social and economic oppression eradicated, it was a problem fascism exploited to drive that dream into oblivion.

Though it may seem unusual to foreground the political significance of expression in this way, Benjamin was not alone in doing so. Preoccupation with the theme of expression can be traced back through a range of significant thinkers across the first quarter of the century. These include: Jünger's professed political influence, French novelist and agitator Maurice Barrès; Oswald Spengler, whose *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (The Decline of the West, 1918 & 1922) drew a hurricane of interest when its first volume appeared in 1918; and Ludwig Klages, the founder of graphology (the psychological study of hand writing) and an important philosopher of expression associated with the German symbolist movement.<sup>7</sup> More significantly though,

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<sup>5</sup> '*Jeder heutige Mensch hat einen Anspruch, gefilmt zu werden*' (ital. in original). *Anspruch* – not, incidentally, *Recht* – is also emphasized typographically. This passage is retained in altered form in the later version of the essay, though no longer emphasized.

<sup>6</sup> '*Die Krise der Demokratien läßt sich als eine Krise der Ausstellungsbedingungen des politischen Menschen verstehen*' (ital. in original). It should be noted that, though I have translated *Ausstellungsbedingungen* as 'conditions of presentation', *Ausstellung* is used throughout Benjamin's text with reference to art works to mean simply 'exhibition' (he counterposes the 'ritual value' of auratic art and the 'exhibition value' of non-auratic art).

<sup>7</sup> On this background, see Ansgar Hillach (1979). Hillach (p. 106) quoted Ernst Robert Curtius (1921: 99) on Barrès: 'He... sees the foundation of all political action in a sum of spiritual realities; the task of the politician is to be the intellectual expression of these spiritual givens... Politics is emotional energy, guided by the will to expression'. A similar way of thinking about politics in terms of expression was central to Spengler's vision: 'Everything that exists, above all man as temporal will and as the subject of spatial conception, is the nomad-like "figure" [*Gestalt*] of a comprehensive movement of life, is its "expression" and "metaphor", in short its "symbol"' (Hillach, 1979: 108). Hillach also rightly acknowledged the place of Klages' (1913) theoretical work in heralding the National Socialist aestheticization of politics through its conceptualization of expressive movement as a kind of diversion or mustering of social action into the

Benjamin's emphasis on expression reflected the line taken by National Socialism. 'Art serves in Hitler's ideology', Mathieu Thomas (1997: 38) has written in a study of the principal figures involved in cultural politics in the Reich, 'as the highest expression of race'.

Hitler spoke of artistic creativity not only in terms of expression, but as a kind of fanatical mission, which he publicly deemed to be of central importance to the political psychic life of the German *Volk* (people). A speech made on September 1, 1933, at a major conference on the future of cultural production in the new Reich, conveyed the task of *völkisch* expression in terms of a profoundly spiritual, heroic self-sacrifice:

Whoever is chosen to reveal the soul of a people [*eines Volkes*] to the world they share, to make it ring out in musical tones, or speak through stones, must suffer under the force of the omnipotent impulse ruling over him; he will make his language speak, even if the world around him doesn't understand him or want to understand; he will prefer to confront every necessity himself than to be unfaithful, even once, to the blazing star that drives him from within.<sup>8</sup> (Hitler, 2004: 52)

Racial superiority had to be *expressed* and this demanded ongoing exertion. The task, moreover, was not just framed politically, but held up as what was truly decisive for the new political order. In Alfred Rosenberg's *Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Mythos of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century), the bulky tract that colonized every school library in the Reich, expression, likewise, was central to the formulation of a racialist theory of politics (which the Nazi philosopher sculpted, to no small extent, out of ideas borrowed from aesthetics).<sup>9</sup> First published in 1930, *Mythus* reframed the political as an heroic struggle against the enervating forces of 'racial chaos' (i.e., miscegenation), which, Rosenberg claimed, had hitherto structured world history and the rise and fall of civilizations. The

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domain of symbolic metaphor (Hillach, 1979: 104-105, 112; Klages was indeed favourably invoked in Rosenberg, 1930: 137). Klages's work was known to Benjamin and discussed in a brief review from November 1930, 'Graphology Old and New' (Benjamin, 1972-1999, Bd IV.1: 596-598; available in English translation in Benjamin, 2008: 192-194).

<sup>8</sup> 'Wer von der Vorsehung ausersehen ist, die Seele eines Volkes der Mitwelt zu enthüllen, sie in Tönen klingen oder in Steinen sprechen zu lassen, der leidet unter der Gewalt des allmächtigen, ihn beherrschenden Zwanges, der wird seine Sprache reden, auch wenn die Mitwelt ihn nicht versteht oder verstehen will, wird lieber jede Not auf sich nehmen, als auch nur einmal dem Stern untreu zu werden, der ihn innerlich leitet'.

<sup>9</sup> 500,000 copies of *Mythus* had been distributed by 1937 and double that by 1945. Though Hitler complained of its incomprehensibility, it was imposed on the National education syllabus and became a megalith in the ideological landscape of the Reich (Cecil, 1972: 94, 102-103).

new politics was to entail the creation of mythic forms that could harness the racial soul's immanent vitality.

This was a seismic shift, though one that claimed an historical taproot running right through the centre of nineteenth-century thought.<sup>10</sup> By rendering that shift as an aestheticization of politics, Benjamin sidestepped the racialist framing, which 'solved' the problem of the destruction of aura by proposing a 'natural' hierarchy grounded in racial difference. He pinpointed instead the crucial aspect of the manoeuvre concealed by that framing: the eclipse of political right. From the standpoint of emancipation, expression, as the Nazis were advocating it, meant giving people a voice so that they would no longer need to be heard.

### **Interpretative deafness**

A bias toward the visual has mostly governed interpretations of what Benjamin's fascist 'aestheticization' might actually have entailed – a bias prepared by the focus on visual media in the *Kunstwerk* essay. Three images have dominated: the neoclassical monument with its projected future in ruins (as formulated by Albert Speer's 'Law of ruin value'; see Goehr, 2008: 144-151); the hard-body of the athlete or the uniformed SS (*Schutzstaffel* defence corps) man (Sontag, 2009; Buck-Morss, 1992: 37-38); and the 'mass ornaments' (Kracauer, 1975), the acclamatory crowds in which the individual and the monumental were combined. Behind these images lies a common theme: the narcotic and numbing. They suggest an eradication of the individual, of its fragile, subjective interiority and its creativity. They frame aestheticization as *anaesthetization* (Buck-Morss, 1992; Spotts, 2002; Rebentisch, 2012: 342-344): a mortification of the reflective individual's political thought and action.

*Aesthetic*, by these readings, invokes the stony, the eternal and the empty. It says nothing to what is fleeting and ephemeral in music. Yet there is a tension between such interpretations and Benjamin's original emphasis on expression. Expression demands signs of life. Its font is vitality; and it suggests a certain lyricism that more closely allies it to music. Art theorist Boris Groys (2008: 131), one of Benjamin's most perceptive

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<sup>10</sup> Houston Stewart Chamberlain was the first historical precursor claimed by Rosenberg, but a wide range of major Enlightenment figures were called upon over the course of the text. Cassirer (1946) carefully appraised the case for precedent made of a number of those figures, notably Chamberlain, Arthur de Gobineau (who was not actually cited by Rosenberg) and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel.

readers, has written that a politics governed by aesthetic expression would place the vibrant body at the apex of all principles. The body's fiery vitality would be the guiding light of its political programme. This would still entail producing 'the political as work of art' (Lacoue-Labarthe & Nancy, 1990: 303), but, according to Groys, doing so by 'making the medium of the body the message, and...the message a political one' (Groys, 2008: 131). Though Groys was still treating the body as an essentially visual manifestation, being deaf to its acoustic activity, his recognition that fascist aesthetics were to be virile, not vacant, radiating with the spirit and potency of the fascist body, is highly suggestive for a more musically oriented analysis.

The 'intentionalist' argument that National Socialism – or Hitler alone – concocted and imposed an original, homogeneous aesthetic, or even just a discernably coherent musical style, has attracted ongoing scholarly interrogation and critique.<sup>11</sup> Yet from the perspective of an expressivist paradigm of aesthetics, it is an argument that seems wrongly formulated. Hitler himself was clear in this respect. In the 1933 speech quoted above, he announced:

It is completely wrong to speak of looking for a 'new style'; one can only hope that our best men may have been chosen by Providence to solve the task set for us today, out of their inner being, animated by their blood...<sup>12</sup> (Hitler, 2004: 50)

The lyrical emanation hoped for from the Reich's 'best men' was not something that could be analytically delineated and circumscribed in advance. Yet nor was it to be a purely personal phenomenon, identifiable solely with its producer. The exuberant body was considered to be self-multiplying, able to spawn more and more fascist bodies. Less a thing of stone, more seething and vectorial, its political power rested on its capacity to perform a kind of double mimesis: to derive from its 'inner being' a superior, streamlined aesthetic body (Groys, 2008: 138), in whose image the *Volk* would in turn reproduce itself (Lacoue-Labarthe & Nancy, 1990: 308).<sup>13</sup> Art theorist Eric Michaud

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<sup>11</sup> See especially Potter's (2006) review article spanning material across the arts. The term 'intentionalist' comes from Mason, 1995.

<sup>12</sup> 'Es ist daher auch überhaupt falsch, von einem zu suchenden "neuen Stil" zu reden, sondern man kann nur hoffen, daß unser bestes Menschentum von der Vorsehung erwählt werden möge, aus dem blutmäßig bewegten inneren Wesen heraus die uns heute gestellte Aufgabe genau so souverän zu lösen, wie dies z.B. den arischen Völkern des Altertums gelungen war'.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Rosenberg, 1930: 417-418: 'If we listen to real music it does not mean that we sink into contemplativeness, not even into sweet dreams. Through the universal medium of tonal shapes, we experience a formative will and a formative structure of composition. But this means even more to feel the formative powers, shared by the

has put this in loosely Hegelian terms: ‘Creative work, as a process of the production or realization of the Idea, was to constitute the joyful onward march of the “community of work” bent on finding itself’ (2004: xiii). The political game lay in harnessing the brute vitality of the racially exemplary soul: in turning the spontaneous process of multiplication into a synchronizing technique.

Race was supposed to supplant the vagaries of taste as the common denominator of aesthetic experience.<sup>14</sup> Accordingly, art criticism, which tends to feed a differentiation of artistic producer from mass consumer, was banned (Groys, 2008: 130-140; Painter, 2007: 209). Yet race was not simply posited as something uniformly shared by a *Volk*

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artist, awaken in the slumbering listener. Music... is a reinterpretation of the world. It is a representation of the soul... The artist proceeds from the inward to the outward. The recipient moves from the outward – from the created work – to what is inward in order to arrive at the experience which pervaded the artist in the primal creation of his work. That is the sole true circulation of aesthetic feeling. It is the supreme task of the work of art to enhance the formative power of our soul; to strengthen its freedom in the face of the world; indeed, to overcome the world’. (‘Echte Musik hören heißt nicht in Beschaulichkeit versinken, auch nicht in süßliche Träume, sondern durch das stofflose Medium der Tongestalten einen Formwillen und eine Formarchitektur erleben. Das heißt aber noch weiter: die im Hörer schlummernden, dem Künstler ähnlichen Formkräfte erwachen fühlen. Die Musik – und mit ihr jede andere Kunst – ist eine Umdeutung der “Welt”, eine Aneignung, eine Darstellung der Seele von der stillsten Stille eines Fra Angelico und Raabe bis zur Wildheit eines Michelangelo und Beethoven. Der Künstler geht von innen nach außen, der Empfänger von außen – vom geschaffenen Werk – nach innen, um zum Erlebnis zu gelangen, das den Künstler bei der Urschöpfung des Werkes erfüllte. Das ist der einzige echte Kreislauf des “ästhetischen Gefühls”, und des Kunstwerks höchste Aufgabe ist, die formende Tatkraft unserer Seele zu steigern, ihre Freiheit der Welt gegenüber zu festigen, ja diese zu überwinden’.)

Immediately prior to this passage, Rosenberg cited philosopher Theodor Lipps, linking expression and empathy (1908: 359-360; Rosenberg, 1930: 416): ‘This is what empathy is: placing oneself in another. The individuals I am cognizant of, strangers, are objectified... duplications of myself, copies that come from my own ego, in short, the products of empathy’. (‘Alles dies ist Einfühlung, Versetzung seiner selbst ins andere. Die fremden Individuen, von denen ich weiß, sind objektivierte... Vervielfältigungen meiner selbst, Vervielfältigungen des eigenen Ichs, kurz Produkte der Einfühlung’.)

<sup>14</sup> ‘In its inner depths’, Rosenberg (1930: 116, 120) wrote, ‘a people of culture will grant nobody the right to pass judgement over its creations with the word of the censor, good and bad, true and false... Art is always the creation of a specific blood, and the essence of an art, bound up to its form, will only truly be understood by creatures of the same blood; to others it will say little or nothing’. (‘Im tiefsten Innern wird auch ein Kulturvolk niemand das Recht einräumen, über seine Schöpfungen mit dem Zensorwort gut und schlecht, richtig und falsch abzuurteilen... Kunst ist immer die Schöpfung eines bestimmten Blutes, und das formgebundene Wesen einer Kunst wird nur von Geschöpfen des gleichen Blutes wirklich verstanden; anderen sagt es wenig oder nichts’.)

and which could be located unproblematically. It had to be drawn forth by art from a state of raw potentiality (so the idea ran). Its guiding force was assumed; however, cultivation was needed to properly identify it. What was immanent, the supposed ground of experience, had to be configured; race had to be incarnated as a mythic ‘type’ (Lacoue-Labarthe & Nancy, 1990: 306; the term is taken from Rosenberg’s *Mythus*). A way had to be found for the mutually productive mirroring of art and identity to carve out a figure that would endure, thus creating a form that could be technologically manipulated for the political ordering of society.

Both the intentionalist argument (that Hitler dictated and micromanaged all aspects of cultural life) and its critique (that he failed to do this and that cultural life and its administration were essentially chaotic) miss the precise logic of this task. They miss the many signs that the regime’s leaders frequently identified their own limited power to determine all aspects of social life less as an end point than as a starting point for their governmental activity. As I will argue further in Chapter Three, contingency and disunity were taken, to a certain extent, as social facts, while spontaneity was deemed a necessary bearer of fruit. Regulative processes were to be developed around them to nurture the lyrical reproduction of the *Volk* whilst quashing threats of opposition. The political rationality of the Third Reich had little to do with the fixity of the image. For it, song seems far more suggestive: gradually unfurling in time, reciprocally buoying and being buoyed by harmonic co-resonance.

Being deaf to the musical is a problem when it comes to analysing National Socialist Germany. There are several reasons for this. The first is glimpsed in the 1933 speech, where the first medium Hitler invoked to illustrate his concept of racial expression is music (‘Whoever is chosen to reveal the soul of a people...to make it ring out in musical tones, or speak through stones...’). This was typical and consistent with the famous account given in the opening pages of *Mein Kampf* of how hearing *Lohengrin* as a twelve-year-old bound Hitler ‘in a single stroke’ to his political destiny.<sup>15</sup>

Rhetorically, music held priority over the other arts in the Nazi Reich.

This could be understood, at least partly, to have been pragmatic. Art music was a ready-made resource for steering national pride in Germany. A long history of extraordinary musical talent and a not infrequently chauvinist cultural-nationalist

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<sup>15</sup> ‘Mit einem Schlag war ich gefesselt’ (Humbert, 1936: 34).



discourse (elaborated, for example, in Robert Schumann's writings for the highly influential periodical that he co-founded, the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*) had raised art music's status over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, making music the premier art of the Germanophone lands and suffusing the social experience of it with nationalistic sentiment.<sup>16</sup> This is the second reason why interpretative deafness threatens to prove perilous: for this inheritance provided the well developed foundations upon which cultural policy in the Third Reich was built. The following quotation from Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter gets near the heart of the matter.

Choosing not to tamper with success, Nazi policy-makers interfered far less in musical affairs than in the operations of other arts (especially visual arts and film). They perpetuated the belief in the universality of German music and regarded this lofty accomplishment as further evidence of German superiority. (Applegate & Potter, eds, 2002: 27)

The choice of words here is revealing. Music was not merely significant; it was Germanic culture's greatest contribution to the arts and the art that best represented the German nation. It was a medium through which particular and universal were conflated, as if German music were music *tout court*, surpassing all else.

Yet the *laissez-faire* attitude conveyed in the quotation is only partially accurate. Nazi policy-makers did not *not* tamper with a thriving musical culture. They actively recultivated one where the Weimar financial crisis had wrought economic destitution. A crucial aspect of this involved tweaking the corsetry of finance shaping musical labour. Conductors became one of the Reich's most highly paid groups of professionals; the wages of concertmasters and soloists competed with those of physicians (Kater, 1997: 9-10). Contractual wage regulations assured musicians at the other end of the economic spectrum a consistency of income above what would have been possible through freelance work, while grants provided further support for struggling artists. Indeed, Potter's own research (1995, 2003, 2007: 649-651) has been invaluable in revealing how high-profile musical institutions and schools in Berlin were nourished by lavish subsidies and protective patronage.

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<sup>16</sup> Since the late eighteenth century, contest for the title of the most German art is generally agreed to have been between music and poetry, with most commentators giving music the upper hand (see, among others, Belting, 1998: 1-12; Applegate & Potter, eds, 2002; Goehr, 2002; Reichel, 1991: 345). Unusually, Lacoue-Labarthe & Nancy (1990: 303; see also Lacoue-Labarthe, 1994) took Richard Wagner to be the central figure of what they called Germany's 'National-Aestheticism', but treated him less as a musician than as a *literary* figure, who styled himself 'as the Dante, the Shakespeare, or the Cervantes of Germany'.

Despite the deep holes left from the exile and murder of great numbers of Jewish musicians and other state ‘enemies’, music again dominated the sphere of elite culture during the mid-1930s. Yet musical activity was also cultivated in other domains of obvious political significance. With its ancient associations with the breath and spirit, its affordance of a co-resonant sense of being together, song was used prominently as a socializing force within the Hitler Youth movement. It was a way of practicing *Gemeinschaft* (community) that looked back to Biedermeier *Hausmusik* (music performed in the home) and educational traditions, whilst adapting their affective production to the new ideological silhouette.<sup>17</sup> Music of different kinds was critical in transforming the radio into a major political technology under Hitler’s rule. Indeed, it was partly in response to the perceived needs of radio broadcasting that musical ensembles were established in the Hitler Youth (Kater, 1997: 139-140; Chapter Three will examine the National Socialist radio apparatus in greater depth). More sinisterly, music also made its way into the forced labour and death camps, where it was employed for various affective, regulatory and undoubtedly persecutory purposes (Gilbert, 2005). Not only was music ‘German’, it was mobile, could be constituted anywhere out of relatively minimal resources, and would impress itself on those who fell within its sphere of resonance in ways a visual object, subject to the mobile attention of the gaze, might not.

Of course encouragement was not the only thing music making received in the Third Reich. Repression profoundly shaped cultural activity and is rightly seen to have overshadowed the liberal aspects of Nazi cultural policy. Encouragement and repression worked together. Censure, rather than censorship, was the dominant steering force. When a list of ‘musical works allowed under no circumstances’ was drawn up by the Reich Chamber of Culture in September 1935, it was distributed to concert managers and theatre intendants without being made public (Steinweis, 1993: 138-9). On the other hand, highly public denigration of cultural works or activities deemed contrary to the

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<sup>17</sup> Music in the girls’ wing of the Hitler Youth movement, the *Bund Deutscher Mädel*, also served as a lubricant for sexual activity: this was another aspect of the biological programme that the multiplicative imperative of the vibrant aesthetic body came to support. As Kater has recounted, Fritz Jöde, one of the most significant figures associated with the movement and a strong advocate of canonic singing as an organic (biological) mode of practicing *Gemeinschaft*, had to be dismissed in early 1935 after a series of sexual approaches to at least sixteen girls in his circle came to light (Kater, 1997: 142-143, 146-150).

aspirations of the Reich (such as occurred in the famous ‘Degenerate’ art and music exhibitions of 1937-8) served to evoke a counter-model for creative practice that was never concretely delineated yet was forceful enough to prompt artistic and institutional self-regulation. An ‘environment of anxiety’ was created ‘in which self-censorship by artists became the norm. Knowledge that the regime was prepared to use its coercive power deterred most artists from giving it the opportunity to do so’ (Steinweis, 1993: 132-133).

Thus, for example, jazz ensembles, promulgators of a music deemed racially toxic by Goebbels and Peter Raabe (the head of the Reich Music Chamber from 1935, when he succeeded Richard Strauss), were routinely harassed (Kater, 1992: 38-46). Jazz was officially banned from the radio from October 1935 (Drechsler, 1988: 131). Its popularity amongst German soldiers was nevertheless acknowledged, along with the fear that they would seek it out from foreign broadcasters, and as the war proceeded it was to be heard from various broadcasters despite the ban. A special national ‘dance and entertainment’ orchestra of top jazz musicians was even cultivated (Kater, 1992: 126-130).

Music making was too mobile, decentralized and extensive to be subjected to the same kind of censorial regulation to which literary publication and art exhibits in state museums eventually fell prey (Steinweis, 1993: 144-5). Nevertheless, the publication and distribution of scores did become the object of controlling orders.<sup>18</sup> Opera companies were pushed into line with the quota system ruling over theatre productions and required, from 1939, to perform at least one new production of a post-1900 German work per season (Steinweis, 1993: 137). A successful musical expression of race could not be politically micromanaged, or *designed* the way Albert Speer sort to design the future Germania (the planned capital of the new Reich) architecturally. But it is a gross misrepresentation to say that musical expression was not tampered with in the Third Reich. It was – in ways that were increasingly invasive and constrictive. (These are points that will be developed in greater theoretical detail in Chapter Three.)

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<sup>18</sup> This began in October 1935 with the Order Concerning the Publication and Distribution of Emigrant Works, aimed at controlling distribution of the work of political exiles. In December 1937, this was extended into the Order Concerning Undesirable and Dangerous Music, making all foreign music subject to screening by the newly formed Reich Music Examination Office (*Reichsmusikprüfstelle*). Finally, March 1939 saw regulation of the publication and distribution of *all* musical scores in Germany (Steinweis, 1993: 141-143). It should be noted that these regulations could do little to prevent scores already in public circulation from being performed.

## Seeing voices

The discussion of culture building through policy and policing arguably misses the central issue though. One needs to consider what was actually of concern in the political steering of musical activity. One needs to consider how music produces sense.

At a very basic level, the kind of understanding musical sound promotes differs noticeably from that of text and image. This difference, though by no means absolute – aesthetic sense production so often relishes the hybrid and liminal, with melos in prose, rhythm in painting, harmony in dance, architecture in music – has to do with representation and the comparatively peripheral role it plays in musical sense production. Strikingly divergent claims have been made about the significance of this difference. Arthur Schopenhauer (1886), one of Rosenberg's favoured philosophers, wrote of music as a direct emanation of the Will, capable of manifesting the greatest truths of human nature and worldly existence precisely because it escaped the contortions of representation. An inverse argument links representation with reason and sees in the musical arts a cultivation of the irrational (Taylor in Köhler, 2000: 2; Sponheuer, 1993). Musicological scholarship has most commonly steered between these extremes, treating music as something subject to complex forms of social coding which cause it to engage meaning, perhaps clandestinely, of a kind not dissimilar from that conveyed through text- or imaged-based forms of representation. But this approach to musical sense production also comes with problems. Just as it purports to show how music and meaning intertwine, it points to a more essential dislocation of music's moving sound forms from the discursive strata supposed to afford them signification. One finds in the music press immediately following Hitler's accession to power pleas that artistic creativity maintain its autonomy from political directives,<sup>19</sup> pleas that often slid into affirming that the ineffable in music was the true stuff of the German soul.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> See, for example, Wörner, 1933, which announced that Richard Wagner was 'the typical, unpolitical artist' (p. 196).

<sup>20</sup> For example, one finds in a short text by Hanns Rohr (1933: 561), 'Der Konzertsaal des deutschen Volkes' ('The Concert Hall of the German *Volk*'): 'Grasping the ungraspable is the thing of our soul... The German soul is like an especially sensitive Aeolian harp to the ineffable in music'. ('Das Begreifen des Ungreifbaren ist Sache unserer Seele... Die deutsche Seele ist dem Unbegreiflichen der Musik eine besonders empfindsame Aeolsharfe'.) This text was published in August 1933; the journal in which it appeared, *Signale für die musikalische Welt*, had previously published a

The social coding model is flawed by this valorization and leveraging of musical activity *in itself* (though as such still linked, paradoxically, to self and place) *against* its political overwriting, and by the possibilities for discrepant listening this opens. Additionally, the model slights the problem of how the link it proposes between music and meaning could actually be secured and managed. It leaves us unable to determine – and certainly not through our own listening efforts – whether the meaning supposedly ascribed to music within a given context will align with the experience of a particular individual in that context or not.

These are issues that will be dealt with more systematically in the next chapter. It was one of Marcel Duchamp's *bons mots* that '[o]ne can look at seeing; one can't hear hearing' (1973: 23). I work from – and around – Duchamp's insight in what follows. Rather than trying either to hear music's political meaning and significance directly or to deduce it via discourse analysis, I propose that we can begin to reorient our understanding of it by *looking* at sonic activity and experience in the Reich. I look at three things. The *Führer's* voice comes first. It was the most striking 'aesthetic' characteristic of the regime's leading 'charismatic' body and thus by far the most significant organ of sonic production in the Reich. The *Hitlergruß* follows. This is the 'Heil Hitler' greeting and salute, which, introduced by the Nazis, profoundly modulated social interaction with its choreographed, vocalized reference to the *Führer*. Balancing the absolute singularity of the *Führer's* voice, the *Hitlergruß* was the most ubiquitous, characteristically National Socialist gesture – and it was, essentially, a sonic one (as Martin Heidegger [1992: 80] said in another context, '[t]he hand sprang forth only out of the word and together with the word'). Finally, I look at the treatment of music, rhythm and song in Leni Riefenstahl's film *Triumph des Willens* ('Triumph of the Will', first screened in 1935). Though Riefenstahl's film, probably the most famous aesthetic creation of the National Socialist period, is usually treated (in academic contexts) as an essentially visual document, it in fact shows music to be at the heart of the National Socialist communal relation.

These are by no means traditional images of music. Yet they themselves suggest experiential continuity across musical and other forms of sonic expression, giving a striking picture of sonic activity in the Third Reich that sets its political valency clearly into relief. To Hitler's apparent preference for the musical arts, to their historical

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number of texts that were openly apprehensive about possible attempts to politicize elite music culture.

prominence in Germany and to the empirical steps to further cultivate them within the Reich, this picture adds ample cause to reevaluate Benjamin's thesis in a way that puts music at its centre.

### *The Führer-voice*

When I imagine Hitler, his mouth is wide open. His short neck is thrust forward as far as it will go. The black band of his moustachioed upper lip stretches tautly in a mustering of resonant power. I can almost see the words thundering out. 'It is the relationship of the voice which makes him the Führer...' (Dolar 2006: 116). This nugget from psychoanalytic theorist Mladen Dolar is rendered ominously palpable in my conjured image.

This imagined phenomenology is cinematic and no doubt heavily mediated by filmic simulations. Remarkably few photographs of Hitler actually show him in full oratorical flight. Almost all portraits produced for mass consumption during his rule were taken by the man who became Hitler's personal photographer in 1923 (and consequently a multimillionaire), Heinrich Hoffmann. Until Autumn of 1923, Hitler had cultivated a mysterious visual anonymity, carefully guarding himself from public view (Herz, 1994: 92-95). Subsequently, he would strictly control the mediatization of his appearance. The majority of Hoffmann's photographs present him with pursed lips. Even photographs taken of public, oratorical contexts generally avoid capturing him frozen – and thus silent – in a politically energized act of speech.

An early photobook that already bears the title *Der Triumph des Willens* ('Triumph of the Will'; Hoffmann, ed., 1933?) includes a montage of three images: one gives a three-quarter profile of Hitler standing pensively before a microphone, mouth closed; the other two capture him from behind, looking out past his microphone to the crowds. A popular Hoffmann collection of 100 Hitler portraits (*Hitler wie ihn Keiner kennt*, 1935?), meant to give insight into the Nazi leader's political development up until his accession to power, shows only four images of him orating and only two with mouth open. Another such collection (*Hitler abseits vom Alltag*, Hoffmann, ed., 1937) contains none at all. In the image (again Hoffmann's) used for the March 5, 1933, National Socialist Reichstag election poster (Ex. 1.1), it is Hitler's eyes that stand out, shining with intimidating determination. Their prominence is reinforced by a series of planes that intersect around his right eye socket (Paul von Hindenburg's raised brow and the

tip of the numeral one below form the other apexes of a neat isosceles triangle). The mouth seems merely an appendage to those coolly penetrating eyes.

I rediscover the apoplectic *Führer*-voice in Leni Riefenstahl's films. The colossal Hitler Youth speech scene in *Triumph of the Will* (1935) was all about larynx and lungs. The camera's narrow gaze on Hitler's upper body showed no interest in his peculiar, sharply mannered gesticulations, which tended to fall outside its frame (Ex. 1.2).<sup>21</sup> The sequence was not a study of Hitler's oratory, but itself an exercise in the production of voice. Riefenstahl's Hitler-voice cannot be reduced adequately to a still image; for the main quality of the voice, as Riefenstahl presented it, was that it *moved*: it was vectorial, it activated.<sup>22</sup> Her camera followed it, sweeping across the geometrical crowds of intently focussed, uniformed youths. It pursued their concentration and their conviction (Ex. 1.3).

The Hitler Youth speech sequence begins, around forty minutes into *Triumph*, preempting the *Führer*'s bark with a shot of the open bell of a military trumpet (Ex. 1.4). An almost identical shot appears six minutes into Riefenstahl's roughly contemporaneous filmic portrait of the German defence forces, *Tag der Freiheit* (1935). There, however, it fades into a shot of the National Socialist *Parteiadler* emblem (Ex. 1.5). Clouds move rapidly behind the Nazi bird and the montage continues by showing a stretch of Swastika flags rippling vigorously against the sounds of brass, before finally anchoring its gaze to the vast swathes of the defence forces. Breath, air and wind form a continuum, bathing the series of resonances – which concludes, in the final sequence of *Tag der Freiheit*, with a militarized choreography of cannon and jets (Ex. 1.6).

What emerges seems to be evidence of a sophisticated aesthetic and political *epistemology* of the voice. Riefenstahl's handling of the Hitler Youth speech in *Triumph* was not merely a spontaneous artistic response to the inherent drama of the scenario; it

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<sup>21</sup> Hitler's hand gestures were, on the other hand, a frequent subject of Hoffmann's photography. See especially the emphasis on hands – touching, signing decrees – in Hoffmann, ed., 1937 (n.p.).

<sup>22</sup> Compare this to a description made by Goebbels (1936: 28) in a specially produced Hitler tribute photography album: 'Just as his voice speaks from the depths of his blood, it pushes its way into the depths of its listener's blood. It brings the most intimate strings of the human soul into resonance. It arouses the sluggish and lazy, it hoists up the half-hearted and doubtful, it makes men of cowards and heroes of weaklings'. ('So wie seine Stimme aus der Tiefe des Blutes spricht, so dringt sie beim Zuhörer bis in die Tiefe des Blutes hinein. Die geheimsten Saiten der menschlichen Seele bringt sie zum Erklingen. Die Trägen und Faulen rüttelt sie auf, die Lauen und Zweifelnden richtet sie hoch, die Feigen macht sie zu Männern und die Schwächlinge zu Helden'.)

reveals a deeper conceptual logic. This may shed light on all of those images of Hitler with his mouth resolutely closed: they probably say more about perception of what images could and could not do to convey Hitler's vocal powers than about the relative status of the voice in the broader mediatized projection of Hitler's person.<sup>23</sup>

Much has been made of Hitler's purported Wagnerian influences. Far less of the originality of the copy. There is, however, at least some literature, mostly informed by psychoanalytic theory, that takes the *Führer's* vocal prowess seriously. Michel Poizat deemed it central to the Third Reich's complex psychical apparatus, arguing that Hitler was not so much Germany's *Führer* as its *Verführer*, its diva seducer (2001: 162-7). Can we imagine him not as Wagner, but as Kundry, with wild, animal voice, centre stage at the Kroll Opera House, bewitching the dummy parliament that had settled there after the Reichstag fire in February 1933? The decisive impact of Hitler's oratorical mobilizing powers is universally acknowledged. Poizat, however, insisted that their importance was also singular: 'Hitler's instrument of fascination was his voice and only his voice' (*ibid*: 162).<sup>24</sup> Its incessant and deadly unconscious force provoked, he maintained, a retroactive illusion of pre-symbolic bliss; it engendered in the German masses a fetishistic disavowal of the symbolic castration concomitant with life ruled by law and language – a refusal of all reason and rationality (*ibid*: 200-201, 224).

It is important not to exaggerate the political effectiveness of the voice though. Qualifications are needed. As noted above, historians of National Socialism have long objected to the 'intentionalist' fallacy of weighting Hitler's idiosyncratic, personal charisma and political vision above all other social, economic and political factors that

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<sup>23</sup> Of interest in this respect may be Hoffmann's production, around 1930, of a flick book comprising 80 images of Hitler orating, which was publicized as the 'living image of Adolf Hitler' (Herz, 1994: 113). In 1927, Hoffmann had also produced a series of six postcards of Hitler pretending to orate before a mirror. These obviously staged images appear comical, almost parodic, and served as inspiration for Charlie Chaplin (Herz, 1994: 107). One can only speculate as to whether the aesthetic limitations of that particular series (which remained on sale well into the late 1930s) was related to Hoffmann's subsequent avoidance of oration as a subject of his photography, or whether that avoidance was more integrally linked to the problem of silencing the active voice.

<sup>24</sup> '...l'instrument de la fascination d'Hitler fut sa voix et uniquement sa voix'.



shaped the Reich's emergence and trajectory (see, for example, Broszat, 1981: xiii).<sup>25</sup> It seems undeniable that the *Führer*-voice was a politically active entity of major significance within the Third Reich. But it is necessary to beware such hyperbole as describe *opera* – as Poizat did – in terms of a 'sovereign voice' that 'holds its listeners in a state of absolute subjection' (2001: 197).<sup>26</sup> It is quite evident that opera's listeners are also prone to distraction, to nitpicking – even to falling asleep; without the support of laws or threats of violence, no human voice holds the absolute power Poizat described. If it was the vocal tie that defined the *Führer* politically, his words 'supported by the mere voice' that *made* the law, as Dolar has written (2006: 116), what was it that secured the singular – yet apparently absolute – binding power of this 'mere' voice and not of another?

To be sure, testimony does suggest that the affective force of the vocal delivery often eclipsed what was delivered.<sup>27</sup> We should not presume that the practised, stage-managed speeches of Riefenstahl's films – which, it is to be noted, have been some of the most extensively called upon repositories of 'documentary' footage of the Reich since 1945 (Loiperdinger, 1987: 10) – are representative of Hitler's everyday performance practice. Art historian Percy Ernst Schramm, who was assigned to keep Hitler's war diary from 1943 and retained copies of it against Hitler's final order to have it destroyed, wrote of the difficulty of logically summarizing Hitler's speeches – a practice which, like art criticism, was prohibited (Schramm, 1972: 72, fn. 5). Entire speeches were apparently dictated off the cuff:

Presented with the emphatically masculine gestures and the verve Hitler displayed on such occasions, and delivered in the sonorous voice that fascinated many, [his] speech presumably had a strong impact... But as effective as the speech must have seemed to the listeners, anyone attempting to follow the main thoughts or to trace the logic of their relationships with each other will become aware of how many gaps and breaks the structure has as a whole. (*Ibid*: 71-72)

Schramm's account reinforces the caricature of Hitler as an operatic pied piper, whose political speech bordered on glossolalia; he 'never achieved the type of rigidly logical

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<sup>25</sup> And, indeed, to my mind one of the most compelling historical accounts of the early Reich, in any medium, is Luchino Visconti's film *The Damned* (1969), in which Hitler is nowhere to be seen (let alone heard).

<sup>26</sup> '...on peut en effet définir l'opéra comme le lieu où la voix souveraine tient le spectateur, le sujet, ou le public, le peuple, dans une relation de sujétion totale, selon une relation d'abandon'.

<sup>27</sup> Further testimony on the discrepancy between Hitler's vocal power and the logical and rhetorical strength of his arguments is to be found in Knopp, 1995: 31-90 (cited Poizat, 2001: 169).

thinking which the Catholic Church inculcates in its priests and the General Staff in its officers' (*ibid*: 71).

Both Poizat and Dolar have argued that the natural underpinnings of the voice were constitutive of its sovereign authority. In Hitler's speech, they have claimed, the corporeal took over political content, drawing it into coincidence with the biological and with race (Poizat 2001: 179; Dolar 2006: 116-117). We know, however, that Hitler's vocal talent was no simple quirk of nature. There is a recording of Hitler speaking, in 1942, with a Finnish General about the course of the war. The discussion, captured unbeknownst to Hitler by a Finnish radio engineer, reveals a voice that is soft and stumbling, with an easy pace and rhythm typical of the Innviertel region in upper Austria where Hitler spent his childhood.<sup>28</sup> It bears scant resemblance to that projected in Hitler's public performances. The political voice was practised: a technical construction – and evidently guarded with meticulous care (just as Hitler's image had been earlier).

Yet if the political voice was a construction, it was also, in a sense, a force in itself. Hitler became its vehicle, signified by his voice just as his (Mondrianesque) moustache signified it. Schramm's report of Hitler's medical history suggests that the relationship was ultimately experienced as one of pure, destructive alterity. His report describes a body taken over and gradually ruined by an 'iron will', a body for years kept mobile only through extraordinary doses of medicaments and injections. In his final weeks, in the bunker beneath the Reich Chancellery, the *Führer* walked with upper body thrust forward, legs dragging behind, hands trembling. He had no control over his left arm, and was often unable to hold himself up (Schramm, 1972: 118-9). Toward the end of 1944, Hitler's vocal cords were operated on for the second time in his political career. Cancer was suspected, as it had been before, though nothing but a harmless polyp was found (*ibid*: 123).

### *The Hitlergruß*

The *Hitlergruß*, the Nazi salute and *Heil Hitler* greeting, formed the acclamatory counterpart of the Hitler-voice. This is obvious when seen in the context of the rallies, where Hitler's speech was greeted directly by the salute and cheer of the Nazi masses –

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<sup>28</sup> Hitler was explaining the likely course of the war to Finnish General Carl Gustav (Spiegel Online, 2004).

though less obvious when performed as an everyday greeting. The Hitler Youth speech scene that we have already discussed, from *Triumph of the Will*, gives a crisp rhythm of call and laudatory affirmation between *Führer* and his *Heil*-ing adolescent subjects. A perfect display of disciplined auditory dialogue: though if attention is paid to the visual and auditory cuts, one can detect with near certainty enhancement from Riefenstahl's editing studio in the seams between speech and applause.<sup>29</sup>

I stress the sonic profile of the gesture in part because the salute, borrowed from the Italian fascists in the early 1920s, was sutured onto an already existing oral greeting; but largely because of the choreography the gesture itself. The arm shoots up, marking the flight line of the voice. Thus even where the salute was made without verbal utterance, the arm indicated the voice.<sup>30</sup> Hitler in turn would often greet it with a counter-salute, raising and folding back his right arm in a way that let his open hand fall expectantly (and somewhat dandyishly) alongside his ear. Though Hitler would also make the standard salute as a sign of respect and praise for others, through this counter-gesture he identified himself as the *Gruß*'s ultimate reference point.

And so every greeting was made with reference to Hitler, the ubiquitously absent third party. The call, *Heil Hitler*,<sup>31</sup> with its amorphous semantic resonances – of being cured or unharmed, of health, of Holy Salvation – reinforced the present absence. But who restored whom through this act of speech? In most instances, with Hitler who-knew-where, it had to be the community restoring itself, enjoined in communion around his absence. Even more than the play of contiguities in Riefenstahl's films, what this

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<sup>29</sup> The *Gruß* likewise appears as a manifestation of disciplined auditory dialogue in the filmic presentation of Goebbels's February 18, 1943, *Sportpalast* speech made for *Die Deutsche Wochenschau* (the war-time cinema newsreel, edition 651). In the first part of the presentation the camera focusses on intently listening audience members, mostly viewed in profile so that their ears are visible. A voiceover conveys selected excerpts from Goebbels's speech, which are neatly punctuated by vigorous applause and laudation from the audience. The second, more dramatic part then cuts between footage of Goebbels animatedly posing to his audience several of the chilling questions for which the speech is infamous (about its willingness to wage a 'total' war, potentially more radical than any hitherto conceivable, and its unwavering loyalty to the *Führer*) and the audience rising to its feet with outstretched right arms in affirmative, highly vocal response.

<sup>30</sup> Again, in the Hitler Youth scene montage, where saluting arms are rhymed visually with outstretched trumpets, the voice-arm link is unmistakable.

<sup>31</sup> Additionally, '*Heil, mein Führer*' was often used to address Hitler personally, while '*Sieg heil!*' (*Sieg* means victory) was frequently used as a chant.

suggests is that with the *Hitlergruß*, National Socialism rendered an explicitly metaphysical idea of the voice a part of everyday social practice.

A decree made by Minister of the Interior Wilhelm Frick on 13 July, 1933, established the *Gruß* as a mandatory civic duty in Party, State and commemorative sites as well as during the singing of the national anthem (the *Deutschlandlied*) and the Horst Wessel Song (Allert, 2008: 30; Kershaw, 1987: 60). Small metal signs appeared throughout Germany reminding people to use the salute (Allert, 2008: 34). Then in 1937 Jews were prohibited from using it (*ibid*: 51).

The *Gruß* replaced older greetings and the class pretensions that often went with them (*ibid*: 30, 34, 51, 31). Yet it could not without irony be said to have enacted the promised bond of immediacy of the new *Gemeinschaft* (community). For not only was the saluting arm raised toward an empty, fictive space, rather than to a present recipient; as sociologist Tilman Allert has argued in a richly perceptive study of the gesture, performing the salute also frequently required stepping backwards (*ibid*: 45, 51). The extension of the arm frequently demanded a movement *away* from the greeted party at the moment of encounter.

This peculiar distancing can be seen to have brought a second, more empirically political dimension to the theological, sacralizing aspect of the *Gruß* already mentioned. It would set up an immediate power relationship. As the saluting party established allegiance to the *Führer*, he (or she) would stand back to judge the recipient's response. Allert likens this to 'the opening gambit in a game of chess, which allows the two sides to begin testing each other' (*ibid*: 72; see also Kershaw, 1987: 60). This, surely, was the decisive element that allowed the *Gruß* to become socially engrained: once it transformed all who used it into police, the real police would no longer be necessary to maintain it. The *Gruß* enacted the social tie as a vocal tie, but it was a tie easily slipped into the form of a noose.

### *Riefenstahl's symphony*

I have already mentioned Riefenstahl's film of the 1934 Nuremberg Nazi Party Congress, *Triumph of the Will*, several times and described one of its sequences – the Hitler Youth speech scene – as a production of voice. The film's unmatched significance as a repository of footage of Nazi Germany has also been noted and it is worth stressing that the way it presents the Reich, its particular contribution to the

National Socialist aestheticization of politics, has thus well and truly infiltrated the anti-fascist imaginary. This, at least, is true at the level of individual details – shots and sequences. But I want to highlight two sequences, the first and the final, that articulate the relationship between the aesthetic and the political on a different level to the rest of the film’s more ‘documentary’ footage. While *Triumph* has conventionally been regarded as an essentially *visual* document, despite the prominence of Hitler’s voice across a significant portion of the soundtrack,<sup>32</sup> these sequences explicitly show the sonic to be not only central to the film’s unique aesthetic makeup, but the core medium through which the relation between *Führer* and *Volk* was to be experienced.

The opening sequence presents Hitler’s arrival by plane into Nuremberg for the September 5, 1934, Party rally, and the mass laudation that receives him. The first shots look out from the cockpit of the plane, gradually parsing the clouds, from one side to the other. The plane’s restrictive window frame is quickly forgotten by the camera’s, as its gaze luxuriates in the nebulous forms it gracefully penetrates. Over a minute of cloud footage eventually gives way to a series of aerial shots of Nuremberg, external shots of the plane and of its shadow as it traces across the city, and finally lines of marching supporters in preparation for Hitler’s arrival. The *Führer* himself is not seen until he emerges from the plane to a roar of *Heils* and raised right arms – a fit of acclamation that clearly precedes his actual appearance.

All of this is accompanied by a set of orchestral variations, composed by Herbert Windt, on the popular Nazi anthem, the Horst Wessel Song. Windt, described by Stefan Strötgen in a valuable musicological analysis of *Triumph* as ‘a kind of star among film composers’ in the Third Reich (Strötgen, 2008: 5), was a student of Franz Schreker and Wagner’s influence shines through in the opening string counterpoint, which brings to the plodding, musically unmemorable tune of the Nazi paramilitary enough elegance and interest to render possible a semi-mystical experience from the shots of cloud.

Citing an interview statement made by Riefenstahl in 1972, Strötgen has argued that the Horst Wessel Song functioned as a symbol for the *Führer*’s presence (*ibid*: 11). It allowed his proximity to be felt from the very start of the film, while his visual

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<sup>32</sup> Hitler’s voice is present for approximately one fifth of *Triumph*’s sound-track, comprising close to two-thirds of the film’s spoken material. Hitler is visibly present for around one third of the film (Loiperdinger, 1987: 68). For these figures, Loiperdinger draws on Fledelius *et al*, eds., 1979: 27.

appearance was delayed to add to the revelatory ecstasy of his eventual disembarkation. As Riefenstahl explained,

I charged the cameraman with the task of filming from the plane, capturing images of parts of the plane itself, and showing how Nuremberg comes through the clouds, but without revealing who sits inside. I thought that the sequence would make a good transition... And then I got the idea...to underlay the shot of the clouds with the *Horst Wessel Song*. In that moment...viewers would realise that that plane could only be Hitler's. (Weigel, 1972; cited in Strötgen, 2008: 11)

This may have been how Riefenstahl initially thought through the construction of the sequence. It does not match the final experience of it though, since Hitler's presence is preempted by a textual explanation: *'flog Adolf Hitler wiederum nach Nürnberg, um Heerschau abzuhalten über seine Getreuen'* ('Adolf Hitler flew again to Nuremberg to appraise the military display of his faithful followers'). There can have been no mystery for Riefenstahl's viewers as to whose plane it was.

What the orchestral invocation of the Horst Wessel Song ultimately added to the sequence is, I think, a little different. A version of the anthem printed in 1934 came with the instruction that the right arm was to be raised in the Hitler salute whenever the first and final verses (which are the same) were sung (Kurzke, 1990: 137). In what is otherwise a bland inventory of military tropes and insignia ('Soon Hitler's flags will ripple above every street'), these are certainly the verses that monopolize the song's meagre poetic interest:

*Kam'raden, die Rotfront und Reaktion erschossen,  
Marschier'n im Geist in unser'n Reihen mit.*

Comrades, whom the Red Front and reactionaries shot dead,  
March along in spirit in our ranks.

Strötgen glosses these lines as part of a 'sacrificial cult', Hitler's 'good news', flown down from heaven in the opening sequence by an 'Earthly Messiah' (2008: 11-12). Yet what they conjure is not so much the desirability of sacrifice, as a state of earthly communion, between the living and the dead who 'march along...in [their] ranks'. The suggestion of an arrival from heaven is undoubtedly part of the story – Hitler had worked hard to boost support from the Catholic right in the early years of his rule and his propaganda apparatus was well practised at cobbling from Christian symbology. Beyond this, however, lay direct allusion to metaphysical communion of a specifically

National Socialist kind.<sup>33</sup> Visually metaphorized through the clouds (part of the pneumatological continuum seen in *Tag der Freiheit*), the sequence shows this enacted through the acclamatory salutes that herald the presence of the *Führer in spirit* well before Hitler's body appears on scene. The Horst Wessel variations provided the cue, and they extended it to the film's spectators.

The very end of the film returns to the Horst Wessel Song. After Hitler's vigorous, rousing rally speech, his deputy, Rudolf Hess, takes to the Nuremberg stage. He announces, 'The Party is Hitler, but Hitler is Germany, just as Germany is Hitler', and the congregating masses are at last enjoined to sing the Nazi anthem. Only the first verse is sung; though the lines quoted above are repeated over a final montage that overlays marching troops, clouds and a Swastika (Ex. 1.7). This is the most didactic moment of the film, though not simply because of the way it visualizes the ghostly 'comrades...march[ing] along in spirit', thereby elucidating what neither requires nor is suited to elucidation in the verse. It is didactic because of the way it demonstrates, with 'truly liturgical overtones' (in Strötgen's words, 2008: 12), but also with utter directness, that music was the medium through which the masses were to glorify their *Führer* and through him themselves. It called on them to sing.

Strötgen's most interesting argument concerned Riefenstahl's stated attempt to simulate, through rhythmic sound-image synchronization, the 'inner rhythm of the actual event' (Riefenstahl, 1935: 12; cited Strötgen, 2008: 10). In an early sequence, images were cut almost consistently to each two-bar phrase of music (which Riefenstahl is said to have conducted herself).<sup>34</sup> The rally images were drawn together to participate in something that was essentially musical. Much later (around 40 minutes into the film) a similar technique was used in the presentation of a fireworks display. The rhythmicized bursts of light 'almost seem to be dancing to the rhythm of the accompanying march music' (*ibid*: 10). As the explosions gently articulate the

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<sup>33</sup> 'Like the other martyrs, Horst Wessel, too, is not dead', Rosenberg wrote in an editorial of the *Völkischer Beobachter* (March 1, 1930). '[T]he souls of the "dead" struggle together with us for a new life' (cited, Cecil, 1972: 97).

<sup>34</sup> The cuts occur a split second before the musical downbeats to avoid emphasizing the disjunctions between images (Strötgen, 2008: 10). Strötgen gives the time cue as 0:13:01, though the material he describes occurred closer to the ten minute mark on the version of *Triumph I* consulted. Reference to Riefenstahl conducting is made in Bach, 2007: 139.

underlying temporal flow of the music, they form a wondrous allegory for the balance between image and sound in the film.

These details were not lost on Riefenstahl's audiences. Press headlines hailed the film not as a great documentary, but as a 'symphony' of the German Will (Bach, 2007: 139). The vocal methexis (the participatory ritual of singing) shown in the final scene is not *represented* in these rhythmically edited sequences, but rather *enacted* through the sound-image synchronization. What mattered was not the literal, corporeal voice, but the temporality of the filmic construction – its expressive mobility – as shaped and revealed through the synchronization process. Sonic expression appeared here from a different angle: as a crafting of an experience of simultaneity and togetherness, rather than an object-like outpouring indexed to the body, biology, nature and race. What linked these two seemingly discrepant conceptions of sonic expression and the voice – and this returns us to the opening discussion of this chapter – was the problem of manifesting *vitality*, the multiplicatory force supposed to bridge nature and political technology.

Missed in the reception of *Triumph* is the origin of the synchronization technique. The film was released to the public on March 28, 1935. Until at least February, press reports heralded it as being co-directed.<sup>35</sup> The other director was Walter Ruttmann, who had ingratiated himself with the Nazi Party through his enormously popular 1933 film *Blut und Boden* (viewed by approximately twenty million people and often paired with Riefenstahl's 1933 *Sieg des Glaubens* as one of the two most significant films produced in connection with the National Socialist movement prior to *Triumph*; see: Fulks, 1982: 208). It was Riefenstahl who initially approached Ruttmann to work on *Triumph*, but at the eleventh hour she suppressed his engagement on the film.

Early press releases described a film that would incorporate an historical narrative which is nowhere to be found in the completed work. It has been suggested that this would have been Ruttmann's contribution, worked on autonomously, while what was released was indeed Riefenstahl's independent creation (*ibid*: 215-218). Yet if one considers the complex rhythmic techniques employed in *Triumph* in relation to Ruttmann's earlier work, this argument seems implausible. Ruttmann had come to

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<sup>35</sup> 'Im Hauptquartier des Reichsparteitagfilms', *Licht-Bild-Bühne* (7 Sep 1934); '60,000 m Entwickelt und Kopiert: Vor der Ausmusterung der Nürnberger Filmarbeit', *Licht-Bild-Bühne* (14 Sep 1934) (both cited, Fulks, 1982: 214). See also Bach, 2007: 126, 138.



prominence in the 1920s creating abstract, highly rhythmical optical films (notably the four *Lichtspiele Opus I-IV*, 1921-1925). In 1927, he directed a silent, but nevertheless ‘symphonic’, filmic portrait of Berlin (*Berlin: Die Sinfonie der Großstadt*). This was a remarkable attempt to convey the city as rhythm (incidentally, in the same year as Martin Heidegger’s *Being and Time* appeared with its claim that temporality was the very fabric of existence), using dynamic montages of visual material that marked the flow of time through ‘pure patterns of movement’ (Kracauer, 1947: 184).<sup>36</sup> Following this, Ruttmann directed the first German feature-length sound film, *Melodie der Welt* (‘Melody of the World’, 1929), again following a musical impulse and using sound and image montages to construct complex rhythmic forms.<sup>37</sup> Even if Riefenstahl did edit *Triumph* alone, the origin of her technique lay in Weimar experimental film with Ruttmann. While the film’s final sequence points to an idealized premodern experience of song as a medium of religious communion, its approach to temporality was rooted in modernity.

## Conclusion

The images of sonic expression and the voice examined here reveal an aesthetic practice of the political that is not captured by the visualist tropes of the monument in ruins and the body hardened against the anomie of modern experience. These images do not so much expose the contextually governed ‘meaning’ of particular forms of sonic expression as show its *activity*: as it was used to impress, to affirm and to shape behaviour; as it was shared and as it brought together in time – as it synchronized. They evince an idea of the sonic that looked back to the Abrahamic religions and pneumatology, wherein the voice was supposed to carry the weight of divine revelation and serve as a vessel of passage between material and spiritual realms. And yet, as we

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<sup>36</sup> Edmund Meisel, who composed the original score to Sergei Eisenstein’s *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), would also provide the score for *Berlin*, thus bridging these two highly important, but politically antithetical, directors of the period (see Kracauer, 1947: 183-188).

<sup>37</sup> Kracauer denigrated this film as a ‘cosmic hymn’ that indiscriminately embraced all forms of human activity in ‘wholesale acceptance’: ‘His “world melody” is void of content, because his concern with the whole of the world leads him to disregard the specific content of each of the assembled melodies’ (1947: 209). Around this time Ruttmann also created a sound only ‘film’, *Wochenende* (1930), that preempted the work of Pierre Henry and Pierre Schaeffer two decades later.

will see more clearly in Chapter Three, this was a distinctively modern update that saw the voice through the lens of the burgeoning mass media, as something technologically extensible and multiplicative. In these images, the aesthetic is not stony and inert, but dynamic, relational and rhythmic.

This gives a new sense to the thesis that National Socialism was defined by its transmutation of aesthetics and politics, a sense that is finally consistent with the Reich's cultivation of its quintessentially 'German' musical inheritance. The framing of command and laudation that one sees particularly clearly in Riefenstahl's filmic montages closely corresponded, moreover, to numerous verbal descriptions from the period of sonic expression infiltrating and radically transforming German life in all of its domains (see the epigraph at the beginning of the introduction to Part I). We miss a key dimension of Nazi totalitarianism if we relegate such descriptions to the realm of enthusiastic poetic flourishes – a dimension critical to understanding the political profile of *Gemeinschaft* and the part the sonic played with respect to it. We also neglect hints that certain aspects of National Socialist governmentality may have borrowed from acoustic models (Chapter Three will examine several accounts of Nazi propaganda that closely align it with a particular idea of acoustic resonance).

And yet, looking at the voice, we are still left with questions. It is one thing for Riefenstahl to have represented song as a medium of communion, locating it within the domain of ritual at the expense of a properly emancipatory 'presentation of political man'. But what ensured that such a representation held or was itself efficacious? The *Hitlergruß*, by contrast, was legally implemented. Still, though as a physical gesture it contributed quite markedly to choreographing microsocial interactions, what enforced its deeper, metaphysical meaning as an essentially oral rite? The problem is similarly pronounced with respect to Hitler's voice, where legislative power and a certain charismatic, affective power pass through the same channel without their interconnection being clear. In each case the coherence of expressive activity appears to have hinged on ideology. But what secured the ideological support? What made art – and sonic expression in particular – serve, in Thomas's words, 'as the highest expression of race'? To answer this question, we will need to look more closely at the theory that links musical sense production and ideology, renovating musicology's disciplinary toolkit in the process. This will be the central task of the next chapter.

While I have insisted here on reading Benjamin's 'aestheticization of politics' in terms of expressive activity, it is important to note that for Benjamin 'the aesthetic' also denoted a particular grade of experience (*Erlebnis*). The 'aesthetic' was what affected the body in direct, sensory ways. It distilled perception within the organs, nervous system and chemical make up of the body, tearing it away from social and political engagement and concern.<sup>38</sup> Thus when Benjamin wrote of aestheticizing war (1973: 84, 234-235), he meant that the register of experience had shifted such that war was treated not as the outcome of a crisis affecting political sovereignty, but as a matter of adrenaline, the saline odour of trench camaraderie, the roar of swooping aircraft, horror, pain, relief – the immediate proximity of life and death. Bearing in mind the discussion of racialist metaphysics, which framed art as a generative movement of racial vitality from body to body, it is easy to see how the experiential and the expressive conceptions of the aesthetic intermeshed. To aestheticize politics meant to separate out the body's function as a receptacle of sensation from its capacity to identify and act as a political subject. As will be discussed in Chapter Three, where I draw from the work of Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben, this is exactly what was attempted in the Nazis' death laboratories. Against this corruption of experience, Benjamin insisted: *'the tasks which face the human apparatus of perception at the turning points of history cannot be solved by optical means, that is, by contemplation, alone'* (1973: 233). Since 1945, a wide range of sonic-arts practices have taken a version of this injunction as their own, struggling to transform the musical from a site of contemplation, fixed on the pleasures of 'disinterested' sensation, into a domain of conceptually self-reflexive social knowledge. These efforts will be the subject of Part II.

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<sup>38</sup> For a brief, but valuable, analysis of the different valencies of the term 'aesthetic' as it has been used in Kantian and post-Kantian philosophical discourse, and of how they have overlapped with ontological conceptions of art – an analysis that sheds light on Benjamin's complex attitude, though does not invoke it directly – see Osborne, 2013: 38-46.

## Chapter Two. Ideology, agency, history, law: towards a theory of political sound

The sonic activity viewed in the last chapter can be classed according to four basic analytic categories: the affective, the synchronizing, the impressive or attractive, and the affirming. These categories are not mutually excluding. They point to conceptions of musical activity that in practice tend to blur and bleed into one another. With Hitler's voice, for example, it is difficult to draw a line between a power to captivate listeners – a force of attraction – and an affective agency that aimed at transforming their states of being. We can be sure that the attentive, erect torso, with commandeering raised, outstretched arm, and the sharp, alliterative staccato of the *Hitlergruß* likewise did both attractive and affective work; yet watching footage of the rallies, what seems far more notable is how the *Gruß* was used to create a space of co-presence – how it synchronized through chant and movement – and how it punctuated and affirmed political speech. Differently, Riefenstahl's rhythmic editing exploited music's temporality – its synchronizing impulse – for its affective power, while her breathy continua of speech, trumpet, wind and cloud are essays not only in co-presence, but in the radiation of charisma and its affirmation through seemingly natural formal articulations.

Recent years have seen a surge of academic interest in music's affectivity and capacity to engender emotional responses. Increasingly, these topics are providing a preferred framework for politically oriented discussions of music, so I begin this chapter's treatment of the music-politics relations with them – though to be sure, concern with them has an extensive history (into which I can only delve briefly here). Arguably, the sudden flourish of interest in music's affective powers is yet to be matched by substantive epistemological gains. In literature spanning social anthropology, analytic philosophy and neuroscience, scarcely a glint of consensus has been reached about how music affects us, why our responses to it differ, or the extent to which those responses are biologically or culturally conditioned (Garofalo, 2010: 725). In one camp, a number of theorists of affect have taken music to be exemplary of a cultural affectionality supposed to be pre-linguistic and pre-subjective. Music, they

say, confirms that ‘intensity of the impingement of sensations on the body can “mean” more to people than “meaning” itself’ (Shouse, 2005: 13; cited and critically appraised in Leys, 2011: 458). In another camp, we find thinkers such as sociologist Tia DeNora, who has conceptualized music ‘as a device for the constitution of emotive action’ (2010: 163) and thematized its use as a subjective and subject-defining process wherein listeners actively ‘construct...their passivity in relation to [it]’ (*ibid.*: 169). The basic question of whether the precise quality of musical experience is more a function of the shape of the musical object or of the subject listening – and if the latter, the subject as a conscious, reflective being, as a site of socially ingrained habit, or as a quantum of biological potential – remains hotly contested.

Such discussions have been greatly hindered where they have referred to ‘music’ as an abstract generality without identifying or differentiating between the numerous elements of musical sense production and their diverse affective potentials. An established body of literature within the domain of music analysis has framed musical experience in terms of listeners having conventionalized expectations that are thwarted or met as tonal forms (particularly harmony) shift across time (see especially Lewin, 1986). By contrast, there has been a tendency among more recent theorists of musical ‘affect’ – particularly those sharing a concern over the use of sonic technologies within militarized contexts (Goodman, 2010; see also Cusick, 2006) – to fixate on vibrations and resonance, emphasizing the affective powers of timbre in the here-and-now over any kind of temporally oriented experience.

For Plato, it was instead the particular configurations of the harmonic modes and quite rudimentary rhythmic patternings that tempered the soul – on account of which he identified music’s affective power as an explicit politico-legal issue for his imaginary republic (Plato, 2006: 86-93). Plato, following the convention of his time, viewed music as a kind of ordering mechanism, itself like a law (Georgiades, 1977: 167-170). Implicit in this was a conception of what I have referred to as music’s capacity to *synchronize*, as it invites listeners to share a marking of time that would frame their togetherness. Such experiences of contemporaneousness, or being together in time (which could include other more complex, mediated forms of co-presence: via the association made in psychoanalytic literature between the lyrical and the maternal voice, for example), have a different existential character to the purely dyadic subject-object affection – though obviously they too call upon affects and emotions.

Echoing Plato (to a degree), Eduard Hanslick established and justified his formalist criticism on the back of a blanket condemnation of music's 'undefined and demoniacal power', which the nineteenth-century critic claimed worked to corrosive moral effect by 'sending a thrill through every nerve of our body' (1957: 78, 91-96). Hanslick was not specific about what in music actually harboured this power. Yet despite the at times chauvinistic violence of his tirade against it, he was also optimistic that the individual listener could learn to resist being morally corrupted and infantilized through the decadent pleasures of musical sensation, and come to contemplate the movements of musical form without impingement upon his or her individual autonomy. Where Plato turned to legislation to control the effects of musical experience in the interest of the republic, Hanslick, an Enlightenment thinker, looked to the individual, concerned that one find freedom through one's own maturity, not through the state. The recent refocussing of attention on music's affective and emotive dimensions – hailed approvingly by Michael Spitzer as part of a 'broader "biologization" of the humanities' (2010: 1) – suggests a further step, whereby Hanslick's voluntarist reconceptualization of the listener is reversed (or at best marginalized), while his individualized, non-political framing of musical experience is retained.

Ruth Leys, in an important critique of what she has termed the 'turn to affect' in the humanities and social sciences, and also characterized as a kind of biologization (2011: 435), has hinted that an experience of the failures of political rationality may actually underwrite this bio-materialist shift. Her argument warrants quotation at length.

[W]hat motivates these scholars [Leys had just referred to Brian Massumi, Nigel Thrift, Shouse and William Connolly] is the desire to contest a certain account of how, in their view, political argument and rationality have been thought to operate. These theorists are gripped by the notion that most philosophers and critics in the past (Kantians, neo-Kantians, Habermasians) have overvalued the role of reason and rationality in politics, ethics, and aesthetics, with the result that they have given too flat or 'unlayered' or disembodied an account of the ways in which people actually form their political opinions and judgments. The claim is that we human beings are corporeal creatures imbued with subliminal affective intensities and resonances that so decisively influence or condition our political and other beliefs that we ignore those affective intensities and resonances at our peril – not only because doing so leads us to underestimate the political harm that the deliberate manipulation of our affective lives can do but also because we will otherwise miss the potential for ethical creativity and transformation that 'technologies of the self' designed to work on our embodied being can help bring about. (*Ibid*: 436)

The crux of Leys's charge is that the pendulum has simply swung back on itself – and swung too far. Though founded on a rejection of a Cartesian separation of mind from body, the turn to affect has tended to reinscribe the split, marginalizing the cognitive/rational as an element of political activity and, in the process, focus has slipped from the political life of the community to the ethical life of the individual.

The very same Manichean reversal is evident in Carolyn Abbate's influential article, 'Music – Drastic or Gnostic?' (2004), where music's power to impress its listeners 'drastically' is raised to debunk its assumed status as an object of hermeneutic interpretation. In Abbate's text, it is not qualitatively differentiable affects that are of interest, but a more specific form of co-presence in the moment of musical performance. It is a particular relation of attraction and fascination (the third of my analytic categories): a function of the musician's virtuosic display as a presentation of self that impresses and captivates listeners.<sup>1</sup> Music, Abbate claimed, has a special capacity to lay bear 'a present other at point-blank range' (*ibid*: 532). This is why it 'has violent force' (2001: 53) – though she has insisted repeatedly that it is only in stealing away from 'meaning', in 'ban[ning] logos' (2004: 532), in being *ineffable*, that music can work its charismatic 'charm'.<sup>2</sup>

In both cases – in Abbate's account of music's impressive/attractive power and in the broader academic discourse on affect – 'such a radical separation between affect [or, in Abbate's case, what is 'drastic' in musical performance] and reason [has been implied] as to make disagreement about meaning, or ideological dispute, irrelevant to cultural analysis' (Leys, 472; see also Michaels, 2004: 181-182). In the process, the analytic has often fallen prey to a highly problematic 'biopolitical' logic that conflates

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<sup>1</sup> Abbate has drawn heavily from the writings of Bergsonian moral philosopher Vladimir Jankélévitch, which have a strongly theological note (close to the metaphysics of Emmanuel Levinas) and also replicate aspects of the vitalist thematization of expression outlined in Chapter One. Music, Jankélévitch maintained, translates the soul of a human situation, and renders this soul perceptible to our soul's ear' (2003: 75); having 'sole possession of a certain persuasive power' it 'makes every listener a poet' (*ibid*: 87).

<sup>2</sup> Already in her 1991 work, *Unsung Voices*, Abbate posited that in vocal music of all kinds a 'voice-object' frequently emerges as a 'radical autonomization of the human voice' that steals listener attention from 'words, plot, character, and even from music as it resides in the orchestra, or music as formal gestures, as abstract shape' (p.10). Thus hermeneutic interpretation is abandoned to oblivion in the intensity of the present moment.

political agency with the workings of the individual's biology.<sup>3</sup> (Later in this chapter, we will see how uncannily this movement of discourse – from the rational, through self critique, into the biological – has repeated key features of the epistemological upheavals of interwar Germany that formed the immediate intellectual context for Hitler's rise to power.)

We sorely need to resituate the analysis of how music produces sense on a broader map of political activity. That must be done in a way that better reflects the complexities and diversity of both musical and political experience, and allows due attention to be given to the specificities of individual works or performances – individual sense formations. Until the recent turn to affect, the relationship between music and politics was conceptualized in musicological scholarship primarily as a matter of ideological overcoding. This chapter argues that the failures of that conceptual model are partly responsible for obscuring the relationship between music and politics in Nazi Germany. Rather than abandoning the model completely, however, I work through a critique of it that challenges both its account of musical sense and of ideology. I focus on the fourth of the analytic categories outlined above – the affirming – treating this as the mechanism through which music brings the affective responses it triggers to bear on the promises of ideology. It is this musical affirmation of sense, I argue, and not the affective *per se*, that is the most significant category for thinking through the relationship between music and politics – the category to which the others relate like spokes on a hub.

Remodelling the relationship between music and politics in this way allows us to work around the impasses, traps and aporia of analyzing musical affect (as touched on above). Yet it also raises new questions: questions about the communication and traction between ideology and (musical) experience, the historicity of their interrelation and the politico-legal mechanisms that govern it. These are questions that take us in to an examination of the place of sonic expression in the Reich's 'Dual State' legal structure and the complex epistemological disputes of the Weimar period around ideology, legal command and nihilism in the works of Karl Mannheim and Carl Schmitt.

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<sup>3</sup> For a useful and accessible account of the origins and use of the term 'biopolitics', see Bull, 2007.



This is the first of two densely theoretical chapters that serve to clarify how, far from the ‘total’ politicization of music eluding the Reich administration (as recent literature on the subject has maintained), the regime made sonic expression a key component of its sovereign command structure, actively confronting the problem of the ineradicable indeterminacy of musical sound’s effects on its listeners. While Part II of this thesis will depart from these theoretical considerations of the sound-context interaction (and intermediation) to pursue more concrete analyses of individual musical (and sonic art) works, the theory developed here is what allows us to conceptualize those works, with their unique approaches to constructing and patterning sense, as sites of political agency: as the products of creative, compositional *acts* that hold diverse potentials to transform aspects of political experience and thought.

Recent discussions of the political in music have struggled to adequately address this crucial level of agency, many falling back into generalizing accounts of ‘music’ as if different approaches to music making – different musical logics, different ‘*musicologies*’ – were irrelevant. Most historians writing on music today, Celia Applegate recently observed, ‘have chosen to understand music by circling around it...concerned with something we might more accurately call musical culture’ (2012: 330); few ‘tackle the notes’ (*ibid*, n.5). Yet for musicologists, the specificities of how musical sense is constructed – and the very real possibility of difference therein – *must* be of concern. And how we write music’s history should follow from how we understand the potential of the individual musical act, as a site of difference, to mark and transform the world it enters into.

### **The musicological theory of ideology**

Before moving to survey what has been made of the concept of ideology in recent music scholarship, I want to focus attention on how it was treated by two very different twentieth-century political theorists: Louis Althusser and Hannah Arendt.

Althusser developed a highly influential Marxist theory of ideology, most strikingly conveyed in his 1970 essay ‘Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses’ (2001). He argued that ideology drives the reproduction of exploitative class relations, defining it as ‘the system of the ideas and representations which dominate the mind of a man or a social group’ (*ibid*: 106-7). Yet in his analysis it was treated as something essentially *material*. To Althusser, the particularities of ideational content were of little interest

(*ibid*: 112, 115). Whatever they happen to be, he said, ideologies always ‘contribute to the same result: the reproduction of the relations of production, i.e., of capitalist relations of exploitation’ (*ibid*: 104). Functionally, ideology is always the same. It projects an imaginary relationship between the individual and the conditions of his or her existence (*ibid*: 109), through which multiple social institutions (educational, religious, familial, legal, political, communicational, cultural, etc.) actively reproduce the *status quo*. Political power, in Althusser’s essay, corresponds to the material structuration of social activity. The individual, he argued, *lives* in ideology (*ibid*: 116). And ideology works because it always addresses the individual and because the individual does not think it works. Ideology both ‘*has no outside*’ and ‘*is nothing but outside*’ (*ibid*: 119).

Arendt – not usually recognized as a major theorist of ideology, though of particular interest here on account of how her reflections on the topic intersected with her analyses of totalitarianism – refused to pitch the political at this level.<sup>4</sup> She insisted that individual agency be recognized, not as a delusion, but as the constitutive fabric of politics. ‘Speech is what makes man a political being’ (1958: 3), she wrote. ‘With word and deed we insert ourselves into the human world’ (2000: 178). Every such act, she maintained, is like a birth, or new beginning. It is an unconditioned initiative, a unique disclosure of self (*ibid*: 178-9) that enters into an ‘already existing web of human relationships’ (*ibid*: 180), wherein what it achieves finds itself contingent upon further actions. For Arendt, the field of political action was defined by unpredictability – the precariousness, even, of individual action – and the irreducible plurality of human existence. It was far from the done deal of self-reproducing ideological state apparatuses.

An ideology, Arendt explained, ‘claims to possess either the key to history, or the solution for all the “riddles of the universe”, or the intimate knowledge of the hidden universal laws which are supposed to rule nature and man’ (1973: 59). Her definition is straightforward and emphasizes the ideational dimension of ideology as it relates to understanding and making sense of the world (in contrast with Althusser’s materialist account). Yet the way Arendt treated ideology in her work was highly charged, shaped

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<sup>4</sup> Indeed, in the opening lines of *On Revolution* (Arendt, 1977: 11), one finds the bold claim that ‘[w]ars and revolutions...have thus far determined the physiognomy of the twentieth century...as distinguished from the nineteenth-century ideologies...which, though still invoked by many as justifying causes, have lost contact with the major realities of our world’.

by her interpretation of totalitarianism. Since ideologies not only propose interpretations of how the world is – of its hidden laws – but prescribe how one should act such that its proper order will become manifest, they stand in tension with the individual agency, spontaneity and plurality that Arendt insisted were the true constituents of political life. She argued that the terroristic aspect of totalitarianism inhered in its aim ‘to make it possible for [these purported laws – concerning the order-producing sovereignty of racial forces, in the case of National Socialism] to race freely through mankind, unhindered by any spontaneous human action’ (*ibid*: 465). It was this aim that was devastatingly rehearsed in the Nazi concentration and extermination camps, which Arendt likened to horrific laboratories for the systematic eradication of those constituents of political life (*ibid*: 437-8).

What defined totalitarianism as a new form of politics was not a particular ideological content. (Indeed, though Arendt drew parallels between Nazi biologism and Marx’s conceptual treatment of labour and history as natural-biological forces [*ibid*: 464], she considered communism, with its stated goal of achieving human emancipation and equality, to have an altogether different philosophical and political scope and significance to National Socialist racialism.<sup>5</sup>) What defined totalitarianism, according to Arendt, was its effort to eradicate the distance between human activity and its ideological framing, such that every action would always already be politically interpretable from the perspective of the ruling cadre, while political action concomitant

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<sup>5</sup> Arendt had surprisingly little to say about Marxism in *Origins*. Though her book claimed to chart the political and ideological roots of totalitarianism as a generalized political structure, it was primarily a consideration of National Socialism. The topics of its first two sections, anti-Semitism and imperialism, leave little room for doubt on this matter. Stalinist totalitarianism received substantial treatment only in the third and final section, arguably as a parallel phenomenon to the main subject of the work and without comparable historicization. Arendt planned a sequel volume to *Origins* that would address, unflinchingly, how the tradition of Western political thought – and Marx’s work in particular – was implicated in the emergence of the new political form. But this sequel was never completed. (One may speculate as to why the political climate may have made it an unappealing project for Arendt, given the regularity with which *Origins* has been blindly jettisoned as a work of Cold War propaganda due to its treatment of Stalinist and Hitlerian totalitarianisms together.) A 1953 article, ‘Ideology and Terror’, published in the *Review of Politics*, was conceived as the fourth chapter, but instead appeared in the 1958 (second) edition of *Origins* in the form of an epilogue (Brightman, ed., 1995: 21, n. 3; the first, 1951 edition of *Origins* was actually titled *The Burden of Our Time*). Other fragments of the project (published as Arendt, 2002) made their way into *The Human Condition* (1958) and the first two essays of the 1961 collection *Between Past and Future*, where Arendt’s complex critique of Marx was carried out at a salutary distance from the fog of German fascism.

with the irreducible singularity of the individual would be made impossible. Arendt's underscoring of individual agency was a clearly legible rejection of this ideology-centric way of thinking about and *practising* politics.

At first glance, on agency and ideology Arendt and Althusser seem to have looked straight past each other. Yet both defined ideology as something that frames a relationship between the individual and its social and material reality. Both treated ideology as a kind of ready-made intellection, but also as something that requires active, ongoing material instantiation – as something practised. Whether that intellection is adopted through critical reflection or channelled subconsciously (whether or not it becomes a form of 'false consciousness'), it hangs on how the reality the individual perceives supports the ideological interpretation given to it. An ideology's effectiveness relates to its apparent *obviousness* (I will come back to this key point in a moment – it requires certain qualifications).

The difference between the two thinkers has more to do with their views on whether exploitative class relations code the entirety of the scene of politics (Althusser) or whether political life is to be understood as more plural and multiform, abuzz with partial and inconsistent ideological articulations that may compete for hegemony (cf. Laclau & Mouffe, 1985), but whose claims to represent reality must remain essentially precarious (Arendt).<sup>6</sup> It seems clear that the Althusserian view will only take us so far in an analysis of how the racist ideology was actually deployed in the Third Reich (and how sonic expression contributed to that deployment). If we follow Arendt, however, we face the task of conceptualizing Nazi totalitarianism in a way that takes seriously the essential precariousness of its ideological articulations' claims to have represented reality. We will return to this task later in the chapter. It will be pivotal in facing some of the key interpretative impasses that currently dominate the literature on music in the Third Reich.

Surveying recent music scholarship that engages with the concept of ideology reveals only partial correspondences with the model just extrapolated from Arendt's and Althusser's writings. Frequently, the term is used as a loose catch-all to cover any kind of political suggestiveness with which music might trade. In a sensitive analysis by Jane

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<sup>6</sup> Sociologist Arjun Appadurai (1996: 27-47) has developed the evocative neologism 'ideoscape' to describe such a political landscape riddled with diverse, partial ideologies.

F. Fulcher, for example, ‘ideology’ framed a discussion of how French composers constructed their music as particular, value-laden ‘representations’ of Frenchness during the interwar years. Fulcher was careful to explain how the music she described ‘transmits ideology’ in this way ‘by reflecting discernible sets of political values’, which it ‘communicate[s] by either stylistically translating, inflecting, or contesting the dominant classic conception’ (1999: 229). At the same time, Fulcher concerned herself with how such musical ‘representations’ were able to be co-opted and reframed, through the press or by being drawn into association with other ‘representations’ of Frenchness. Music, in her analysis, features as the site of an ‘interplay of meanings and perceptions’ within an ‘intertextual, representational context’ (*ibid*: 230).

In much recent scholarship, however, this ‘interplay’ comes across as something more unilateral. ‘The unpalatable truth’, Mark Carroll wrote in his introduction to an anthologized selection of essays from the last few decades on ‘music and ideology’, ‘is that any ideological engagement (actual or perceived) depends primarily on the use of texts, whether in the form of libretti, lyrics, titles, manifestos or explanatory commentaries’ (2012: xi). Music’s ideological meaning is established primarily through discourse and language, far less by the play of musical forms that come to be associated with it. Karen Painter, writing on symphonic music in fascist and pre-fascist Germany, has put the matter quite bluntly:

Few scholars would maintain that political meaning *inheres* in music, even if certain structures and procedures might allow, or disallow, a political interpretation of one sort or another. The politicization of music [in pre-fascist Germany] required a massive discursive effort by critics and biographers, and a willing readership (Painter, 2007: 3).

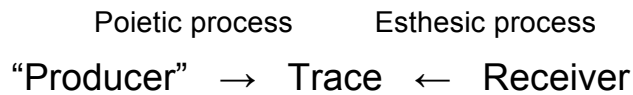
A discursive coup – by book burners and criticism banners, no less.

Frequently accompanying this belief that what is said about music, its textual or discursive mediation, is actually the source of the ideological elements that enter into its perceived meaning, is a conceit that music has a special power to elicit ideological projections. Italian ethnomusicologist Marcello Sorce Keller, in an article entitled ‘Why Is Music So Ideological, and Why Do Totalitarian States Take It So Seriously?’, attributed to it an ‘uncanny potential to attract, catch, and collect symbolic meanings of various kinds in a magnet-like fashion’ (2007: 97). Abbate, similarly, labelled music ‘ineffable and sticky’ (2004: 523). This, she claimed, is its ‘fundamental incongruity’. In the early work of anthropologist Georgina Born, we find another version of the same thesis. Music is likened to ‘a blank tape on which to record, or a rhythm track to be

overdubbed’: ‘a transparent medium through which to project a deeper message’ (1987: 59) – elsewhere she described it as ‘alogogenic, unrelated to language, nonartifact, having no physical existence, and nonrepresentational...a self-referential, aural abstraction’ (1995: 19).

Let’s call this the slippery-sticky-empty paradigm of music. My claim is that it has been the dominant conceptual paradigm steering how the relationship between music and ideology, if not the political *tout court*, has been addressed during the last quarter century (or so) of music scholarship. I say *steering*, but as we are about to see, the slippery-sticky-empty paradigm has also proved a kind of limit or impasse, a theoretical obstruction to the cultural historian’s effort to grasp the music-politics relation in its plenitude. (This has certainly been true of recent work on music in the Third Reich, as noted in the introduction to this thesis.)

Jean-Jacques Nattiez’s influential theoretical work *Music and Discourse* (1990; first published in French in 1987) sheds light on this disabling aspect of the paradigm. The crux of the problem is circumscribed in a simple tripartite schema, introduced in the opening chapter, where ‘trace’ refers to the musical object, ‘poietic process’ to its production and ‘esthetic process’ to its reception:



(Nattiez, 1990: 17; developed from Molino, 2009: 73-115)

What is most notable about the schema, highlighted by Nattiez (*ibid*: 16), is its difference from the schematization of the transmission of information developed under the rubric of communication theory (by Claude Shannon, Warren Weaver, David Berlo and others). There, where concern was with conveying an informational signal from one point to another across a technical system (and minimizing any interference or ‘noise’), the second arrow pointed the other way: Sender → Message → Receiver. By swinging the arrow around, Nattiez emphasized that music’s listeners do not, like those hanging by their telephones, *receive* ‘messages’; they *construct* meaning, actively, through the act of perception (Nattiez called this ‘esthesis’, a neologism drawn from Paul Valéry, 1957: 1131; cited Molino, 2009: 92). Music’s listeners, Nattiez’s diagram showed, ‘assign one or many meanings to the form’ (i.e., the ‘trace’) they are confronted with

(Nattiez, 1990: 12); music does not convey meaning in a straight line from composer to listener.

Nattiez was not particularly concerned with the question of where, consequently, musical meaning actually originated. He noted biological, psychological and cultural bases, but wanted no truck with ‘reductive or mechanistic explanations’ (*ibid*: 125), evasively accounting for musical meaning as a function of endless chains of the listener’s ‘personal experience’ (*ibid*: 6-7). More significant, from the vantage point of Nattiez’s semiological analytic, was the relative autonomy of the musical ‘trace’ with respect to the interpretative processes it would be met with. Along these lines, he argued that music involved ‘a superimposition of two semiological systems’ (*ibid*: 126): one that refers ‘intrinsically’, only to itself, through the play of form; and one that refers ‘extrinsically’, evoking, for example, corporeal movements, psychic states or environmental qualities – in large part, through conventionalized associations. ‘If there is an *essential being* of music defined from a semiological vantage point’, he wrote, ‘I would locate that being in the *instability* of the two fundamental modes of musical referring’ (*ibid*: 118). And this is the rub. In positing that symbolic or ideological meaning is *assigned* to music through processes that *parallel but are not integral* to its ‘intrinsic’ or ‘self-referential’ patterning of sense, one paves the way for an interpretative stalemate. Music’s symbolic efficacy – its capacity to trigger social meaning, rather than mere (Hanslickian) form tracking – must essentially be opaque to the analyst or cultural historian, if one follows the implications of this theoretical premise. The slippery-sticky-empty paradigm treats music as if it were a kind of cultural Venus flytrap: a void surrounded by a sticky membrane that catches the social meanings buzzing erratically about it. The crucial problem, indicated if not fully interrogated by Nattiez, is that analysis of the contextual structuring of sense is always threatened by the possibility, which it must acknowledge, that the movement of contextually encoded ‘meaning’ will be overwhelmed should the nullity of the void (the ‘ineffable’, the ‘blank tape’) instead becomes legible and steal listeners’ attention.

We find this separation between music and meaning presupposed, sometimes explicitly axiomatized, across a number of areas of music scholarship. Writing on music and hermeneutics, Lawrence Kramer has echoed Nattiez in describing music as ‘saturated with meanings attributed to it by the subjects it addresses’ (2003: 130) but also maintained that ‘[b]etween the [musical] text and its discourse lies a gap that can never, in principle, be closed’ (2011: 6). The ‘interpreter as agent’, he has argued, ‘must

intervene between the text and discourse', must '*stop...reading the signs*'. In parallel, musicologists working in the model of cultural history commonly treat context as far more signal in the production of musical meaning than the fabric of musical sound itself. Isolate music from this 'web of culture', Gary Tomlinson wrote three decades ago, and it undergoes 'a debilitating loss of meaning' (1984: 354). Richard Taruskin's *Oxford History of Western Music* tells us more or less the same thing: '[m]usical techniques do not have political sympathies or ethnic backgrounds; the people who use them are the ones that do' (2005, v. 4: 774). The underlying theoretical principle remains unchanged. In each case, the gap between *music itself* and the *discursive/cultural framing of musical experience* is decisive.

Yet what that gap registers, what the instability Nattiez homed in on implies, is the lack of any guarantee that individuals will actually *listen* to music according to the interpretative norms articulated within the relevant discursive context (hence Kramer's thematization of interpretation as an *intervention*). And cultural historians are increasingly finding themselves compelled to recognize this. Brian Currid's work on mass music culture in Weimar and National Socialist Germany, to take the most extreme example from my own immediate field of inquiry, questions the efficacy of the Nazi propaganda apparatus at every turn. His project seems born out of suspicion grounded in the slippery-sticky-empty paradigm. It makes a central point of refusing to take at face value any claim that the Nazis were able to 'produce and control the ideological, material conditions of the sonic experience of national belonging' (2006: 27) without constraint, difficulties or failures – without, in other words, having to deal with their listeners as actual agents in the production of musical meaning. I agree with Currid on the need to critically scrutinize such claims. Yet it is also important that suspicion serves to sharpen, rather than stall or close off, analysis and understanding. The historian may raise questions (indeed, is obliged to) about the Nazis' capacity to 'produce and control...the sonic experience of national belonging'; however, if *doubt* is to be productive for our historical understanding, it must feed into further examination: of whether strategies were developed and carried out for meeting that aim, of how their success was measured, of how contingencies and constraints were grappled with, and so forth. The problem of the gap, the lack of any guarantee that when something is said about music it is heard accordingly, needs to be taken as a starting point for analysis. In recent literature on music in National Socialist Germany it has functioned more as an endpoint – where it has been registered at all.



The most recognizable approximation of a theory of ideology in recent music scholarship, in sum, treats ideology as some form of political message projected, through discursive mediation, onto music's semantically empty patternings of sense. Such projected messages are supposed to stick to musical experience, being imbibed or retriggered during acts of listening. And yet because they are extrinsic to music – since they are not a part of its internal formal logic – theorization must acknowledge their conveyance to be uncertain and unstable. Attempts have certainly been made to overcome or ameliorate this model, which essentially treats politics as something done to music (though with success that is near impossible to measure), rather than something to which musical activity contributes with its own specific forms of agency (Fulcher's effort to circumscribe an active linking of musical and political values provides one example of this [see also Fulcher, 2011]; the turn to affect discussed earlier gives others). However, an alternative paradigm, able to adequately negotiate the 'instability of the two fundamental modes of musical referring' (Nattiez) and account for the mechanisms through which the 'ideological, material conditions of...sonic experience' are able to be worked on and managed politically (Currid), has not yet emerged.

Turning back to Arendt and Althusser, even more basic issues with this musicological (pseudo-)theory of ideology begin to make themselves felt. If ideology, as Arendt defined it, is a kind of key to interpreting the 'riddles of the universe', how could it be 'projected'? Why, moreover, would it be projected onto individual musical works? And why would ideological interpretation treat musical experience differently from all other objects in the 'universe' to which it claims to hold the key? Ideology interprets *everything*, in the sense that it frames the individual's relationship to its world. There would seem to be no reason to treat music as having a special (magnetic) relation to ideology, either in the context of Nazi Germany or in general. We saw signs in Chapter One that music *was* given special prominence in the Nazi Reich; and yet Arendt and Althusser gave no hint as to why the ideological intellection of music should differ in class from that of countless other products of human activity. Anyone prey to the National Socialist interpretation of 'history as a natural fight of races' (Arendt, 1973: 159) would presumably have perceived many such artefacts of human labour and creativity, approvingly or disapprovingly, as emanations of race. Political theorizations of ideology suggest no reason to attribute any relevance whatsoever to whether music is sticky, slippery, empty, or even whether it can convey political 'meanings'.

But we still must ask how ideology *works*, how its effectiveness is established; and it is in answering this question that music begins to reveal potential interest for the domain of politics. If no special effort was needed to politicize music in the Third Reich, beyond that required more generally to establish the ‘obviousness’ of the Nazi interpretation of the universe, our question must be how that ‘obviousness’ was managed politically. And how sonic expression contributed to this.

### **Ideology and the production of sense**

Central to Althusser’s account of how ideology functions was his notion of subjective ‘interpellation’. This is what happens, he explained, when a policeman yells ‘Hey you!’ and we turn around to find ourselves already framed within the law he represents. We respond because it seems *obvious*, with no need for reflection, that the call is directed at us (Althusser, 2001: 116). We recognize ourselves in the places assigned to us by ideology because the claims it makes and the interpretation it offers of the world we live in simply seem natural or somehow incontestable. But this recognition is also transformative. In the moment of interpellation – the turn to face the figure of the law, in Althusser’s example – the irreducible singularity of the individual becomes ‘abstract’, slipping into a spectral, ready-made subject form (*ibid*: 119).<sup>7</sup>

Ideology is thus not only lived, but lived ‘spontaneously’ (Althusser’s word, but also a favourite in Arendt’s lexicon). As Slavoj Žižek has pointed out, however, it can also be lived *cynically* (Žižek, 1989: 225). ‘Totalitarian ideology’, Žižek has asserted (*ibid*: 27), ‘no longer has [any] pretension...to be taken seriously’; it is the self-deception that we are not being deceived by ideology, that we are too self-aware to be controlled by ideology, that paradoxically lures us into the web of ideological violence. By exposing its intent to dupe us, ideology manipulates us to believe that we act according to our own irreducible individuality. This is how it maintains its hold over the subject, injecting paradox into the experience of self-consciousness. Nazi racial ideology was notoriously crass, its treatment of Jews (most notably) so strongly marked by conspiracy theory elements that many Germans must have found it *obviously* absurd.

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<sup>7</sup> Althusser drew from psychoanalytic theory in making this point, most notably Jacques Lacan’s work on specular misrecognition (i.e., 2006: 75-81). A similar theorization of ideological interpellation is to be found from almost two decades earlier in Frantz Fanon’s study of black identity and colonialism, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967; originally published in French in 1952).

Yet, following Žižek's logic, this may actually have contributed to its power; for if its account of the Jew was absurd, so too must have been its framing of the 'racially pure' German as an autonomous subject. By virtue of its crassness, then, Nazi racial ideology provoked this subject to exercise his or her autonomy and independence by rejecting it. At the very same time the ideology would be affirmed, insofar as it attributed those same qualities – autonomy and independence – to the subject. (We shall see shortly that this particular logic, read here as a purely psychological matter, had a clear counterpart in the legal structuring of the Reich.)

To get a sense of the political work done by sonic expression in Nazi Germany, we need to approach the music-ideology relationship laterally, with an ear to the complexities of subjective interpellation. My argument will be that it is around this experience of *obviousness* that the salient interaction ensues between ideological interpretation and musical sense production.

As an initial thematization, the 'obvious' in music can be thought of as anything that spontaneously provokes the Kantian response: *that's beautiful! you must agree!* (Kant, 2005: 33-34). Any aspects of musical sense production could elicit this response: harmonic concord, a particular melodic shape, a surprising use of dramatic tension or quietude and so on *ad infinitum*. Music manifests itself as 'obvious', not in the sense of being clichéd, but as something perfect that might be ruined if it were changed even a tiny bit. The key point is that when music does this, it interpellates its listeners as 'already there',<sup>8</sup> making them feel as if their response were already encrypted in what they hear. The assumption of common experience in the Kantian response – 'you must agree!' – captures this well. A body of philosophical literature that has conceptualized music's ontology via the language of Platonic form has suggested a similar structure of experience where it has posited that the intuition of musical sense follows pre-existing, eternal models.<sup>9</sup> Neoclassical and postmodern pastiche in music set in play a related interpellative logic: their cynical twist requiring us to recognize how the thing that gets twisted might otherwise have sounded 'right'.

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. McClary, 1991: 62: 'the fact that most listeners do not know how to account for the overwhelming push for closure they experience in [most tonal music of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries] means that it often seems like a force of nature rather than a human ideological construct'.

<sup>9</sup> A recent example of this is Dodd, 2007; see also the discussion around Absolute Music and the writings of Thrasybulos Georgiades in Chapter Six.

So what happens, in political terms, when listeners ‘recognize’, ‘that’s beautiful!’, ‘that groove really works!’, ‘I wish I could do that!’, etc? My claim is that there is something akin to a ‘Hey you!’ moment. The subject experiences a form of sense or rightness, is nudged out of his or her finite individuality and reframed within a world of order and meaning. Ideology, we have said, depends (if it is to be effective) on the material intuition of the sense its interpretation gives to the individual of the latter’s world and placement within it. My claim is that music (and other forms of aesthetic sense production) can and does do part of the work here. It is capable, in unique ways which I will explore, of transmitting an impression that there is sense in the world, rather than mere chaos. The overlap between music and ideology is unmistakable;<sup>10</sup> yet so too is the difference between *how* they bring sense to the subject-world relation – a difference that may seem scandalous if we accept the possibility of their interplay and collusion, which is to say of aesthetic sense production shoring up ideologies that might otherwise lack power to compel.

Music has a special capacity to bestow legitimacy on the ideological discourse holding up political decision – this is my thesis here. We largely miss what it brings to the play of politics if we assume the relationship only goes the other way, with ideology determining the shape of musical experience through discursive mediation. In the Third Reich this contribution can no longer be mistaken. As we saw in Chapter One, Nazi racist ideology explicitly staked its claims on aesthetic expression. Art – and music in particular – was to give sense to, to make obvious, the assertion of racial superiority. The thesis that musical experience is able to lend an aura of legitimacy to a given political order has, I believe, much wider application, beyond the context of Nazi Germany. For it to be of use analytically, however, we first need to consider in some detail the specific and unique ways in which music affirms sense (the fourth of the analytic categories outlined at the start of this chapter).

It is worth tarrying with political theory a moment longer before moving to consider how music projects sense. Althusser’s structuralist conception of ideology, like Arendt’s definition of it as an answer to the ‘riddles of the universe’, may seem like quite an abstraction from the familiar scene of political speech, where stock ideas are

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<sup>10</sup> ‘Many people’, philosopher Andrew Bowie has noted, ‘find music a more compelling practice than philosophy [i.e., the kind of interpretative work for which ideologies offer ready-made alternatives] for situating themselves in the world’ (2007: 398).

improvised upon almost like musical instruments in an act of performative bravura. To my knowledge, only one theorist of ideology, Michael Freeden, has contended in a theoretically convincing way with this performed aspect of ideological speech.

Freeden has argued that ideologies need to be understood as ‘distinctive configurations of political concepts’ (1996: 4). By ‘political concept’, he meant such notions as liberty, equality, justice, or wealth – terms that relate to core political values, but allow multiple interpretations and are thus essentially ‘contestable’ (*ibid*: 55). Ideologies, according to Freeden, ‘create specific conceptual patterns from a pool of indeterminate and unlimited combinations’ (*ibid*: 4). He has argued that they must be studied morphologically; for it is through the particular arrangement of political concepts that ideology bestows ‘decontested’ meaning on them: that freedom and wealth connote neo-liberal markets and not the welfare state, for example. In this way, Freeden has pointed to how acts of speech engage directly in legitimating political action. He has underscored how ideological discourse is leveraged to massage (or ‘interpellate’) specific valuations of potentially sensitive political concepts among a given audience and how such valuations can then serve to validate a particular course of action or to invalidate that of a political opponent. Through Freeden’s argument, Althusser’s ‘obviousness’ begins to reveal a hidden complexity.

Clearly, Freeden’s analytic can be applied to the discursive formations that frequently accompany and ‘articulate’ various forms of musical activity (the textual mediations of ‘esthesis’, in Nattiez’s parlance). Such formations have often been understood to shape ambiguous sonic suggestion into more determinate meaning (as we have seen), or to provide a textual gloss (or reification) of musical complexity that draws it toward the already familiar, thereby facilitating consumption (Pace, 2009). Following Freeden – and approximating Fulcher’s methodological position – these textual mediations might more aptly be described as weavings of aesthetico-political concepts that make a case for the music’s value to be intuited in particular ways. They work, at best, to legitimate and valorize musical activity that might otherwise appear either lawless (i.e., inassimilable to prevalent norms of taste)<sup>11</sup> or, alternatively,

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<sup>11</sup> One of the marks of the discursive formations accompanying 1950s serialist composition is a frequent recourse to legalism. For example, Wolf-Eberhard von Lewinski, a commentator of limited insight, wrote in *Die Reihe* in 1958 that the composition of electronic music ‘requires very comprehensive laws. So nobody should be surprised that the rule of law was extended to apply to the new material’ (von Lewinski, 1960: 3). Such statements all too easily betray defensive origins in a sense of

uninnovative and redundant. It is too much of a simplification to paint their function as lubricating the consumption of something too unwieldy to be swallowed whole.<sup>12</sup>

But how might Freedon's analytic be adapted to apply to musical formations and experience more directly? I want to explore two possibilities here: one that follows Susan McClary's pioneering efforts to link the morphologies of musical form to (gendered) identity constructions; a second that considers how musical experience folds into broader morphologies of experience across time, thereby modifying the perception of political order. From these reflections I will then proceed to sketch how much more specific forms of temporal experience, relating to finitude and the eternal, are able to be projected through the morphological crafting of musical form and how these might further interact with processes of political legitimation, before examining in more detail how the legitimacy of ideology and political action, like musical activity, is framed by historical time. The theoretical points established through these considerations will provide the basic framework for the analyses in Part II.

McClary described her approach to musical analysis in her groundbreaking work *Feminine Endings* as being reliant 'on the common semiotic codes of European classical music' (1991: 68). The formulation seems typical of the slippery-sticky-empty paradigm; however, McClary's most compelling analyses display a sensitivity to propinquity and morphology that mark them as rather different. Combinations of details, orderings, repetitions, transformations and, of course, endings mould sense into meaning. Semiotically open musical qualities collude to find relative closure. All music quilts together such qualities, which, like Freedon's 'political concepts', lend themselves to 'decontestation' through their patterning. We recognize in different approaches to music making qualities such as liberty, discipline and refinement, respectfulness, conservatism or outlandishness, vitality – the list could go on. Without qualification, such qualities have relatively indeterminate meaning; it is their combination – or morphology – that makes sense of them.

This making sense, a clasping together of different qualities that makes each appear through the prism of the others, is what engenders a *style*. We have seen how Fulcher

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arbitrariness or impropriety. See the discussion of law and anomie below and then again in Chapter Four.

<sup>12</sup> The claim that a musical practice defies textual reduction can also readily become ideologically value-laden.

has linked style and political meaning. McClary's approach has been different. 'For better or for worse', she has written, music 'socializes us' (*ibid*: 53). Musical style, she was claiming, imprints itself on our ways of being and doing, and on identity. Where bodies and voices are directly and materially concerned, this seems undeniable, at least to a degree.<sup>13</sup> Gage Averill, examining the relationship between music and politics in contemporary Haiti, has argued further that music 'creates strong associative memories and nostalgically evokes those memories' (1997: 19), bringing with them a particular sense of collectivity. A song is not simply a mirror before which we dress ourselves, without realizing that it guides us; it is a kind of mnemo-prosthesis that joins the synaptic dots between pleasure and politics in our brains. This, in Averill's words, is what makes music 'serve...effectively as an instrument of politics and a medium of power' (*ibid*). Style channels not just identity, but pleasure, and it does so by stabilizing the two into a particular configuration or assemblage.

Despite its merits, and apposite though it may be to the context of Averill's analysis, I find this approach to the music-politics relation unsatisfying. It ignores the displacement often required to pass from what works in music to what works in political life (we will see a variant of this problem in the discussion of Luigi Nono's work and bearing witness in Chapter Four). That forms of displacement can play a key part in the experience of art and culture is amply evident from most of what the mainstream entertainment industry produces: scenarios and personages so hyperreal that its consumers could only ever partly identify them with their own reality.<sup>14</sup> With art and culture, different experiential levels – to which multiple, divergent expectations and patternings of value pertain – may hold relative autonomy. The term 'identity' is simply too heavy and monolithic to give due sense to the multi-layered psychological reality of much cultural experience. One need not 'identify' with David Bowie, Michael Jackson or Stefani Germanotta in any particularly meaningful way to appreciate their music and performances.<sup>15</sup> Interpellation does not so much construct identities as frame subjects

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<sup>13</sup> See, for example, the potent presentation of music as a disciplinary form, scarcely disentangled from the National Socialist past, in Austrian Nobel laureate Elfriede Jelinek's novel *Lust* (1989).

<sup>14</sup> The *normality* of this experiential displacement is underscored by the horrific shockingness of exceptions such as the July 20, 2012, shootings in Denver at the premiere of Christopher Nolan's batman film, *The Dark Knight Rises*, by a man wearing a gas mask, apparently in imitation of the film's villain.

<sup>15</sup> Žižek might prompt one to qualify this statement with the argument that it may be precisely in thinking that we do not identify with these 'larger than life', constructed

within particular scenarios (or power structures). But what, we need to ask, might be the political reach of the scenario in which a musical style establishes its sense?

One way of thinking about that scenario is in terms of leisure time (cf. Stokes, 1994: 13). While McClary approached politics through the lens of identity – probably the dominant tendency in the cultural humanities in the 1990s – a more comprehensive analytic might follow the classical definition of politics as a form of collective (state-mediated) world-making. To take Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s argument (1987: 147), political associations are formed where private individuals find they cannot alone meet their private interests and therefore band together, developing, and entering into, a system of co-existence (conventionally a polis or city). If we take *free time* – what the Romans called *otium* – as one of the principal domains of musical experience, we might first be tempted to associate it more with ‘pre-political’ private interest than the political sphere. Yet if we also recognize that its ‘freeness’ is both delimited and made possible by the organization of labour and other time-consuming social commitments (the sacrifices the individual must uphold to keep the system in motion), the interest political government might take in music starts to reveal itself. Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben, whose work will be discussed in more depth in Chapter Three, has written of *otium* as a function of the ‘*inoperosità*’ (‘vocationlessness’ – often translated as ‘inoperativity’) that he has argued defines, partly by being constantly concealed and occluded, the essence of human life. That the human has no natural or God-given function or purpose, shadows every political association it enters into; Agamben has maintained that it forms the ‘political substance of the West, the glorious nutriment of every power’ and the kernel of its political utopias and shipwrecks (2009: 269).<sup>16</sup> This flourish reinforces a simple point: *leisure is not outside of politics; it is critical to it.*<sup>17</sup> The scenario of musical sense production always inhabits broader morphologies of experience. But its relation to the political system governing those broader

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media personalities – that they have nothing to do with us – that we come to identify with our own incapacity to actively transform the domain of media culture and thereby submit to the belief that we can only express ourselves by mimicking the ready-made gestures of others. However, I think it would be deeply inauspicious to hold that non- or dis-identification must always reverse back on itself to feed back into the mechanics of identification, leaving no remainder or gap for other modes of aesthetic appreciation.

<sup>16</sup> ‘Questa inoperosità è la sostanza politica dell’Occidente, il nutrimento glorioso di ogni potere’.

<sup>17</sup> For a thoughtful, but rather different, discussion of this issue in several Islamic contexts, see Bayat, 2007.



morphologies is double-edged. In bringing the occluded *inoperosità* of human existence into experience, music may at once glorify and threaten the system's operativity.

As seen in Chapter One, Nazi metaphysics posited a unity of experience grounded in racial commonality. If that unity of experience had been a reality, there should have been no need for the kinds of identificational displacements that are an everyday matter for action film fans who diet on simulated violence without ever committing crime (for example). The rhythms of leisure and labour, on the other hand, would still have been part of the experiential economy of life in the Reich. Even if it proves a common blind spot in ideological formulations, leisure never goes unfelt in time as it is lived, particularly where it is given special aesthetic intensity. It is overwhelmingly evident that the political significance of leisure time was not, however, overlooked by the Reich administration. A security report from early 1939 underscores the extent of the desire to politically regulate the experience of otium, noting a proposal to institute a new, eighth Chamber of Culture, specifically dedicated to managing Germany's '*kulturelle Feierabendarbeit*' – a somewhat inscrutable concept that means something like 'cultural leisure-time work' (Boberach, ed., 1984, Bd II: 273).<sup>18</sup>

We are reminded here of Benjamin's discussions of aesthetic experience and the destruction of aura (see Chapter One). Over the course of modernity, a number of Benjamin's analyses from the 1930s suggest, art relinquished its function as a site of shared, negotiated cultural understanding, central to the ordering of society. Reframed to inhabit a specialized, autonomous domain of activity and experience, art was gradually being reduced to a vehicle for art-specific sensations and intensities. The task of remaking the relationship between art and society – or art and life – would come to be associated with the early twentieth-century avant-garde movements (Bürger, 1984);<sup>19</sup> but it was also Hitler's task as his regime sought to rewrite aesthetic experience as a function of race and to governmentally regulate the experience of otium (beginning with the radio well before the *kulturelle Feierabendarbeitkammer* was dreamed up, as detailed in the next chapter). In the aftermath of the Reich, that task – to rethink art's

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<sup>18</sup> For a more detailed exploration of the political significance of pleasure in the Third Reich – and the need for historiography to take it seriously – see especially Swett, Ross & d'Almeida (eds), 2011 (Corey Ross's contribution, 'Radio, Film and Morale: Wartime Entertainment between Mobilization and Distraction' [*ibid*: 154-174], is of particular interest with respect to specifically musical pleasure).

<sup>19</sup> It is important to note that the musicological use of the term 'avant-garde' tends to be much looser than that of art historians and instead often connotes social detachment (Schoenberg and Boulez are frequently referred to in this way).

place and function politically – would re-emerge, spurring a wide range of artistic endeavours. What I seek to establish in the second part of this thesis is how the experience of the Third Reich, its aestheticization of politics, and the particular role of the sonic within it, shadowed that re-emergence, fueling a multi-faceted reworking of sonic arts practice: an effort, in other words, to creatively redefine and restructure – to recompose – the expressive voice.

One thing that becomes clear through the analyses of Part II is that there is more to music than its association with leisure that allows it to work on our broader experiential morphologies. Music projects forms of temporal experience. More specifically, it is able to frame experiences of finitude and permanence that may come to bear on some of our deepest existential needs. For Thomas Hobbes, author of one of the most influential works of early modern political theory, *Leviathan*, it was not only the *positive* desire to obtain ‘such things as are necessary to commodious living’ (1991 [1651]: 90) that inclined people to peace and hence political organization. There was also a strictly *negative* incentive: the ‘continuall feare, and danger of violent death’ (*ibid*: 89) that he imagined would be the everyday reality of a pre-political ‘state of nature’. This condition, the war of ‘every man, against every man’, Hobbes described as ‘a tract of time’ (*ibid*: 88), suggesting it was best thought of in terms of the way of being it harboured, a way of being defined by a particular temporality, highly unfavourable to the individual. ‘[T]he nature of War’, he wrote, ‘consisteth not in actuall fighting; but in the known disposition thereto, during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary’ (*ibid*: 88-89). In such a state, nothing can be expected but a life ‘solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short’ (*ibid*: 89). Key to the legitimacy and power of a political regime, Hobbes was explaining, is its capacity to keep at bay or neutralize this dreadful sense of mortality and to protect the individual against the feeling of temporal finitude that shrouds human life and activity, curtailing human potential and stopping desire in its tracks. Needless to say, a state might seek to do this by affording individuals the stability and support to pursue their future-directed desires and enjoy a share of leisure time to their satisfaction. Yet Hobbes was also attentive to *appearances* of stability: to the sovereign as an *image* of power able to project an artificial eternity (Brunner, 2007: 283-291). This is well illustrated by a passage wherein Hobbes likened the sovereign to a celestial body, contending that ‘in his presence...[his subjects] shine no more than the Starres in presence of the Sun’, such is the magnitude of sovereign glory and honour

(1991: 128). Beyond real security, the political order, in Hobbes's analysis, answers the 'natural' temporality of war with a construction of *vicarious immortality*. It is in this, I want to suggest, that we see a striking overlap in function with music.

Music articulates sense in time. This is probably true of all forms of activity we might be tempted to call musical; but it is an unmistakable feature of much music at the heart of the Western canon. Through music's fleeting sounds, form coalesces. It is given an integrity, a distinctive shape or quality, that survives the 'real time' in which musical sound is heard, gathering together as an abstraction in the listener's mind while the sounds that bring it into presence, moment by moment, fade into silence. When a composer notates a musical idea or when a recording is made of a performance, a process occurs that fixes a particular configuration of sounds to a technical support, such that it may be heard again indefinitely. Comparable processes occur in the writing down and printing of a literary work, the painting of a picture, the casting of a sculpture – in each case, what is produced is designed to outlive its making, if not to last forever. But in music, the problem of defying transience tends also to permeate compositional design. The tension between fugitive sound and memory-etched form provides the matrix of musical sense production. In turn, this tension is able to be exploited in the crafting of dynamic musical structures and often is, incessantly. A play of difference and repetition, delays, decoys and disruptions can amplify instability and impermanence, and through this music is able to choreograph for listeners an opposite apprehension of something – some form of sense – that seems to transcend the finite moment. Hobbes believed it to be beyond the power of the human mind to imagine anything truly infinite. Music, however, has a special capacity, well-trained in the Western classical tradition, for staging experiences of the eternal.

Consider sonata form, as it has come to be known, tellingly codified as a fixed structure well after its heyday as a dynamic approach to organizing musical ideas. Introduction, exposition of repeated contrasting themes, episodes, bridges, developmental transformations, recapitulation, coda: that sonata form denotes, above all else, a way of thinking about the presentation of sense as a process fraught with drama is already evident from the classificatory names given to its (typically) constituent parts. The main thematic material is *exposed*, though often after an introductory passage first sets it up via motivic intimations; the fixity of that material is then challenged as we hear it fragmented, *deformed* (a term commonly used in literature on sonata form with reference to the development) and subjected to destabilization techniques; in turn, its

formal stability is then *recapitulated*; but the drama's conclusion, provided by the coda, is posterior to this affirmation – it relies once more on motivic fragments, as the projected wholeness of the thematic material recedes into the past. These parts outline a way of thinking about music's morphological structure as a staging of sense wherein permanence and precariousness are so tightly, dialectically entwined as to be co-dependent. 'Perhaps nothing', Charles Rosen was able to write, 'demonstrates the efficacy and the powers of the sonata style better than the ability to increase tension by a false moment of stasis' (1988: 281). Yet it is the inverse process – the projection of stability, of a sense that transcends the finite time of human action, through the confection of instability and tension – that I think best identifies the ambition of an approach to music making sometimes held at the pinnacle of Western culture.<sup>20</sup>

What I am suggesting here is that it is not just music's capacity to spark a recognition of beauty or order – to provoke the Kantian response, 'that's beautiful! you must agree!' – that allows it to work in the service of ideology. When its framing and articulation of musical ideas across time conjures the eternal, making it seem almost graspable in the fleeting moment, music engages with a more subterranean level of desire. It is from this level of desire – to escape the dreadful existential temporality of war that pertains to humanity's 'natural' state, in the Hobbesian analysis – that the impulse springs to form protective political associations, to build stable and secure cities and nations, and to lavish them with honour and glory such that the ways of being they foster might themselves seem worthy of eternity. That music is capable of projecting different temporal experiences places it in more intimate dialogue and

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<sup>20</sup> There is a marked tendency in analytic literature on sonata form to focus on harmonic progression, the polarization of tonal regions, and the resolution of dissonances as the defining factors in the elaboration of the musical structure. This focus has, I believe, skewed academic theorization, such that the complex approach to the articulation of sense outlined above has been insufficiently grasped. There is, Rosen noted, a 'reciprocal relation between motif and structure in a sonata form: the motif articulates structure, emphasizes the most crucial points, and the structure reinterprets the motif, giving each appearance a new and sometimes radically different significance' (1988: 224). It is not to be disputed that composers have used forms of harmonic polarization to inflect the presentation of thematic material, following – sometimes challenging – normalized patterns. My objection is to the treatment of sonata form as an essentially or primarily harmonic structure, conceived as a relatively fixed path across a map of tonal regions rather than a dynamic principle, and to the corresponding treatment of the thematic material as frivolous detail, fodder for the move across that harmonic map rather than the irreducibly particular, holistically conceived and dramatically framed musical sense that captures listeners' interest.

partnership with ideology, which situates the subject not only within the world conceived as a set of relations in the present, but, on a deeper level, in time. Any attempt to comprehend music's affective power, its capacity to allure or to synchronize, can only fall short where it fails to contend with how music constructs and affirms temporal experience – a matter that may at first seem abstract and philosophical, but in fact goes to the roots of the desire that underpins political activity and the visions of life that activity works to secure.

I have said that it is an ontological condition of music that it projects fixed forms through transient means. Yet how it does this and the shape of temporal experience it offers are determined through the compositional process. In the late eighteenth century that process occurred respecting stylistic norms and conventions that made music's basic temporal orientation largely impervious to philosophically motivated critique and revolution. The political and cultural upheavals of the twentieth changed this; and so a recurrent point of interest in the analyses of Part II will be how, after 1945, the musical projection of the eternal vis-à-vis the transient, the ordered vis-à-vis the chaotic, became matters of compositional design – and thus political agency.

### **Ideology, history, law**

Freeden's groundbreaking morphological approach to the analysis of ideology speaks to the present when older theories that held ideology to be inherently emancipatory and grounded in reason fail to hold traction. It is a theory for our age of spin, of 'talk without response', when rhetorical virtuosity is routinely acknowledged – even by those who suffer under the policies that issue from it – as if ideological speech were, above all, a matter of form (cf. Dean, 2009: 19-48). This, however, suggests that the functioning of ideology has an historical dimension. If so, it must be attended to through theory.

The term ideology originated in the work of French aristocrat and Enlightenment philosopher Antoine Destutt de Tracy around the turn of the nineteenth century. Destutt de Tracy defined it simply as a science of ideas, but the word's meaning rapidly accumulated pejorative political connotations (Kennedy, 1975). Half a century later, Marx elaborated those connotations, characterizing ideology as a delusory system of

ideas covertly aimed at maintaining existing power relations.<sup>21</sup> The most substantial theoretical formulation of the term came much later though, in a work by sociologist Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (1936), first published in German in 1929, which developed both senses of the term. Mannheim characterized ‘particular’ ideologies as those accounts of reality that all too readily revealed their myopia, aporia and error, while ‘total’ ideologies, he wrote, approximated *Weltanschauungen* (world views), epochal structurings of social activity and understanding (Mannheim, 1936: 49-53). But it is a further, more provocative conceptual distinction made by Mannheim that places us recognizably within the political arena of the immediate pre-Hitler years. While ideology, by his argument, corresponded to the ‘routinized affairs of the state’, he claimed that *politics* actually pertained to the ‘irrational’ element of the state’s operation and of sovereign decision making (*ibid*: 101).

As a precocious 24 year-old, Arendt (1990) reviewed Mannheim’s text on publication. Traces of his various conceptual distinctions are evident in her own much later treatment of ideology and political action; her review, however, was staunchly critical. Mannheim’s sociology was causing a storm among German philosophical circles, as it explicitly encroached upon philosophy’s most prized domain: epistemology. The basis of this encroachment, against which Arendt felt the need to defend the work of Karl Jaspers (her teacher) and Martin Heidegger (for a time, her lover), was presented as a simple Weberian thesis,<sup>22</sup> though one also clearly marked by Nietzsche’s reflections on nihilism (which would secure Heidegger’s attention the following decade). Epistemology, the specialized study of knowledge, was a product, Mannheim claimed, of modern secularization. With the faltering and breakdown of received ‘single world views’ bound up with the authority of religion, this argument ran, questions pertaining to the scope and limits of human knowledge were newly subjected to self-reflexive interrogation (*ibid*: 33).

Philosophy – and particularly Germanic philosophy – had tended to view this development as a pivotal step in fulfilling the historical destiny of ‘man’, of the West, or at least of a particular body of philosophically minded people. The closing pages of

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<sup>21</sup> It bears noting that in Adorno’s influential writings on music, a boiled-down version of Marx’s characterization remained in use, with the adjective ‘ideological’ branding cultural forms, or uses thereof, that Adorno deemed gave a false appearance to social reality.

<sup>22</sup> Earlier in the 1920s, Mannheim had worked in Heidelberg under sociologist Alfred Weber, the brother of Max Weber (who died in 1920).

Hegel's *Phänomenologie des Geistes* provide a majestic example of this. History is described as 'Spirit [*Geist*] emptied out into Time', externalized through the self-reflexive movement of knowledge into what Hegel likened to 'a gallery of images, each of which [is] endowed with all the riches of Spirit' (1977 [1807]: 492). The Self, the abstract subject of this abstract, singular and unidirectional History, 'penetrates' and 'digests' these progressively accumulated 'images' (which represent the 'entire wealth of its substance'; *ibid*), in this way – and here we are reminded of Hobbes's analytic – gradually extending itself toward infinitude and the 'throne' of the absolute (*ibid*: 493).

Mannheim's sociology, by contrast, treated knowledge and the specialist, theoretical framing of its scope, as being more akin to a *social device*, a technical apparatus used to construct and ground different forms of social order. Rather than identifying the accumulation of knowledge as the motor of human history, his approach hinted at a much more voluntarist, constructivist conception of history and world making, wherein the particular – 'political' – determinations of individual societies would be the critical drivers of change. With the gap left by secularization, the imperative of modern politics, he wrote, had become to *construct* a world view anew. It is easy enough to comprehend why this approach to epistemology may have been perceived as a threat to anyone wanting to claim that their nation or people represented history in absolute terms on account of a supposedly elevated rationality – a claim that was to be scorned in Arendt's later work, but certainly remained seductive to Heidegger at the time (see Division Two, sections V-VI of *Being and Time*, 1962).

There is a paradox here and it is important that we work through it. My paraphrase of Mannheim's argument may suggest that he did not regard epistemology as a vehicle of historical progress or consider it capable of legitimizing political action without first being sifted through a constructed ideology. In fact, almost the opposite is true. Not only did Mannheim view his sociology of knowledge as building on historically accumulated understanding, he sided, quite unmistakably, with the tendency – the 'chief characteristic of modern culture', he wrote – 'to include as much as possible in the realm of the rational and to bring it under administrative control – and, on the other hand, to reduce the "irrational" element to the vanishing point' (1936: 101). The dying Hegelian god of History seems as rapacious as ever in *Ideology and Utopia*. The seeming paradox is that it was precisely through this accumulated understanding, with its increasing critical self-reflexivity, that the *limits* of reason's capacity to guide and structure political activity became impossible for scholars like Mannheim to ignore.

History had begun to reveal itself as the product less of a metaphysical teleology binding the mortal soul to the throne of the absolute than of arbitrary – sovereign – decisions and, by extension, illegitimate violence.

This revelation menaced the modernist ambition of systematizing political activity according to a comprehensive ideology extrapolated from reason alone. But as we have seen, Mannheim easily codified what exceeds ideological prescription – the ‘irrational’, *political* element – and such codification allowed it to be brought back into the frame of ideological computation, potentially in a way that would lend it some form of legitimacy. And indeed it was precisely the centring of ideology around the irrational element that Mannheim identified as defining trait of *fascism*. What mattered for the fascists *ideologically*, according to Mannheim was ‘the apotheosis of direct action, the belief in the decisive *deed*, and in the significance attributed to the initiative of a leading *élite*’ (*ibid*: 134): political action that stepped beyond the realm of the known and the formulaic – what Carl Schmitt earlier in the decade had called ‘decisionism’ (2005 [1922]).

At the juncture where he defined the political, Mannheim did indeed cite Schmitt. However, he cited the wrong text, as it were: not Schmitt’s work on political decisionism, but his 1927 text, *The Concept of the Political* (2007; cited Mannheim, 1936: 103). There Schmitt, one of the leading jurists of the Weimar republic, who would become president of the National Socialists Jurists Association in 1933, argued that the political rested, conceptually, with the distinction of friend and enemy. This, he insisted, was irreducible and perceived ‘*existentially*’. It implied, on some level, ‘the real possibility of physical killing’ (Schmitt, 2007: 33). War, according to Schmitt, *had* to retain an ineradicable presence within the horizon of the political, though not necessarily as something common or desirable. This may seem a remarkably cynical reworking of Hobbes (done in a context fraught with instability and legitimation crises), whereby the state deliberately holds the ‘continual feare, and danger of violent death’ proximate enough to its subjects to sharpen their sense of desire for protection from it and in turn bolster their patriotic allegiance. Certainly, the cluster of issues that link the problem of political legitimation to the experience of vicarious immortality is as pertinent to Schmitt’s thought as to Hobbes’s.

This is easily sensed already from his first book, *Political Romanticism* (2011 [1919]), where Schmitt, a devoted Roman Catholic, developed an alternative historical



modelling of secularization to that given by Weber. In the art and literature of Romanticism he traced a nihilistic disintegration of social order and hierarchy, rather than a supplanting of religion by reason. He sketched the emergence of a new, problematic relationship between individual subject and world. Romanticism, he contended, wallowed in the ‘cultic and liturgical aftereffects and reminiscences’ of the age of Christendom (*ibid*: 17-18); yet, to the Romantic subject, the world had become a mere ‘occasion’ for subjective productivity, divested of its divine ordering. The private individual had been left ‘to be his own priest...his own poet, his own philosopher, his own king, and his own master builder in the cathedral of his personality’ (*ibid*: 20).

Subsequently, Schmitt would describe this as ‘only the intermediary stage of the aesthetic between the moralism of the eighteenth and the economism of the nineteenth century, only a transition which precipitated the *aestheticization* of all intellectual domains’.<sup>23</sup> Aestheticization, he wrote, was ‘the surest and most comfortable way to the general economization of intellectual life and to a state of mind which finds the core categories of human existence in production and consumption’ (Schmitt, 2007: 84). Continuing this line of argument in *The Concept of the Political*, Schmitt steered toward a striking critique of liberalism, accusing it (directly attacking Joseph Schumpeter’s work) of concealing political enmity behind the fatuous neutrality of economic imperialism.

An imperialism based on pure economic power will naturally attempt to sustain a worldwide condition which enables it to apply and manage, unmolested, its economic means, e.g., terminating credit, embargoing raw materials, destroying the currencies of others, and so on. Every attempt of a people to withdraw itself from the effects of such ‘peaceful’ methods is considered by this imperialism as extra-economic power. Pure economic imperialism will also apply a stronger, but still economic, and therefore (according to this terminology) nonpolitical, essentially peaceful means of force. (*Ibid*: 78-79.)

Schmitt, as we have seen, was no pacifist and hardly opposed to the political use of force. What he objected to here was the false reduction and bureaucratization of the political sphere, as if the organization of society rested entirely on economic management problems, soluble through calculations extrapolated from a comprehensive set of economic principles. What he objected to, to return to Mannheim, was the routinization of the affairs of the state according to this economic rationality, at the

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<sup>23</sup> ‘The Age of Neutralizations and Depoliticizations (1929)’, published in Schmitt (2007): 80-96 (citation is from p. 84; my ital.).

expense of the political deed and the decision – a routinization that did not do away with aggression and violence, but instead masked and depoliticized them.

Despite this clear congruence between the thinkers, it seems that Mannheim had no response to Schmitt's critique of liberalism. He described the legal theorist's definition of the political merely as one among other possibilities, presumably incompatible with his own. More importantly, he failed to give warranted consideration to Schmitt's still influential definition of the *sovereign* as 'he who decides on the exception' (2005: 5), given in the opening line of his 1922 work *Political Theology*; though with this, Schmitt had given a name – sovereignty – to the node where the routinized and the unroutinizable (the 'irrational', which Mannheim considered to be the true site of politics) knot together. Less than half a decade before Hitler's accession to power, Germany's most provocative sociologist thus had little to say to the coming politico-legal institutionalization of the *Ausnahmezustand* (state of exception, more commonly known in English as Martial Law, or a state of emergency) which Schmitt had been busily theorizing (from his 1921 work *Dictatorship* through to *Guardian of the Constitution* [1931] and *Legality and Legitimacy* [1932]) and would match that node to a very singular voice.

*Ideology and Utopia* reveals, instead, disavowal. Mannheim apprehended the non-teleological historicity of epistemology (decades before Michel Foucault). Yet he shut his ears to it, holding on to a hoped for disappearance of political decision (just as subsequent liberal ideologues have imagined, delusorily, a post-ideological politics [e.g., Bell, 1961; Fukuyama, 1992]).

In the historical matrix from which National Socialism emerged, the relationship between ideology and political command was not direct or straightforward. One finds political decision articulated in the aporia of ideology, at the threshold where rationalization turns on itself and begs questions of its own legitimacy – an historical process that affected not only politics and philosophy, but also the arts and music, as previously accepted approaches to the ordering of aesthetic sense were called into question (this will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter Four). Fascist ideology, as Mannheim argued four years before Hitler took power, responded to this nihilistic process by framing the 'irrational' element of political decision making that it exposed as a virtue. What it could not pre-empt or rationally explain, it accounted for as a decisive manifestation of the concealed 'forces' of race (Hitler) or history (Mussolini).

In this way, it legitimated a dynamic process whereby the perception of anomie was answered by a forceful reassertion of sovereign power.

Schmitt evidently believed that dictatorship could offer an antidote to the processes of aestheticization and economization he described. Rejecting the Weimar Republic's democratic voting procedure, he even imagined a 'direct' or 'pure' democracy wherein the decisive sovereign deed would be answered by the expressive acclamation ('an eternal phenomenon of all political communities') of his or her subjects.

[T]he true activity, capacity and function of the people, the nucleus of all popular expression, the originary democratic phenomenon, what even Rousseau considered to be true democracy, is acclamation, the cry of approval or rejection coming from the united masses. (Schmitt, 1927: 62; cited Agamben, 2009: 191)

When Benjamin subsequently adopted the phrase 'aestheticization of politics', he inverted Schmitt's analytic. Fascism was not rescuing the essence of politics. It was hanging its legitimacy on this emotionally charged, ritualistic acclamation: on the affective powers of expression. It aestheticized sovereign command and violence; and in doing so, obscured urgent questions of right and justice.

Ideology – particularly fascist ideology, although paradoxically historical fascism grounded itself on a universal claim about the nature of ideology here – is misconstrued as an autonomous entity. It does not exist outside of its dialogue with political command and law – a dialogue whose internal dynamic can only be understood historically, as we have begun to see. To understand the 'aestheticization of politics' we need to consider the political workings of law as well as (or more precisely: in combination with) ideology. We know that the racialist 'ideas' that formed the basis of Nazi ideology were prevalent well before 1933. What needs to be taken account of is the juridical profile they received following Hitler's accession to power: their actualization, as it were, in the form of sovereign command. Only by doing this will we be able to properly grasp the political functionalization of sonic expression in the Reich.

In 1941, a decade before Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism* first appeared, Oxford University Press published an extraordinary analysis of the politico-legal structure of the Third Reich, in English translation, by German émigré attorney and legal theorist Ernst Fraenkel. Fraenkel had socialist leanings, though he was by no means a dogmatic Marxist. His analysis, *The Dual State*, paid close attention to the legal framing of the intersection between political decision and economic *laissez faire* (up until the outbreak

of war in 1939).<sup>24</sup> Unlike Franz Neumann's work *Behemoth* (1967 [1942]) of the following year, which presented the Third Reich as a chaotic, lawless non-state, Fraenkel's more attentive analysis clearly revealed the existence of a two-part state structure. Following John Locke's terminology, Fraenkel described the police forces operating under the political directive of the Party as a 'Prerogative State', whereas in the capitalist 'Normative State', he noted, '[n]ormal life is ruled by legal norms' (1941: 57).

A significant part of Fraenkel's analysis was devoted to clarifying the politico-legal mechanism through which the Prerogative State was able to impinge upon the jurisdiction of the Normative State. Key to this was the so-called *Reichstagsbrandverordnung* (the Reichstag Fire Decree, officially: the Order of the Reich President for the Protection of People and State) of February 28, 1933, which appealed to Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution to create a permanent state of exception in the new Reich (*ibid*: 30).<sup>25</sup> This allowed for the suspension of Articles 114, 115, 117, 118, 123, 124 and 153, relating to habeas corpus, freedom of expression, the press, the right to assembly, and privacy and property rights, purportedly in the interest of defending the constitution against Communist acts of violence deemed a danger to the state. Four weeks later, an *Ermächtigungsgesetz* (Enabling Act) was passed by the German Parliament that granted Hitler's cabinet the power to enact laws by decree without parliamentary authorization (Schmitt would be roped in to provide a veneer of politico-legal legitimacy to these activities; see Bendersky, 1983). Together, these established the framework for the *pas de deux* between normative government, according to the constitution, and prerogative government by decree.

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<sup>24</sup> The subsequent public revelation of the atrocities of Auschwitz demanded a very different treatment of the Reich and it stands to reason that the impact of Fraenkel's analysis was eclipsed by that of Arendt's much more historically oriented project. This, however, in no way lessens the quite singular precision and insight of Fraenkel's *Dual State*.

<sup>25</sup> Agamben (2005: 14-16) has presented a brief history of recourse to Article 48 within the Weimar Republic. Article 48 legalized the Reich president's suspension of the law in the interest of public order and security. It was invoked more than 250 times over the course of the Republic's 14 years. 'It is well known that the last years of the Weimar Republic passed entirely under a regime of the state of exception; it is less obvious to note that Hitler could probably not have taken power had the country not been under a regime of presidential dictatorship for nearly three years and had parliament been functioning' (*ibid*: 15).

Fraenkel detailed how, across the early years of the Reich, the Normative State's courts' initial resistance to impingement from the Prerogative State was gradually eroded. What opened a particular action or activity to the rule of the Prerogative State was its classification as political. However, that classification was itself deemed a matter of political prerogative; and Fraenkel explained how, far from being stable and legally codified, 'the sphere of the "political"' was 'systematically extended' through pressure from the *Gestapo* (i.e., the Prerogative State; 1941: 43). By 1937, the Supreme Administrative Court of Prussia (*Oberverwaltungsgericht*), in the course of a ruling on a driver's licence application refused to a man who had spent six months in a concentration camp for attacking the government, determined that 'in the struggle for self-preservation which the German people are waging there are no longer any aspects of life which are non-political... [For] the community has a right to be protected from its enemies in every sphere of life' (cited *ibid*: 43-4).

Prior to this, in the domain of culture, though the Propaganda Ministry was already steering activity through its granting of special licences, at least some more direct political interventions were successfully challenged through recourse to the protective umbrella of the Normative State. For example, Eberhard Hanfstaengel, director of the Crown Prince Palace in Berlin, was able – until 1937 – to resist pressure to close the Palace's permanent display of its collection of modernist art, which included works by Emil Nolde, Max Beckmann, Wassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee (Steinweis, 1993: 134). Goebbels had attempted to institute systematic pre-censorship of all public exhibitions through the Visual Arts Chamber as early as 1935. He was challenged, however, by Bernhard Rust, the Minister of Education, who held jurisdiction over public museums in the Reich; their autonomy in organizing exhibitions was thus retained a little longer (*ibid*: 139). Even after 1937, the Reich security council reported various exhibitions that continued to show artists previously identified as cultural Bolsheviks (Boberach, ed., 1984, Bd II: 275 reports on such an exhibition, held in Düsseldorf in early 1939, called 'Der deutsche Westen'). Yet the threat of Prerogative State intervention ensured the increasing rarity of such exceptions.

Still, '[i]t must be presumed that all spheres of life are to be subjected to regulation by law', Fraenkel insisted.

Whether the decision in an individual case is made in accordance with the law or with 'expediency' is entirely in the hands of those in whom the sovereign power is vested. Their sovereignty consists in the very fact that they determine the

permanent emergency. ‘The sovereign is he who has the legal power to command in an emergency’... (*Ibid*: 57)

Fraenkel was citing Schmitt. We have seen the quotation already (though in Geoffrey Schwab’s translation: ‘Sovereign is he who decides on the exception’) and we will see it again in Chapter Three. Fraenkel also invoked Schmitt to clarify what ‘totalitarian’ meant vis-à-vis the Reich. Its politico-legal structure, Fraenkel agreed, made the Nazi regime *qualitatively*, but *not quantitatively*, totalitarian (*ibid*: 59-61; citation is to Schmitt, 1931). The regime refused to brook opposition and effected a legal structure that allowed executive intervention where any political threat was perceived.

Economically, though, the Reich was, in large measure, liberal. It nurtured market competition out of the Weimar slump through the Normative State’s imposition of law and order (cf. Overy, 1982: 11-12; Hardach, 1980: 7; Böhme, 1972: 117).<sup>26</sup> Meanwhile, the ‘constructive forces’ of race provided the hollow ideological foundation on which the Dual State was balanced (*ibid*: 62). At the same time, *Gemeinschaft*, as both idea and affect, Fraenkel argued, was mobilized to dissimulate the social and economic inequality that continued under the capitalist Normative State (in conjunction with the decimation of the trade unions; *ibid*: 39, 153). The key point is that law directly marked the meeting of ideology and life: the regime’s racial/biological ‘others’ were generally denied the legal protection of the Normative State; following the Reich Citizenship Laws of 1935 (better known as the Nuremberg Racial Laws), they were stripped of Reich citizenship and left open to be killed with impunity.

## **Conclusion**

The ideological turn to a political biology, which received its most shocking form in National Socialism (though has by no means been unique to it – a point on which the contemporary ‘turn to affect’ and Spitzer’s threatened ‘biologization of the humanities’ should impel us to reflect), was foreshadowed by an experience of what Edmund Husserl, in work left unfinished at his death in 1938, termed a ‘crisis of European

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<sup>26</sup> From the late 1930s this would change considerably as the Party increasingly drove an expansionist, self-consuming war economy. It was in relation to the most notorious product of this culminating intercourse with death, the extermination camps, that Arendt’s nightmarish formulation of strictly controlling ‘total terror’ applied, rather than the everyday life of citizens within the pre-war Reich.

knowledge discourses' (1970).<sup>27</sup> Faith in the body followed a nihilistic eclipse of faith in the guiding hand of reason. This eclipse intimately concerned the experience of history and the weight with which it was able to speak to the present, orienting it temporally. National Socialism's biologization of political legitimacy can only be interpreted as an about-face with respect to the Enlightenment project of attaining emancipation through reason; we have nevertheless seen in this chapter how closely the interplay between its highly simplistic ideology and its remarkably aggressive command structure responded to historical dynamics internal to modernity, dynamics that reshaped the framework of both political and aesthetic legitimation. What now needs to be examined in more detail is how the aesthetic – and more specifically how sonic expression – was harnessed to bring power to this complex nexus of history, law and ideology.

Music – and culture more generally – was to be a concern of both levels of the Dual State. The amorphousness of musical activity in the Reich, increasingly registered in literature on the subject, accords with government under the Normative State. It is not evidence that the Reich was anything but totalitarian (in Schmitt's 'qualitative' sense). However, such activity was also marked as a matter of political interest through the prominent tampering of the Prerogative State. It is not difficult to see why, given that the ideological legitimacy of the Dual State structure rested with the notion that race was the guiding force of political order, that art was proposed 'as the highest expression of race' (Thomas, 1997: 38) and that music claimed the title of 'most German of the arts'. More than a communal sharing of breath, more than confirmation of the 'obviousness' of the ideological myth of racial supremacy even, music promised a forecast of a vitality to come.

This chapter has argued for an inversion of the usual theorization of the music-ideology relationship. Music, I have said, is not passive to ideological projection. It actively affirms sense, having a special potential – particularly through its treatment of time – to vicariously lend order and meaning to its listeners' world and their perception

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<sup>27</sup> The German title of Husserl's *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften* is normally translated as 'The Crisis of European Sciences'. This translation is problematic, however, given that part of Husserl's argument was that epistemology had devolved into positivist, hard science. The German term *Wissenschaft* covers a broader sphere of knowledge discourses than science does in English (talk of social, political and economic *sciences*, though still common, carries an air of the illegitimate; 'musical science' seems absurd).

of their place within it. If we are to grasp what is unique about music from the perspective of politics, we must stop treating it as a slave to the socio-historical contexts in which it is produced and heard, and home in on what different musics are able to *add* to the political arena. We must consider the kinds of agency music bears – to affect us, to synchronize our behaviour, to impress and, especially, to affirm – and how that agency is molded compositionally. It is crucial that we consider music in relation to broader morphologies of (non-musical) experience. But it is also crucial that we are attentive to music’s *alterity*: to the particularities of musical sense formations, to the possibilities they offer to experience, but also to those aspects of them which resist political mastery and control.

The next chapter continues the theoretical work begun here, focussing on the meeting of sovereign command and aesthetic presence carried out through the Nazi radio broadcasting system. I model how that meeting was managed for political ends and, in a similar vein to Hobbes and Schmitt, consider what possible effects National Socialism’s not entirely streamline radiophonic deployment of its ‘charismatic’ sovereign presence may have had on the Reich’s citizenry’s political and ethical convictions. Working from Schmitt’s definition of sovereignty, I also model how failures – the ‘exceptional’ – were grappled with by those managing the radio broadcast system and how the task of paralysing opposition was made complementary to that of engendering committed listeners. I view the radio and its relation to musical activity more generally in the Reich a little like Fraenkel viewed the Prerogative State’s relation to the Normative State, as it increasingly – imperialistically – encroached upon the latter’s territory until no activity whatsoever could be deemed safe from political intervention. The radio structured for its listeners an experiential linkage between the ‘autonomous’ expressive creations of the musical items it broadcast and the voice of sovereign command. Even where musical listening occurred without the radio, this meant that music’s affirmative powers could find their object easily enough – and could do so without requiring the projection of any specific ‘ideological’ meaning.

In turn, the second part of this thesis focusses on creative practices that have, since the dismemberment of the Nazi Reich, sought to critically reformat the communicative structure of music. My emphasis there is again on music’s (maleable) *agency*. Implicit in this chapter’s critique of what I dubbed the ‘musicological theory of ideology’ is a rejection of how cultural historians of music tend to approach the music-context relation more broadly. Music’s meaning, I have argued, cannot be treated as a function of



context – even though I maintain that the dialogue between music, ideology and law is shaped historically and must be understood as such. To treat music’s meaning as a function of context is to wrest it of its peculiarity and potency as a cultural form; it is to treat it, in other words, as having no inherent capacity to shape experience, as contributing nothing of its own to that dialogue – as having no real meaning. At the same time, it is to falsify the amorphousness of music’s impact on its listeners, as well as the repeatability and mobility of musical works and songs, which ensure that their time is never really coextensive with that of the contexts they pass through and leave their complex imprint on. It is to fail to ask how music works – has worked, might otherwise work – on our experiences of social and historical time, beyond being merely a product of (and reducible to) them.

Social anthropologist Georgina Born has used the phrase ‘onto-political imagination’ (forthcoming: 15-16) to evoke the ways in which decisions about social organization and ways of being shape acts of musical creativity. The phrase could also be used to describe the kinds of critical approaches to musical communication Part II aims to illuminate: approaches that have treated musical form as something that, through its particular organization, interacts with, and has some capacity to shape, our ways of being or our perception of time. That creative musical activity, conceived in this way, has a political dimension which is not merely a function of context is easily recognized. Yet I do not simply do away with context as a ground for analysis in Part II. My concern across this thesis, rather, has been to remodel the music-context relation to better capture how aspects of socio-historical transformation speak to and spark musical innovation. The charismatic voice, modelled in the next chapter, is not merely an historical phenomenon; it is also a *problem* – albeit one to which music scholars have too often closed their ears – that has challenged the ‘onto-political imagination’ to mine music’s political potential and remake it ontologically. The ‘afterlives’ this ‘problem’ has thus spawned (and may continue to spawn) are not reducible to their immediate contexts. They have refused to blindly glorify the times and places through which they have passed, lending sense to whatever dominant ideologies might structure experience and action within them. Instead, they have endeavoured to change how music contributes to shaping how we structure and perceive our social relations, and to prompt reflection on music’s relation to time, on the legitimacy it draws from history and on the indeterminacy of its future.

### Chapter Three. The sovereign voice

One of the most influential theories of political legitimation has been that of Max Weber himself, left incomplete upon his sudden death in 1920. A short essay outlining three ‘pure types’ of legitimate rule appeared in the *Preußische Jahrbücher* in 1922 and was also included in a collection of Weber’s essays on economic theory published the same year.<sup>1</sup> These three types, as is well known, were: *rational* (or normative/legalistic), whereby a state assumes legitimacy on the basis of the quality of its rules and bureaucratic competence; *traditional*, or based on precedent and the auratic hold of the past; and *charismatic*, feeding, as Weber put it, on ‘affectual surrender’ (2004: 138). Each type, in a different way, could be said to answer the criterion of what I called in the last chapter vicarious immortality. The rational calls on the universality of reason, on a logical systematicity that transcends and is impervious to the flux of time. The traditional stakes its power on having forever been thus, at least as far as living memory is concerned. The legitimator power of charisma is more complex, as we shall see; but the word’s etymology links it directly to the concept of divine presence – the absolute and eternal, once again. Weber wrote of the recognition of the charismatic leader as the basis of legitimation in democracy (1964: 386-392). Yet since the notion of charismatic command would seem to describe perfectly the kind of slippage between law and expression that, in Benjamin’s eyes, would come to define fascism, it is difficult not to read in Weber’s account of it also an augur of what was to come in 1930s Germany.

Charisma is a thing of uncertain status. It is a captivating force – a sovereign presence – and it is every bit as slippery for the theorist as the enthralling charm of music, conjured, though without full elucidation, in the work of Abbate, Vladimir Jankélévitch and others. St. Paul used the term charisma to refer to a divinely bestowed

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Die drei reinen Typen der legitimen Herrschaft’, *Preußische Jahrbücher* 187 (1922): 1-12; also in Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1922), 475-488. An English translation of the essay, ‘The Three Pure Types of Legitimate Rule’ is to be found in Weber, 2004: 133-145. A related, more extensive account of legitimate rule according to the same three-part typology is to be found in Talcott Parsons’ edited book of Weber’s writings, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, which, first published in 1947, was one of the earliest and most influential presentations of Weber’s later sociology (post-*Protestant Ethic*) in English (Weber, 1964: 324-392).

grace. He saw it as a gift (which we might say – after Mauss, 1950 – brings with it a whole economy of obligations): a manifestation of the divine within the human order (see Potts, 2009). Analysing Hitler’s leadership in terms of charismatic appeal obviously requires a rather different conceptualization, if the worst kind of mystification is to be avoided. This chapter draws on media theory and analysis to attempt to provide such a conceptualization, modelling what I consider to be key aspects of the technical profile of charismatic sovereignty in the Reich.

One media technology stands out as being intimately associated with Hitler’s rule: radio. Goebbels consistently described it as the most modern and most important tool available to the regime for influencing the political behaviour of the masses.<sup>2</sup> He may have deemed it, at times, second to the press in effectiveness as a ‘weapon in our struggle for national existence’ (cited in Bergmeier & Lotz, 1997: 141). Yet the radio corresponded more closely to a particular historical fantasy that saw modern technology at the brink of a radical transformation of socio-political ordering.<sup>3</sup> As put by one caption from the photobook *Die veränderte Welt* (The Transformed World), published in 1933 by Edmund Schultz with an introduction by Ernst Jünger (one of Benjamin’s

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<sup>2</sup> In Goebbels’ first programmatic speech on radio, at a directorial meeting on March 25, 1933, he described it as the ‘allermodernste[s] und allerwichtigste[s] Massenbeeinflussungsinstrument’ (the most all-modern, all-important instrument for influencing the masses; cited Drechsler, 1988: 29). A public broadcast on the role of radio three months later similarly dubbed it ‘das modernste Massenbeeinflussungsmittel’ (the most modern medium for influencing the masses; Joseph Goebbels, Broadcast on role of radio, June 16, 1933, item 5472 from the archive of the Imperial War Museum London). In a publication – again public – of late 1940, the description had barely changed: ‘The radio has proved itself, above all in the context of war, to be the most modern, wide-reaching medium for leading the people’ (‘[Der Rundfunk] hat sich vor allem im Kriege als das modernste und weitestreichende Volksführungsmittel erwiesen’; Goebbels’ introduction to Fritzsche, 1940: 6). It is significant that this conceptualization of the radio was not held surreptitiously by the political elite but that, on the contrary, some effort – or at least pretense – was made to defend it publicly.

<sup>3</sup> The idea behind this fantasy was hardly new. Marx, in *Capital*, identified and critiqued it in the work of authors dating back to antiquity: “‘If’, dreamed Aristotle, the greatest thinker of antiquity, “if every tool, when summoned, or even by intelligent anticipation, could do the work that befits it...if the weavers’ shuttles were to weave of themselves, then there would be no need either of apprentices for the master craftsmen, or of slaves for the lords”. And Antipater, a Greek poet of the time of Cicero, hailed the water-wheel for grinding corn, that most basic form of all productive machinery, as the liberator of female slaves and the restorer of the golden age. Oh those heathens! They understood nothing of political economy... They did not...comprehend that machinery is the surest means of lengthening the working day’ (1976: 532-533; cited Morton, 2007: 91).

reference points for the fascist imaginary): ‘growth of optical and acoustic media opens out undreamed of possibilities for the political will’ (Ex. 3.1).<sup>4</sup>

This chapter identifies the National Socialist radio broadcasting system – or ‘apparatus’ – as the core, bureaucratically composed mechanism through which the ‘charismatic’ sovereign voice imposed itself on German society in the Third Reich. Approaching the issue of charismatic sovereignty in this way helps ground theoretical consideration of the material and technical complexities of charismatic power. In the analysis that follows, I draw on a number of characterizations of the propaganda function of the National Socialist radio made, often publicly, by those who controlled it. However, I also try to attain a degree of clarity around some of the reported (as well as hypothetical) discrepancies between the rhetoric and reality of the Nazi radio. Building upon the methodological considerations of Chapter Two, I argue here that the radio apparatus needs to be understood as a highly complex structure whose effects were only partially controllable (sometimes via feedback loops that served to reinforce the structure’s autonomy). It was not simply the obedient tool of its masters; the radio, like the items it broadcast, had a rhythm of its own.

Later parts of this chapter move through relatively dense theoretical terrain as I consider the radio in relation to the ‘disarming’ aspect of sovereign presence. I propose that it may have been used to affect how its listeners felt shame. One of the most deeply troubling questions that Arendt raised with respect to the Third Reich was how it was that, seemingly overnight, the majority of the German people – not even, Arendt stressed, just convinced Nazis – apparently forgot the moral convictions by which they had lived and exchanged them ‘for another set with hardly more trouble than it would take to change [one’s] table manners...’ (2003: 54). Guided by Agamben’s remarkable analyses of the relationship between shame, subjecthood and bearing witness within the context of the camps, I suggest that headway might be made with Arendt’s problem by conceptualizing the radio apparatus, similarly, as a mechanism that had profound effects on subjective interiority. From these considerations, I develop a generalizable theory of (sovereign) expression and then conclude this part of the thesis by delving into issues of responsibility and the implications the analysis of the sovereign voice may hold for critical theory.

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<sup>4</sup> ‘Die Steigerung der optischen und akustischen Mittel erschließt dem politischen Willen ungeahnte Möglichkeiten’ (Schultz, ed., 1933: 33).

In concluding the last chapter, I suggested that the radio apparatus might feasibly be treated as a metonym for the Reich's political sound – those myriad forms of sonic expression that gave voice to its aestheticization of politics – *tout court*. Three factors lead me to do this. The first is that the radio conveys and mediates a variety of forms of sonic culture: from political speeches to a whole range of musical and non-musical entertainments, including a relatively broad spectrum of classical music. The second factor is that the radio brings these different cultural and political forms into dialogue. It structures relationships and equivalences between them – relationships that would hold beyond their framing by the radio itself. Finally, as we will see, the National Socialist radio was actually referred to, at times, as if it itself were a kind of double or substitute for the voice of the *Führer* – the sovereign voice. In stressing how the radio sparked the political imagination in the early 1930s, I want to suggest in this chapter that this identification of the radio with the sovereign might also be understood the other way around. Radio technology, I suggest, played a major part in opening the sonic fantasy realm into which Hitler's voice launched itself. By establishing how the radio functioned in the Reich as a key instrument of charismatic power, this chapter aims at a new understanding of how the 'aestheticization of politics' was effected in Hitler's Germany – one that finally places sound at its centre.

I have already noted a tendency in recent scholarship on the Third Reich to criticize the notion of totalitarian control as *merely* a fantasy of the political elite. This fantasy, it is argued, does not match the messier realities of National Socialist government. However, against this tendency, I think it is crucially important to stress the work done by the fantasy element. Radio, in the 1920s-1930s, was a node of fascination for what I will call here the *totalitarian imagination*. In this its significance for National Socialism was scarcely matched (the camps were another, far more disturbing spur). Totalitarian imagination did not do the same work as the Nazi racialist ideology. The racialist ideology served to affirm hierarchizations, to match actions to norms and assign (biological) differences to their places (thus Aryan fertility would be rewarded with the '*Ehrenkreuz der deutschen Mutter*'; homosexuals and others deemed biologically degenerate would be sent to the camps). The totalitarian imagination, by contrast, was more creative, more transgressive and we might say more *modernist* or more *avant-garde*. It thrived on the perverse thought of the cyborg, of new worlds built from new man-machine relations, of the peculiar sado-masochistic violence of shifting the

experiential coordinates of life and death. It saw vitality in weaponry and made ornaments of crowds.

If the idea of the totalitarian imagination might seem dubiously fantastical, we need to bear in mind that this may in part be an effect of the political imaginary that has become engrained in National Socialism's wake. Political liberalism has actively worked to neuter the totalitarian imagination. It has advocated a vision of politics, defended primarily in moral terms, wherein liberty and right are safeguards for the pursuance of private self-interest, and it has largely rejected the political project of forging a common good (Mouffe, 1993: 62). This (in key respects negative) vision of politics is not without its problems; private interest can be a poor base for tackling issues of global reach – the grave threats associated with climate change, for example – which demand responses grounded in a conception of justice that is universally oriented. In any case, the biases of the liberal political imagination should not guide our sense of the extent to which the new media forms of the 1930s 'open[ed] out undreamed of possibilities for the political will'. And indeed one might query whether political liberalism has really put those media to a qualitatively different use; for they remain as forces in our own political landscape and have multiplied.

Sovereignty always comes with a seasoning of paradox. In democratic contexts, Wendy Brown has noted, a people, or *demos*, produces its sovereignty by investing it in a heteronomous power that holds them in a relation of submission (2010: 53). Their 'sovereignty' is a product of what Étienne de La Boétie, in one of the most breathtaking essays in the history of early modern political thought, called their 'voluntary servitude' (1991), arguing that under whatever political regime this servitude largely goes unmarked and unthought by those who suffer through it. But in contemporary democracies, Brown has argued, the 'nonsupremacy of the *demos*', the fact that it has given away its sovereign power (and not to an absolute sovereign ordained by God, but to a coterie of spin-doctored political bureaucrats working behind the scenes with lobbyists), also needs to be actively disavowed. She has pointed out that this is often achieved through some form of performative excess: the manifestation of a *semblance* of absolute power that does key political work on the social imaginary.<sup>5</sup> (We have

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<sup>5</sup> Brown's example is the construction of walled boundaries that create an appearance of protective impenetrability but are not terribly effective in regulating movement.

already encountered a variant of this idea in Hobbes; we will meet another in Bataille's analysis of fascism later in the chapter.)

Weber's rationalization of political legitimation crystallizes the paradoxical dimension of sovereignty described by Brown. For Weber suggested that sovereign power, by definition absolute, is subservient to another legitimating force *beyond* the sovereign. Charismatic rule, Weber argued, requires recognition; indeed, it makes recognition a duty (1964: 361). But this poses a distinct problem: how can recognition be presupposed? How can the power of charismatic rule be assumed prior to any charismatic enunciation if it is dependent upon a recognition which, logically, must be posterior to it? Legitimation based on the recognition of charismatic authority is inherently retrospective. If it nevertheless yields a platform for future action, one might infer that it will be a platform lacking the stability offered by both rational and traditional rule. Though Poizat may have written of the opera house as an institutionalization of the sovereign voice (see Chapter One) and Abbate of logos being banned by the voice's spectacular presence (Chapter Two), the simple fact of the matter is that charismatic power can falter from one moment to the next.

Weber only addressed this problem partly and indirectly. He did not think that charisma could be made durable or identified with a stable body in a way that would conventionalize its legitimation over time (unlike bureaucracy). Quite to the contrary, his discussions of charisma tended to reduce the temporal dialectic of recognition down to a single point. They stressed its instability and finiteness. '[I]n its pure form', he wrote, 'charismatic authority may be said to exist only in the process of originating. It cannot remain stable, but becomes either traditionalized or rationalized, or a combination of both' (1964: 364). The fragile temporality that defines charismatic sovereignty cannot be held onto. It must be transformed, Weber intimated, into a non-charismatic economy.

My contention in this chapter is that National Socialism attempted to harness charismatic production through the mass media – the radio, in particular. Aestheticizing politics meant expanding the production of sovereign presence well beyond its usual domains of activity and engineering ways to regulate its effectiveness. I develop an understanding of how the National Socialist radio worked as an instrument of power around the following three propositions, which I defend at a theoretical level while drawing support from a range of historical documents.

1. The radio's expressive and ideologically affirmative function was organized around a tool-like use of aesthetic vernaculars deemed to have affective power and popular appeal. Its power – its attractive force – was essentially hybrid and partly borrowed from an unmasterable alterity.
2. The radio did not simply aim to attract and convince listeners; in accordance with the imperial, Schmittian logic of the exception, it also worked to neutralize the potential for oppositional listening practices that might prove detrimental to the regime's expansion of power.
3. In the way it 'spoke for', at times humiliating, its listeners, the radio impinged upon their subjective interiority, potentially encouraging a form of subjective dissipation detrimental to the ethical life of mind.

The chapter has three core sections. It starts by examining how the political elite in charge of the radio's operation articulated the purpose of broadcasting. Next, it addresses objections that the messy reality of radio broadcasting in the Third Reich did not match those ambitions. It then turns to theory to grapple with the problems of contingency and the alterity of music's power as marshalled by the radio, and the latter's effects on the ethical core of subjective interiority. There was a carefully cultivated myth in the Third Reich that Hitler's great personal sacrifice in leading the *Volk* to its destiny was such that his subjects must repeatedly prove their worthiness to him (Mitscherlich & Mitscherlich, 1975: 18). The extent to which such political manipulation of core subjective affects, such as self-worth and shame, allowed the National Socialist regime to commit its atrocities remains to be properly studied. But this is one of the directions in which I suggest we can understand the political work done by the radio's seemingly incongruent mix of pure-bred orchestral classics and misnamed jazz hits.

### **The technical broadcast-voice**

German radio pre-existed Hitler's rule by a decade. Its inaugural broadcast took place only a few months after Hitler's image first appeared in the press in 1923. It was made a tool of the Weimar state, in part to keep the airways free from Nazi political agitation. However, in 1932, under Franz von Papen, it became a government megaphone, transmitting daily policy defences in an attempt to compensate for von Papen's conservative cabinet's manifest lack of popular and parliamentary support (Ross, 2008:



279-280; Drechsler, 1988: 24). The NSDAP – but not the Communists – were permitted to use it for campaigning in the lead up to the elections that put Hitler in power, preparing the way for the radio to become the central organ of the Reich’s complex propaganda apparatus.

What Hitler inherited was not, however, merely a ready-made machine for transmitting political speech. It was something that brought that speech into proximity with popular songs, radio plays, classical music and various other forms of entertainment and edification. And it came with a nascent version of the metaphysics of vocal communion discussed in Chapter One, born out of the socially novel phenomenon of the radio hit tune (*Schlager*). As a 1932 article in the resolutely conservative, Catholic journal *Volkswart* put it, concerned by potential dangers to community stability posed by the seemingly infectious, virus-like aspect of the newly mass-mediated cultural form: ‘the *Schlager*, grasping the senses, flies effortlessly into the ear and just as easily issues forth from the lips – it’s no wonder that it spreads so quickly and in no time flat may rule a whole city’ (Blume, 1932: 89; cited in Currid, 2006: 93). The totalitarian dream was to exchange the *Schlager* for a political ordering principle: to tether the voice of the *Führer*, the generative expression of racial power, to this newly experienced psychological imperialism.

With the assumption of power, Goebbels set to work on a campaign to make ‘Every national comrade a radio listener’ (Ross, 2008: 284). On May 25, 1933, production commenced on a mass-market radio set that would retail at half the existing market price (RM 76, compared to RM 150). It was called the *Volksempfänger 30. Januar* (‘People’s Receiver, January 30’ – or simply the Ve 301); its name commemorated the date of Hitler’s accession to power and it was destined to become one of the most iconic design objects of the Third Reich. Countless displays, advertising, special concerts, raffles, even celebratory gifts sought to coax Goebbels’ dream of a total national radio audience into reality.<sup>6</sup> By 1938, mini radio receivers were selling for as little as 35 marks (Bergmeier & Lotz, 1997: 8). Over the course of the Reich’s twelve years, the radio licence count climbed steadily from 4.5 million to over sixteen million (Drechsler, 1988: 27).

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<sup>6</sup> Corey Ross (2008: 284) notes that ‘[i]n 1936 alone the travelling exhibitions covered 60,000 km and visited 3,700 localities, where they reached an audience of over 1 million people’.

Yet the way the radio was put to work politically is far from unambiguous. Nor, indeed, was it stable. Initially, the radio's clearest political function lay in transmitting speeches and other spoken forms of traditional political agitation. Historian Corey Ross has reported that 'speeches by the Reich chancellor went out almost every evening on some or all German broadcasters' from February 10 to March 4, 1933 (2008: 330). This flooding of the airways with Hitler's voice in the early weeks of his rule reveals what appears to be a clear and rather unsophisticated strategy of exploiting the radio to extend the reach of his personal charismatic presence and hence power, with the ambition of making it near ubiquitous. In a similar vein, Ross has described in evocative detail the special 'Day of National Labour' broadcast for the first of May celebrations in 1933:

Carefully choreographed as a means of charming industrial workers, the celebrations were intended to be an event that no one could miss. While crowds of SA men gathered before loudspeakers in squares all across Germany, radio owners were explicitly encouraged to place their sets in windows so that others could hear. What the millions of listeners were offered, however, was a relentless sequence of speeches and commentary devoid of musical interlude, apart from the songs chanted by thousands of marchers. After nearly twelve hours of such coverage the long-awaited climax finally came at 19:40, when Hitler spoke without interruption for nearly two hours, his speech capped off by fireworks, endless salutes to victory, and a performance of the national anthem. (Ross, 2008: 331)

To Goebbels, it must have quickly become apparent, however, that the *Führer's* speeches, with delivery reduced down to vocal sound alone, lacked the attractive force of the *Schlager*. The following twelve years would see Goebbels continually push for musical entertainment to be given ever higher ratios of air time.<sup>7</sup> Boredom, he argued, was the radio's, and hence the regime's, worst enemy.<sup>8</sup> Whereas early years featured

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<sup>7</sup> Between 1925 and 1939, the percentage of music with respect to other forms of non-musical programming grew from 57.4 and 69.4%, increasing year by year with few exceptions (Drechsler, 1988: 32; Pohle, 1955: 327). According to Drechsler (*ibid*: 33), music meant for entertainment (including orchestral and band music) made up approximately two thirds of music broadcasting in 1938/1939; by summer 1943 it had climbed to 70%.

<sup>8</sup> 'It just can't become boring. No tediousness. No leaving conviction on the display table. Don't believe one best serves the National Socialist regime by blaring out marches night after night... The radio should never suffer from a lack of eloquence – intention gets noticed; people get put out' (Goebbels, *Mitteilungen der Reichsrundfunkgesellschaft*, Sonderbeilage, 30/3/1933; cited Drechsler, 1988: 28). ('Nur nicht langweilig werden. Nur keine Öde. Nur nicht die Gesinnung auf den Präsentierteller legen. Nur nicht glauben, man könne sich im Dienste der nationalsozialistischen Regierung am besten betätigen, wenn man Abend für Abend schmetternde Märsche

elaborate, 'educative' cultural programming – for example, 1934 saw a two week Beethoven cycle and a summer 'Wagner-Schiller-Chamberlain' lecture and music series – what Ross has called a 'populist reorientation' occurred during the latter half of the 1930s (2008: 334). The programming emphasis gradually, but noticeably, shifted. Music meant to be racially affirmative was bit by bit eclipsed by fare more blatantly intended to be affective, in an attempt to accommodate 'the relaxation of listeners through light-entertainment broadcasts'.<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile, regular patterns were established following an identified tendency for listeners to structure their leisure time around favourite programmes (Eckert, 1941: 161; cited Ross, 2008: 334). The shift was by no means absolute, however; while Ross has written of 'a clear victory of pragmatism over ideology' (2008: 334), it seems more appropriate to speak of two quite distinct conceptions of the radio – of its political function and reality – being in play together, albeit in tension: what I will call an 'expressive' paradigm, rooted in the racist ideology, and a 'biopolitical' paradigm, corresponding more closely with the totalitarian imagination.

Aspects of both paradigms appear in a key discussion of broadcasting presented in the 1939/1940 issue of the German Radio Manual (*Handbuch des Deutschen Rundfunks*). In this discussion, the radio is deemed indistinguishable from propaganda – indeed, it is considered to be *the* technical exemplification of it. The author, Adolf Raskin, was one of Goebbels' broadcasting specialists. He held a doctorate in musicology as an expert on Johann Joachim Quantz (the flautist, court musician, composer and teacher of Friedrich II of Prussia – here already an intellectual interest in the relationship between music and power is evident). 'Broadcasting', Raskin stated,

in the full and true sense is propaganda, it is what 'propaganda' means, if one examines the content of the word properly: 'propaganda' means reaching out, making known, pressing forward, spreading new ideas and insights, taking arms on every battlefield of the mind, fertilizing and doing away with, clearing and extirpating, building and tearing down... (Weinbrenner, ed., 1939; cited Bergmeier & Lotz, 1997: 6-7)

The parameters of that 'building and tearing down', Raskin insisted, were 'set exclusively by what we mean by "German", "race", "blood" and "Volk"' (Bergmeier & Lotz, 1997: 7). Yet his description emphasized the dynamism of broadcasting, the force

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ertönen läßt... Der Rundfunk soll niemals an dem Wort kranken, man merkt die Absicht und wird verstimmt'.)

<sup>9</sup> The quotation is from an announcement made by Eugen Hadamovsky, the Reich Programme Director, in January 1935 (cited Ross, 2008: 333).

at play in the dissemination and inculcation of propaganda, much more than the particular nature of the content meant to be impressed upon the radio's listeners. Broadcasting named the violent eloquence of power, its viral expansion and destruction of all resistance. Propaganda, for Raskin, was, like charisma, closer to a verb than a noun. Though it was unmistakably technological.

A slightly different conceptualization of the radio's political function was given by Eugen Hadamovsky, the Reich Programme Director and one of the most influential officials in the formation of National Socialist broadcasting. Hadamovsky understood radio propaganda in a way that tallies with the more metaphysical dimension of the Nazi racialist theory of expression. Propaganda, by his description, was a 'pure mental creativity emanating from a central will'. He claimed the radio broadcast as its ideal instrument and the 'one thing that matters' with respect to it, he insisted, was the *Führer's* voice (*ibid*: 6, 19).

What is particularly noteworthy about Hadamovsky's description, though, is that it did not idealize Hitler's voice 'itself', the 'mere' biological voice: it no longer treated broadcasting as a matter of faithfully relaying *that* voice. Rather, Hadamovsky deemed the ideal instrument of propaganda instead to be the voice *as* broadcast, the voice which emerged through broadcast with its motley technical and administrative procedures. Hadamovsky underscored the *indexical* element of the broadcast-voice. The voice was not acousmatic; it came from somewhere: it was the emanation, he stressed, from a 'central will'. Broadcasting entailed granting technical-administrative form to this will – racial essence – in order to convey it as voice. In other words, the broadcast-voice did not so much relay as *duplicate* the *Führer*-voice. It pointed back to the same imaginary font, the same 'central will', but gave it a different expressive form. And similarly, it aimed to spawn further multiplications of National Socialized voices. Musical expression was integral to the radio's propaganda function, thought in this way. Hans Hinkel, commissioner for the radio's entertainment sector, 'self-appointed warden of Aryan culture' (*ibid*: 159) and eventually vice-president of the Reich Culture Chamber, untiringly insisted that the only way the radio would achieve its purpose was by farming a taste for the best of German classical music.<sup>10</sup> Of all of the key figures engaged in shaping Nazi radio broadcasting, he was probably the strictest adherent to the

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<sup>10</sup> A brief biography is given in Steinweis, 1993: 61-63.

‘expressive’ paradigm, with its grounding in racialist ideology, and he remained so into the 1940s.<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps tellingly, the nickname ‘His Master’s Voice’, with its suggestion of servile fidelity, was reserved for a different division head: Hans Fritzsche (*ibid.*: 16). Fritzsche was known as a journalist and political commentator. Through his popular radio presence, he became a major media celebrity in the late 1930s, receiving hundreds of tributary letters from listeners, including offers of political guidance that it was clearly hoped might be passed on to Hitler (as if Fritzsche represented a special conduit to *Führer*), as well as requests from children for autographs and photographs (Gassert, 2001: 93-94). His reports tended to focus on undermining and denigrating enemy news broadcasts, coolly subverting what might have been better judgement (*ibid.*: 92; see, for examples, Fritzsche, 1940). After the gruesome events of *Kristallnacht* (November 9-10, 1938), he rified:

Over there, they cling to their ‘one salvation’ – Judaeo-democracy, under which, like medieval bigots, they would like to see anyone they regard as politically heterodox dragged to the stake – while here, we have a nation that wants nothing more than to be allowed to get on with our work and put our house in order the way we like it! (Cited, Bergmeier & Lotz, 1997: 16)

The name, ‘His Master’s Voice’, was probably used by Fritzsche’s peers, at least in part, to mock his subservience to Goebbels and his towing of the Party line. Yet that mocking doubtless came tinged with praise for Fritzsche’s virtuosity at the microphone: his further duplication of the ‘master voice’ and the stardom he achieved through it. This suggests an altogether more wry understanding of Hadamovsky’s notion of ‘pure mental creativity emanating from a central will’ than the one that hooked Hinkel’s imagination.

Music’s core political function on the National Socialist radio is usually explained, with a prosaically empiricist tone, in terms of “‘bind[ing]” listeners to the radio and thereby mak[ing] them more receptive to political messages’ (Ross, 2008: 334; Bergmeier & Lotz, 1997: 136). But if my account (in Chapter Two) of the interlocking of ideology and musical sense production holds, one cannot be satisfied with this interpretation. A crucial aspect of radio’s power, beyond its promise to flood Germany with a ubiquitous, politically engineered presence, lay in its capacity to bring discreet

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<sup>11</sup> Bergmeier & Lotz (1997: 136) have cited minutes from a broadcasting planning meeting in which Hinkel insisted that even propaganda targeting non-Germans should be ‘framed with really good German music’, contradicting Goebbels, who believed it would be more effective to use music local to the target audiences.

voices into co-resonance, drawing them into a continuum of correspondences, like the breath, clouds and wind in Riefenstahl's films, and thereby subsuming them into an expressive, affirmative 'master voice'.

Goebbels saw radio's power a little differently to Hadamovsky. Almost everything he said or wrote about the radio revealed that he thought of it as an affect regulator: something that worked on its audience at a biological level. It did not simply attract listeners enough to keep them available to receive political messages; it had the capacity, he believed, to modulate the population's mood. His approach to the radio, particularly as the war developed, increasingly evinced a belief that the administering of a diet of light, popular music could be ramped up indefinitely and have a corresponding effect on political activity and commitment (Ross, 2011). He treated the radio 'biopolitically' in the very simple sense that he was concerned with governing not subjects, but bodies.

His approach nevertheless brought with it contradictions and apparent hypocrisy. As is well known, Goebbels was highly vocal in denouncing jazz as revolting '*Negerrei*' (nigger-music). Yet the modernist in him championed a music that would leave behind the 'era of stiff-collars and frock-coats' and take its rhythm from the century of machines.<sup>12</sup> Music had to swing – just not *be* swing. Accordingly, in the later years of the Reich, jazz was specially cultivated for radio broadcast; what was forbidden was calling it by its name (Drechsler, 1988: 130-131; Kater, 1992; Bergmeier & Lotz, 1997: 143). A striking aspect of Goebbels' biopolitical approach, is that it meant specifically 'Nazi' characteristics were 'extremely difficult to discern... among the bulk of entertainments', particularly in the later years of the Reich (Ross, 2008: 339).

It is tempting to conclude, like Buck-Morss in her reading of Benjamin, that what was at stake in the radio (for Goebbels) was simply anaesthetization: a 'palliative to soothe the general population or... a tonic to condition the fighting morale of the troops' (Kater, 1997: 178). With the blurring of the radio's status as an amplifier of the sovereign voice, its metamorphosis into a biopolitical instrument for manipulating affect, we are returned to the problem of sustaining charismatic power, raised above in relation to Weber's unfinished work on legitimate rule. We must consider whether these shifts represent a displacement of the radio's original function as a charismatic

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<sup>12</sup> The quotation here is taken from an article about jazz on the radio published in 1942 in the weekly magazine *Das Reich* (cited Bergmeier & Lotz, 1997: 144).

command structure. In doing so, however, it is crucial that we weigh up the significance of the fact that those shifts left the radio's indexical structure intact. That significance is easily grasped if one compares the regime's treatment of the radio to that of the commercial recording industry.

Any assessment of music's place in the Third Reich must contend with the near collapse of the German recording industry in the early years of Hitler's reign. The industry had begun to slump in the Weimar years and the new government, though zealously cultivating the radio's rapidly multiplying influence, apparently found no strategic interest in supporting it (Ross, 2008: 287-288). Indeed, the industry only started to recover in 1936, after filing a successful lawsuit against the Reich Broadcasting Corporation (and hence the Propaganda Ministry, which managed it), demanding annual broadcast royalties.

If the core political function of the radio, as Goebbels increasingly saw it, was to raise the population's general contentment through entertainment, why was the government apparently so indifferent to the collapse of the recording industry? That the suit was successful supports Fraenkel's account of how the Dual State structure continued to affirm legal norm and autonomy in the domain of private enterprise. But what made broadcasting of unique political interest? What distinguished it from the recording industry's commoditization of music culture? Why was it deemed so important that the *Volk* tuned in to the *Volksempfänger* for its dose of hit tunes, if the same affective and affirmative responses could have been self-administered with a gramophone? From the perspective of the neoliberal present, where the individual is deemed 'an entrepreneur of himself' (Foucault, 2008: 226), the National Socialists' favouring of centrally administered broadcasting might seem downright inefficient.

The most compelling explanation, I believe, is that the radio's indexical structure – that it directly linked Voice to Party – was recognized as key to its capacity to produce politically desired effects on its listeners.<sup>13</sup> The record was pristinely free of any umbilical traces to the bodies that produced it. It obscured the commoditized voice's origins; and, indeed, the acousmatic aspect of the record threatened to produce

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<sup>13</sup> Another important empirical factor should also be considered: record purchasing costs were significant deterrents to gramophone listening for working-class families with minimal entertainment budgets. A 1937 survey found that only 3% of working-class households owned a gramophone, even though at the beginning of the decade the cheapest available model retailed at a price well below that of the Ve 301 (Ross, 2008: 129-130).

associations of disembodiment and even dismemberment that the radio's directors were keen to avoid.<sup>14</sup> Popular media of the time navigated these associations in various, often highly comical ways. *Ein Lied geht um die Welt* (A Song Goes 'Round the World), for example, a popular musical film from 1933 showcasing the Jewish tenor Joseph Schmidt, spun a romantic narrative about misrecognition and the perplexing erotic implications that spring from the record's peculiar amputation of voice from body (see Currid, 2006: 100-110 for an extended discussion of the film). Such narratives gave a crutch to the imagination for audiences negotiating their relationship with the new commodity form and the disembodied object-voices inscribed within its inscrutable ridges.

The problem was not that the record contradicted Nazi vocal metaphysics. If the radio could push listeners to hear a Bruckner symphony in a particular way – as an expression of the racial forces the Party promised it would bring to dominate the world stage – then subsequently played on a gramophone or live in a concert hall, we can expect those listeners to have heard it in the same way. Where the idea has become engrained that one is hearing, in all manner of forms of sonic expression, the 'creativity emanating from a central will', the subtle differences between the associations spawned by different media pale into insignificance. My point is that the record, with its world of commodity exchange, cannot have appeared an auspicious tool for inculcating that idea socially. Biopolitical manipulation was not to be suffered as an anonymous process (the Nazis were never terribly secretive about their propaganda usage and spoke of it, publicly, as a part of the modern political toolkit that had become a political duty to use; see note 2 above). The political function of the radio in National Socialist Germany was not merely to anaesthetize the *Volk*. It was to mobilize all of the categories outlined at the beginning of Chapter Two: to attract, to affect and to affirm, but crucially also to structure – to synchronize – the relationship between listener and sovereign 'will'.

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<sup>14</sup> A text by Hadamovsky (1934) stressed the perceived importance of bridging the radio voice and its listeners through some sort of human connection, commending the work of 'radio wardens' for developing community interest in radio listening in the first years of the Reich.



## **Polyps in the system**

That all of Germany was listening to the *Führer* with the *Volksempfänger*, as an advertising campaign for the Ve 301 claimed (Ex. 3.2); that radio propaganda could clear, extirpate and tear down all opposition; that the broadcast-voice was indeed a duplication of the *Führer*-voice, holding power to engender ever more duplications: all this has been grappled with above primarily at the level of ideas and fantasies. Recent work on culture in the Third Reich goads us to rigorously question the extent to which such ideas and fantasies, tied up with various political and economic investments, correlated with reality (notably, Currid, 2006).<sup>15</sup> The kinds of problems that have been raised can be grouped into three classes: the first relates to the autonomy of listeners, to the fact that they may not have always received or responded to the messages directed at them as intended; the second, to infighting among the Nazi elites (we have already seen how different some their ideas of radio broadcasting and what it could and should achieve were); the third, to contingency – that is, as Arendt’s close friend Mary McCarthy put it to her, ‘that certain features [were] incorporated into [totalitarian regimes] simply because they worked’ (Brightman, ed., 1995: xi).

It is important to address these various objections, so as to properly establish the radio’s function as a highly significant instrument of sovereign, ‘charismatic’ power in the Third Reich. The last is, in a sense, the most significant, embracing the other two, and will be treated in the next section in connection with the discussion of feedback mechanisms. Totalitarian fantasies notwithstanding, the Nazi elites controlling the radio could not simply dictate or ‘author’ listeners’ responses. The tension between the competing paradigms we have just seen, the expressive and the biopolitical, suggests as much: while the former emphasized the will of the producer, the latter, increasingly adopted by Goebbels’ ministry, stressed the listener’s desire. That desire could not

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<sup>15</sup> I have taken it to be unnecessary to demonstrate the bogusness of Nazi racialist metaphysics. In a valuable, yet at times problematic, book on musicology in the Third Reich, Pamela Potter (1998: 196) has written that musicological research into the racial grounding of music proved inconclusive, almost as if this exonerated the research. This, Potter argued, is part of the reason ‘one cannot really speak of a wholesale nazification of musicology’ (*ibid*). Yet how could such research have convincingly established a positive race-music connection of the type sought? That one *was* nonetheless sought is what is significant. (Similarly, Potter’s argument that a musicological interest in the quality of Germanness in music well preceded 1933 and was linked to ‘broader developments in German intellectual history’ is not a watertight argument against that interest having had, or developed, fascistic dimensions. It should not need restating that fascism and racialism also had histories that preceded 1933.)

simply be mastered; listeners had to be worked with and around – however, I will argue that this better resembles a principle adopted by those working the Nazi radio than an argument for them necessarily having failed at their task.<sup>16</sup>

The issue of intersubjective contingency never left the radio's horizon of operation. It seems ironic that Arendt should have appeared deaf to it. As we have seen, she very clearly presented the political act as a deed that is never complete in itself and always awaits response in a state of dependency:

because action, though it may proceed from nowhere, so to speak, acts into a medium where every reaction becomes a chain reaction and where every process is the cause of new processes. Since action acts upon beings who are capable of their own actions, reaction, apart from being a response, is always a new action that strikes out on its own and affects others. Thus action and reaction among men never move in a closed circle... (Arendt, 1958: 190)

Pure sovereignty – absolute power – *does not exist*. This is a point that my approach to the notion of charismatic power through media theory strongly reinforces. Canned laughter does not ensure enjoyment.

Just as the Third Reich radio programmers could not simply wish their listeners to hear things in a certain way and expect them to be heard thus without further ado, our own task of understanding the political function, effects and significance of National Socialist radio broadcasting strikes against similar difficulties accessing listeners' responses. As already mentioned, the radio's audience was far from silent and passive to what it heard through its receivers. Examining hundreds of letters addressed to Fritzsche from his listeners (from the surviving Reich Propaganda Ministry files deposited in the German Federal Archives in Berlin), historian Philipp Gassert (2001: 100) has written of a public 'talk[ing] back' to the Nazi radio. The propaganda apparatus had a voracious appetite for public opinion and, to a degree, welcomed criticism. And, indeed, criticism it received: one anonymous letter quoted by Gassert reads, 'I now feel embarrassed listening to you', attackung Fritzsche for presenting dissimulations that would not be accepted by 'any German who has not completely lost his judgment because he has been confused by years of Goebbels' propaganda lies' (*ibid*: 98). On balance, however, the letters Fritzsche received showed support:

that many Germans accepted core values of Nazism and would hold on to those beliefs even during the later phases of the war. Even critical anonymous letters

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. Goebbels's published account of the difficulties faced by the radio's programmers in pleasing listeners' different musical tastes. Thank God, he said, those listeners write in telling us what they want – and this was welcomed (Goebbels, 1943).

were frequently meant to be constructive and did not challenge the general ideological framework. (*Ibid*: 94-95)

‘How awful that you can never hear when we are talking back to the receiver’, read another letter (*ibid*: 95), highlighting the basic non-transparency of what transpires at the radio receiver, though offering no hint whatsoever of a subversive or non-conformist listening (‘how delighted we are that Mr. Churchill and Mr. Roosevelt get beaten up by your sarcastic commentaries’, the letter continued).

With musical listening, responses are even more difficult to gauge. ‘One of the greatest general difficulties in trying to establish patterns of development in political attitudes [beyond those of the ruling elite] during the Third Reich’, the influential historian of National Socialism Ian Kershaw has written,

is that direct, authentic expressions of opinion in their original form are few and far between. In the pervading climate of fear and repression, frank political comment in diaries, papers, and letters of private individuals was naturally sparse. Reconstruction of opinion in the Third Reich has to rely upon *reported* opinion, in sources moreover which were compiled for particular administrative and political purposes and contain their own heavy internal bias and colouring. (Kershaw, 2002: 6)

When considering music and the aesthetic dimension of radio broadcasting, we must add to this the more general difficulty of listeners being able to understand and articulate their responses in any real depth. Partly speculative approaches become all but unavoidable. The problem of intersubjective mastery – the mastery of the private listener – presents us, just as it did to those operating the radio apparatus, with a kind of black hole, unable to be fully penetrated by theory and analysis. In the following pages, I will suggest that Schmitt’s definition of the sovereign – ‘he who decides on the exception’ – offers a valuable conceptual tool for following how the Reich’s charisma machine navigated that black hole.

Concerning the autonomy of listeners: even if we reject the slippery-sticky-empty paradigm and the contention that meaning is projected onto music rather than conveyed by it (as critiqued in the last chapter), we must still hold onto the fact that idiosyncrasy, partiality and contingency are ineradicable features of musical listening. The radio broadcast may better articulate a direct, indexical relationship between producer and produced than the free-floating record, but, as I have just noted, the relationship that emerges between it and its listeners will always be subject to a clouding of indeterminacy. Beyond this, though, lie several unique issues that put the Nazi radio

apparatus's smoothness of transmission into question in concrete ways and need to be addressed directly.

One of these was the particular historical shape of the early development of radio culture in Germany. It cannot be overstressed that radio was a relatively new public medium. The conception of it as a vehicle of pacification, productive of a state of passive subservience in its listeners, corresponds poorly to the German radio's fragile and politically inchoate beginnings. Currid has described a 'more or less anarchic' use of the technology in the period from the end of World War I to 1923:

At the very beginning of radio broadcasting, *Bastlerei* (radio hamming) was one of the primary modes of using the new technology. Amateur radio hams (in the familial stereotype of the period, fathers and sons) who explored the airwaves on simple receivers they had built themselves formed a subculture that stood outside the officially sanctioned mode of listening that would soon find favor. In 1923, there were tens of thousands of so-called *Funkbastler* in Germany, who for the most part had learned to build their own receivers as radio technicians in World War I; at the time there were only 1,300 state-sanctioned receivers. (Currid, 2006: 30; see also Pohle, 1955: 25)

With the inauguration of state broadcasting in 1923, this cultural 'sport' was aggressively curtailed. The state was made the sole proprietor of broadcasting right. Receivers had to be legally approved. Listening fees were introduced. An emergency decree of 1924 even permitted police and post office inspectors to search private dwellings, workplaces and other venues for illegal radio operation (Currid, 2006: 31-32; Lerg, 1980: 101-103).

Arguably, however, traces of the early sportive, curiosity-driven approach to radio listening survived this reining in to state order. Arguably, the attempt to contain the radio bug may even have helped incubate it for subsequent outbreak. Reports on broadcasting from the later years of the Reich betray constant paranoia that the craved attention of the *Volk* had become illicitly devoted to foreign transmissions. A government security report from May 1940 revealed the perceived extent of the problem through an anecdote. A German family is informed that a son has died in battle. His funeral is organized, but the family tunes into the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) news service and learns that in fact he has only been arrested. Aware that this knowledge has been obtained through illegal means, the family keeps it to themselves and proceeds with the funeral. But nobody joins them in mourning – not even the priest; the whole town has similarly tuned in to the foreign news (Boberach, ed., 1984, v. 4: 1119; cited in Currid, 2006: 49).

Other reports expressed more anodyne concerns about technical hindrances: lapses of receiver capacity (Boberach, ed., 1984, v. 3: 854), or insufficient battery supplies (*ibid*, v. 3: 605). It is telling that a 1938 report referred to a Reich Radio Chamber motto that was blatantly negative: ‘disturbances of radio reception mean disturbances of the *Volksgemeinschaft*’.<sup>17</sup> The dream of frictionless technological power that accompanied the totalitarian imagination meant that cultural problems were often parsed as technical ones. What is clear, though, is that the radio system’s imperfection was recognized by those controlling it. They were not simply working in a fantasy of omnipotence; the ‘autonomy’ of listeners was integral to their calculations.

Schmitt’s definition of sovereignty is useful for unpicking how the acknowledged limitations of the radio were dealt with. While Raskin was describing German radio as a racially construed weapon for ‘national existence’, the medium was in the process of becoming a weapon in a very different sense. Soon after the outbreak of war in 1939, Goebbels called for a secret broadcasting agency to be set up. This agency would be called *Büro Concordia* and headed, initially, by Raskin. Its purpose was to produce ‘foreign’ radio broadcasts that would mimic the broadcasts of the Nazis’ international opposition while dissimulating their origin in Nazi territory – hiding, in other words, the broadcast’s indexical structure (this is often called ‘black’ broadcasting). Through these broadcasts, the *Büro* attempted to disaffect and enervate resistance while sowing the seeds of antagonism amongst allied opposition. Horst J. P. Bergmeier and Rainer E. Lotz (1997: 195-235) have provided invaluable documentation of this effort, which, among other enterprises, mimicked the French Communist newspaper *l’Humanité* with its *Radio Humanité*, the BBC with its *New British Broadcasting* and *Radio Arnheim*, extended its reach to the colonized peoples of India and Egypt and even planned a ‘Jewish secret station’ that would be picked up in the USA. From this, the idea of the mobile *Kampfsender* (‘battle transmitter’) arose: radio transmitters operated by the military to effect demoralization in the front-line opposition (*ibid*: 224).

Raskin’s published account of broadcasting, cited earlier, construed it as a powerful irradiation from a central point: ‘reaching out, making known, pressing forward, spreading...’. It gave an image to broadcasting that might equally have been modelled on acoustic resonance across space from a central sound source or a bomb blowing all in its proximity to smithereens. This idea of power was spectacularly non-relational

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<sup>17</sup> ‘...Störungen des Rundfunkempfangs Störungen der Volksgemeinschaft bedeuten’ (Boberach, ed., 1984, v. 2: 118).

(thoroughly un-Foucaultian). It suggested energy concentrated, explosively, to be released to work as far as its reserves would take it. *Büro Concordia* revealed a very different modelling of power. Limits and exceptions were its concerns: bungling enmity, rather than amassing (and brainwashing) friends. Like Fritzsche, whose core strategy in his political commentary broadcasting lay in ‘discrediting Allied propaganda...to undermine the effectiveness of foreign broadcasts even before they reached the German population’ (Gassert, 2001: 92), *Büro Concordia* set to work on the indistinctness of the friend-foe relation. The sovereign voice worked *around* the autonomy of its listeners. It commanded by circumscribing (more will be said on this below). Sovereign power, as we are able to rethink it via Schmitt, is not refuted by acknowledging the irreducible autonomy of the subject; the latter is its precondition.

That conflict profoundly shaped the political administration of the Third Reich is now a mainstay of the historiography of the period. It is a claim of a different order, however, to say that conflict made the radio apparatus politically incoherent. With respect to radio programming, the tension, both interpersonal and ideological, that probably had the most significant effects on broadcast activity was between Goebbels and Hinkel. Goebbels in 1938 referred to Hinkel in his diary as a ‘loathsome intriguer’ (cited Bergmeier & Lotz, 2007: 14), but clearly valued his abilities and rewarded his Jew-baiting belligerence professionally. Their thinking on aesthetic matters nevertheless placed them at opposite poles on the expression-biopolitics spectrum. Hinkel, who was eventually given responsibility for entertainment programming, sided with the purist racial expressionists. Goebbels’ ears were more attuned to functionality; he would readily sacrifice racial considerations in courting listener pleasure. As late as 1942, Hitler refused to arbitrate ongoing dispute between them on the pleasure vs. expression problem, demanding they reach agreement between themselves. Hinkel emerged with a peculiar solution. He proposed that programmes of popular music be interspersed with orchestral music, such that tone and rhythm would be constantly varied; ‘neutral’ German marches or overtures were to be played as palate cleansers between news and light entertainment; and interrupting music with announcements was to be avoided (*ibid*: 142). Thus the zebra-striped patterning was settled; but in fact the ‘compromise’ was really a recognition that the suturing of racial expression, through the classics, to the pulling power of pop was the recipe that already gave the radio its relative effectiveness as a charismatic assemblage.

Did such pragmatism make radio broadcasting incoherent? When one is speaking of politics, incoherence is a matter of perception and response. Logical consistency, in such contexts, is a means to an end and needs to be engaged with at the level of appearances; demonstrating a particular phenomenon's inherent inconsistency or heterogeneity does not denude it of political effect. If the radio programming's stitching was too obvious to be convincing – and I think that there can be little doubt that, on a certain level, the radio sent profoundly mixed messages – one needs to ask what message or effect *that* may have carried.

Security reports reveal complaints of tastelessness from radio listeners, responding, for example, to the broadcast of a cheery polka following a report of 200 deaths from a bombing raid during the summer of 1942, or the song '*Ich tanze mit Dir in den Himmel hinein*' ('I'll dance with you into the heavens') during a blitz the following spring (Ross, 2011: 167-8; Drechsler, 1988: 139; Boberach, ed., 1984, v. 13: 4970). The radio did not always flatter its audience's sense of propriety. These reports may have referred to isolated incidents, but it bears recalling that Goebbels openly publicized his biopolitical reasoning for adorning the radio with a forced grin. He was surprisingly candid about manipulating the *Volk* and it is clear from how his arguments percolated through the music press of the time that they were heard (see for example Grassman, 1938). Such a vote of no-confidence, in conjunction with the carefully cultivated myth that Hitler's personal sacrifice exceeded the *Volk*'s worthiness, must, at some level, have conveyed a sharp sense of the audience's deficiency. Did one hear a cheesy polka in a hail of bombs by virtue of belonging to a population too racially tone-deaf and unresponsive for the heroism of Beethoven? (This question guides the discussion of shame below.)

Painter has written that over the course of the Reich's brief history, '[m]usic gradually ceded its ideological ambitions [to glorify heroic struggle and national unity]... Escapism and simple gratification prevailed' (2007: 245). Her statement grasps the shift in radio programming, already noted, from the racial to the biopolitical. Yet to properly understand the political ramifications of this (only partial) shift, it needs to be recognized as having occurred within the same regime of ideological interpretation. Music remained subject to the demand for racial expression. Where it failed to satisfy that demand, the radio provoked enough listeners to respond that Goebbels felt the need to publicly acknowledge and deflect their accusations of cultural decline (1943). Indeed, the demand would have intensified, not diminished or lapsed, as Germany entered into

war: with war came increased insecurity and suffering, putting new pressure on the ideological promises underpinning National Socialist rule. As Fritzsche started to receive a trickle and then a flood of anonymous letters accusing him of underplaying local war-time devastations in his reports during the final years of the Reich, music's broadcast time was amplified. It was pushed to and beyond its limits: to give sense to the ideological claim of racial superiority; but also to modulate the experience of pleasure in the Reich, while manufacturing and marshalling otium in the service of the war effort. Conflict, tensions, empirical constraints and failures made for a messy reality. But the labyrinthine opacity of reality as it is lived – shot through with anxiety, mobilized by desperation – is precisely what ensnares and implicates the subject in ideological interpretation.

Goebbels referred to radio programming as a 'matter of practice, not theory' (*ibid*) and indeed we have seen that its operation was a hybrid product, negotiated from competing conceptions of the radio's political use-value and shaped by clearly documented recognition of listeners' capacities to respond diversely to what they heard. However, objections that the National Socialist regime could not eradicate the potential for non-normative listening and that political infighting left the radio apparatus in a state of functional and ideological incoherence do not hold as arguments against the identification of radio broadcasting as a major instrument of sovereign power in the Reich. On the contrary, they point us toward a deeper understanding of the work done to realize the political ambitions directed at the radio: of how through it the attempt was made to stabilize the charismatic power of the *Führer's* voice; and of how deeply the Schmittian logic of sovereignty came to mark that attempt.

### **Feedback and alterity**

The third class of objections raised above, relating to contingency, puts pressure on the notion of totalitarian imagination, since it would seem to challenge the unrestrained, 'totalizing' dimension of Nazism's creative political vision. We have already seen that contingency was a very real part of the radio operation. But to properly understand how the charismatic machine worked, a detour into theory is needed to examine the place of contingency in musical seduction.

The broadcast voice is a technical construction that seduces. Its seductiveness does not, however, follow an original design. It is borrowed and collated. What lay behind



the tension over whether Reich radio broadcasting should have been directed toward entertainment or racial expression was the double aspect of the ‘charming’ aesthetic form, as something that is radically inexplicable and contingent, yet nevertheless lends itself to imitation. All voices are shaped from this mix (as Georgina Born [2005: 16] has argued, all music is composed of and by multiple agencies that weave together time and space). All voices are technical constructions and all, to paraphrase Mary McCarthy, incorporate certain features simply because they work. They grasp at form in active presentiment of response. Voices anticipate. They produce presence in commerce with knowledge already obtained and embodied. They have a feel for the future anterior.

This was one of psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan’s fundamental teachings (e.g., 2006: 671-702). German media theorist Friedrich Kittler also endorsed it in complex ways and wrote of etymological resonances between *μουσική* (*mousikē*), the musical poetry of Ancient Greece, *μαθεῖν* (*mathein*), a word which means ‘to learn’ and is the root of our ‘mathematics’ (though in Homer it evokes the heroes’ mastery of the mysteries of life and love), and *παθεῖν* (*pathein*), the suffering that goads learning (2006: 15). The musician, as artisan of the voice, is by Kittler’s account a technician of the passions (the siren is the musician’s archetype).

But Kittler often exaggerated matters of technical efficacy. He wrote almost as if the ambitions of the totalitarian imagination were reality. In a fascinating text on Wagner’s music-dramas (1994), he rightly observed how the *libretti* are saturated with references to breath and breathing, sighs and glossolalia, around which a fantastical play of acoustic and dramatic amplifications unfolds. He conjured the same simple formula: music = passion + technology. But then, to demonstrate his seriousness about the last term in the equation, he described Wagner’s musico-dramatic amplification of breath as a ‘*physiological inscription in bodies and nerves*’ (*ibid*: 216, my ital.). Modern mass media, he claimed, was born with the premiere of *Tristan und Isolde* in 1865: ‘Tristan’s acoustic erection as the pillar of the orchestra’s World-Breath nullifies all possibilities of traditional art’ (*ibid*: 231-232).

Kittler’s tone seems celebratory. Yet an enigmatic epilogue to the text, which linked Wagner’s innovation to an anecdote about Ernst Jünger soaking in the aesthetic ‘beauty’ of night bombings in Paris during World War II (*ibid*: 234-5), can leave little doubt that the vision of this new media form presented by Kittler was the remnant of an ugly fantasy. Quite by accident though, this raises an interesting point of confluence.

Wagner's influence on National Socialism is invariably approached as a matter of German nationalism and anti-Semitism (as well as downright ego-mania). What Kittler's short text points to (though he did not make the connection) is a model for the *Gemeinschaft* pneumatology we saw in Chapter One in Wagner's 'respiratory eroticism' (*ibid*: 221). 'Are those the breezes of your sighs that fill the sails for me?' ('Sind's deiner Seufzer wehen, / die mir die Segel blähen?') the voice of a young, unseen seaman sings at the beginning of *Tristan* (*ibid*: 227). Nineteenth-century naturalism and twentieth-century biopolitics lie on the same historical plane.

A key term in Kittler's text, doing some of the work to justify his technological determinism, is *feedback* (*ibid*: 224; on Kittler's technological determinism, see Gane, 2005). Feedback refers to the looping mechanism used to track the movement of unpredictable variables in complex control systems. Tracking data is 'fed back' into the operating algorithm so that the system is able to autonomously adapt to the contingencies of a given environment or situation. Cybernetics, the theoretical science of feedback, took shape from Norbert Wiener's work in the immediate aftermath of World War II (1948). However, what the concept of feedback described had already been an object of human-machine systems engineering research for at least three decades (Mindell, 2002) – and as Kittler's discussion of music and mathematics suggests, it corresponds to the basic mechanism whereby trial and error becomes autonomous technical know-how.

Wiener had been engaged during the war in anti-aircraft missile prediction research, where the stakes of autonomizing feedback processing could not be higher. More familiar to the experience of most musicians is the loop between microphone and amplifier that pulls environmental sound into an *uncontrolled* squeal that crescendos toward blow-out. If Wagner's fondness for sheer reverberation heralded, as Kittler claimed, the coming age of feedback media, the Nazi Reich began to implement that age with its 'new emphasis on consumer wishes' (Ross, 2008: 333). Indeed, an important feature of Nazi radio broadcasting that very much remains with us today was the listener request programme (the *Wunschkonzert*), where letters from listeners requesting particular songs were read out and the songs performed (albeit under strict surveillance and regulation).<sup>18</sup> Though such programming could hardly be described as

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<sup>18</sup> Listener request programmes began shortly after the birth of public broadcasting in 1924. In January of 1936, a *Wunschkonzert* was performed as part of the *Winterhilfswerk* social charity programme (referred to in Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002:

a fully autonomous, adaptive control system, this rudimentary, though nevertheless highly popular, display of media responsiveness nevertheless pointed in that direction.

Be that as it may, a rigorous technological conception of the voice cannot pretend that it is an ontologically stable tool of manipulation. Kittler's invocation of feedback seems to have been determined to suggest otherwise; but feedback systems are defined by contingency and alterity, as amplifier screech still keeps reminding us. Charismatic force is always problematic, not only because it is *relational* and dependent on the reactions of others, but also because it is *inauthentic*. The charismatic voice borrows from an otherness that we can only say lies at the very border of the human world; it is like the feedback loop, tracking the strange and unpredictable. As archetypes of this otherness, the sirens, hominoid sea-birds and muses of death, sang only to sing (Kittler, 2006: 36); their allure was apparently indifferent. In a sense, their song was the prototype of Absolute Music – but despite its seeming intentionlessness, it captivated, overwhelmed and brought sailors to their death (in Homer's *Odyssey* [12.45-46], Circe describes the sirens lolling in a meadow while human corpses rot around them; no better image could be found to convey their indifference to the havoc their voices wreak). Music's power to seduce is contingent in the sense that it depends on an alterity which partly escapes rational control. It resides in the particularities of sonic patternings as they menace our sense of time, conjuring the absolute only to let it ring out to nothing. The National Socialist radio's power is unthinkable without contingency.

The relatively well-known fate of the song *Lili Marleen* may serve to illustrate this point.<sup>19</sup> Based on a poem by Hans Leip, debuted in Berlin in 1931 by a singer going under the name Lale Andersen, and then recorded for Electrola in 1939 in a new version composed by Norbert Schultze, *Lili Marleen* was far from an instant hit. Also in 1939, Hitler granted Joachim von Ribbentrop, the recently appointed Foreign Minister of the Reich, control of foreign press relations. Goebbels detested Ribbentrop and in May 1941 the latter flaunted the privilege his office afforded him by purchasing Radio

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121) to great enthusiasm. Following several other positively received efforts, *Kriegswunschkonzerte*, designed for members of the defence forces to make requests that their families might hear at home, became a regular feature of German broadcasting from October 1939 (see Koch, 2003: 168-271).

<sup>19</sup> The following discussion of *Lili Marleen*, Joachim von Ribbentrop and Radio Belgrade draws primarily on Bergmeier & Lotz, 1997: 181-189.

Belgrade, within newly occupied territory, for the Foreign Ministry. He thus broke the Propaganda Ministry's monopoly over the Nazi radio system.

Andersen's recording of *Lili Marleen* happened to be in the collection of only around sixty records acquired by Radio Belgrade, so was played repeatedly to troops in the Eastern occupied territories and North Africa. Though Goebbels complained that it had a 'cadaverous smell' and Hinkel that it was nothing more than 'defeatist chirping which tends to undermine the fighting spirit of German soldiers', repetition sold it. Efforts to shift its ranking on the Radio Belgrade charts were met with letters of protest from across Europe (a flood of 8,000, 10,000, then 12,500 per week, according to Leibovitz & Miller, 2009: 103). Consequently, it was decided that *Lili Marleen* would be aired once daily, three minutes before the radio signed off air at 22:00. Andersen, meanwhile, had found herself in trouble with the Gestapo. The song was banned in German and a new version was recorded in English for Radio Belgrade (an argument was made that it would appeal to Allied listeners). When in late 1944 the Soviets closed in on Belgrade, the Radio was transformed into a mobile studio under the identification 'Studio Belgrade – *Lili Marleen*'. It retreated back across the Alps and kept broadcasting until the 8<sup>th</sup> of May, 1945, when it signed off the air with one last rendition of *Lili Marleen*.

The song's singular reality as the voice of Radio Belgrade meets Raskin's definition of propaganda as boundless spreading and reaching out. Yet its popularity was born of accident and any effort to explain it would have to grapple with its melancholic – 'cadaverous' – tone: its tale of love cut short by the call to war, metaphorized as a shadow abandoned by a lamppost to a future that could never be 'like before...like before...like before...' (*wie einst...wie einst...wie einst...*). Hardly the expected anthem of an imminent super-race, *Lili Marleen* seems more like an ascendant plaint of failure. The original final verse's almost Rilkean lyrics of swirling nocturnal fog ('*Wenn sich die späten Nebel dreh'n*') and silent space ('*Aus dem stillen Raume*') *détourne* with images of loss their assured, militaristic musical setting – which Schultze is said to have added after dozens of failed commercial pitches, guessing that it would make the work more attractive to the popular music market's gate-keepers (Leibovitz & Miller, 2009: 61-62). It borders on irony that Germany's enemies subjected what was already a song

fit for the muses of death to ‘subversive’ reworkings, as a story featured on the US Central Intelligence Agency website in 2008 proudly reported.<sup>20</sup>

The story of *Lili Marleen* could be read as a tale of ideological and professional conflicts getting in the way of clear political strategy, but only if one forgets that the song’s popularity – and hence its power – emerged through happenstance. Otherwise, it reads as a tale about the ineradicable difficulty of controlling seduction. Asked to explain her fame while at its height, Anderson is said to have replied with the rhetorical question, ‘can the wind explain why it becomes a storm?’ (*ibid*: 125). Her song was like a polyp, nurtured by the broadcast-voice apparatus. Tools, the story reveals – for in it, the song clearly fits the role of a political tool, albeit a malfunctioning one – are never *merely useful*. They also exist and have their own strange reality (the singular attractiveness of *Lili Marleen*), which can be shuffled about, copied, modified and manipulated in manifold ways without ever quite being mastered or dissolved. Conflict, in the Third Reich, was not only a matter of political egos clashing, but also of competing strategies – the progeny of the totalitarian imagination – having to negotiate those indeterminacies of reality that could not simply be stripped of citizenship and murdered. The story of *Lili Marleen* points to the complexity of marshalling musical power, not to the falsity of a claimed *absolute* power – and certainly not to the impotence of the radio as a political instrument.

Martin Heidegger’s famous essay ‘*Die Frage nach der Technik*’ (2000; translated as ‘The Question Concerning Technology’, 1977), which germinated around the time of the philosopher’s denazification proceedings,<sup>21</sup> took the alterity of the tool as the main

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<sup>20</sup> The report (Central Intelligence Agency, 2008) describes how the US established ‘black’ radio broadcasting practices in 1943 as an innovative part of its war effort, claiming particular success in the North West of Germany. No mention is made of the Nazi’s *Büro Concordia*, set up four years earlier with the same strategy.

A collection of audio recordings consulted at the Imperial War Museum, London, mis-catalogued as ‘Joseph Goebbels *et al*, Compilation of Nazi propaganda radio broadcasts and Speeches’ (archive identification number: 29699), contained an undated, German-language rewrite of *Lili Marleen*, apparently produced in Britain for ‘black’ radio broadcasting to German troops. The song is introduced through allusions to Lale Andersen having been deterred in a concentration camp. In this new ‘updated’ version, Lili Marleen told of the terrible difficulties of life in Hitler’s Germany, called the *Führer* a slave-driver (*Schinder*) and said he made of every woman a widow. If we see each other again, she tentatively promises, it would be in a different Germany.

<sup>21</sup> The essay was expanded in 1953 from the 1949 lecture ‘*Das Gestell*’ and published in the 1954 collection *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Pfullingen: G. Neske).

theme of its meditation. Tools are frequently defined as means to an end, the willing servants of human masters. But Heidegger observed that as long as we assume their functionality ‘for us’ we forget that our knowledge of them can only ever be a contingent response to how they are revealed to us (1977: 18). The siren’s voice is intuited as a call *to us*, as tool-like. Those drawn in search of its origin meet nothingness and death. No truth is accessible in the siren’s voice beyond its accidental, seductive pull.

Knowledge is grounded in experiences of effect and function, and the tool may best be characterized as a kind of practical knowledge, an object or technique in which knowing is united with doing, made indistinguishable from it, and ultimately forgotten as it becomes instead reflex or habit (Heidegger, 1962: 98-107). Just as in philosophical discourse one argument builds upon another that built on another, tools are used to make tools used to make tools. Unlike in classical essay writing, however, the proliferation of tools never reaches a final conclusion answering back to the initial impulse that propelled it. The multiplication of means has no clear end. In the industrialized world, Heidegger said, the ubiquity of the man-made gives the impression ‘that everything man encounters exists only insofar as it is his construct’ (1977: 27). But this, he claimed, may be the most terrible deceit of the modern technological condition. Behind such an impression, knowing has been supplanted by a making that is not only thoroughly deaf to the alterity of the object world, but deaf to the extent of its deafness.

This is only the beginning of the problem. Apprehending the machine as a product of the human mind cushions the sadism of the totalitarian imagination’s fantasies of man-machine congress.<sup>22</sup> Modern technology orders and stockpiles natural life into ‘standing reserve’; the Rhine, Heidegger recounted nostalgically, has been dammed and transformed into a hydro-electricity generator to power a far away grid (*ibid*: 16). Human beings, too, become wrapped within modern technology’s zone of enforcing rationality (*ibid*: 17, 24), precisely because the tool retains a certain alterity, despite that alterity being lost to perception.

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<sup>22</sup> This may be one way of considering, with some sympathy, Heideggerian philosopher Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe’s claim that National Socialism was a kind of humanism (1990: 95) – a claim drawn from an analysis of the centrality of human biology to nazi racial ideology that otherwise appears thoroughly out of touch with the significant appeal of modern technology to the totalitarian imagination (let alone the matter of genocide).

Consistent with his positing of experiential opacity here, Heidegger was careful to emphasize the indiscernibleness of the quality of modern technology's agency. His questioning nevertheless revealed a deep suspicion that technology is far from passive to the authority of its users. Because the modern human world is technology (or technics) all the way down. Modern technology is said to 'enframe' Being – this, according to Heidegger, was its essence: *Gestell*, 'enframing'.<sup>23</sup> What is more, technology enframes human thought and activity not just physically and territorially, but, above all else, temporally (*ibid*: 25). The question of technology again rehearses the question of historical nihilism: the question of whether what bears the guise of progress is not a mistaken siren call, a development that eats away at its own foundations, leading to nothingness and death.

The broadcast-voice exemplifies the Heideggerian analysis of technology in a number of ways. Obviously, its main purpose, as an instrument of mass propaganda, was to sculpt human sociality: to accrue an audience, influence the kinds of political and historical narratives against which that audience would conceive of its existence and thereby shape the way it acted. On a very different level, it exemplifies the analysis through its bricolage structure, feedback loopings and the unmasterable inauthenticity of what it transmitted. Its instrumentalized component-voices must have remained fundamentally mysterious to its engineers, despite being fixed and catalogued, despite their reproduction and their reproduced feedback of effects. The Propaganda Ministry's engineers *employed* propaganda, but they were unable to *author* its charismatic power, as the disagreement and compromise between Hinkel and Goebbels demonstrates. The technical voice blurs authorship and authorization, original power and engineered force.<sup>24</sup> As *Gestell*, its challenge to human freedom and agency extended even to its Party hosts.

This brings us to a significant insight: the totalitarian imagination that bore many of the ambitions of National Socialist rule was itself the product of a kind of seduction. Its totalizing vision, its view to an accrual of absolute power notwithstanding, in embracing the radio, National Socialism also embraced the alterity of the siren. Its vision was

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<sup>23</sup> The German noun form of the verb *stellen* – to set, or arrange – captures the inscrutable indiscernibleness of agency that Heidegger is getting at here.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. 'There is then in all technical processes a meaning, not invented or made by us, which lays claim to what man does and leaves undone' (Heidegger, 1966: 55).

contingent; the extraordinary violence Hitler's regime unleashed to transform the subjects it ruled over into a technically pliable biological mass cannot mask this.

### **Listening without shame**

As already noted, due to the difficulties of accessing empirical evidence about the effects the broadcast voice had on the construction of subjective interiority, a speculative approach to the topic is largely unavoidable. The key question that needs to be addressed concerns whether the radio may have been detrimental to ethical life, impinging upon core subjective affects such as shame. When Arendt asked what set apart the few in Germany who 'did not collaborate and refused to participate in public life, though they could not and did not rise in rebellion', her answer was simple, direct and forceful: 'they refused to murder...because they were unwilling to live together with a murderer – themselves' (2003: 43, 44).

Arendt supported this answer through a Socratic model of ethics centred on subjective interiority and the reflective dialogue the self maintains with itself. 'I am my own partner when I am thinking', she explained, 'I am my own witness when I am acting. I know the agent and am condemned to live together with him. He is not silent' (*ibid*: 90). Evil ensues, she argued, where this dialogue falters and action fails to inscribe itself in conscience-prodding memory. 'If I refuse to remember', Arendt wrote, 'I am actually ready to do anything' (*ibid*: 94). This evil, she said, is not radical, but *rootless*, a product of the dismemberment of the Socratic 'two-in-one' intra-subjective dynamic (*ibid*: 95). Hence her famous formulation, used to describe the thoughtlessness, the lack of depth, she perceived in Adolf Eichmann, one of the key figures responsible for organizing the extermination of millions of Jews: 'the banality of evil' (1963).

The intra-subjective dynamic described by Arendt is grounded in what Agamben has argued may be 'the most proper emotive tonality of subjectivity' (1999: 110): *shame*. Arendt's question was how this core dynamic of subjective life can have faltered on such a scale and seemingly overnight. In the discussion that follows, I suggest that the charismatic voice of the radio may have contributed to this moral eclipse in profound ways, affecting the core, constitutive dynamic of its listeners' subjecthood in ways directed, once more, less at engendering conviction than at disabling the potential for opposition.



In his 1942-43 lectures on Parmenides, Heidegger grappled with the ancient Greek concept of *αἰδώς* (*aidos*), a term often translated as shame (1992: 74-75; cited, Agamben, 1999: 106). *Αἰδώς*, he wrote, is what ‘disposes us toward thinking’ (1992: 75); it is the mechanism through which truth – *ἀλήθεια* (*alētheia*) – reveals and makes itself felt. Both *αἰδώς* and its counterpart *λήθη* (*lēthē*) – forgetfulness, oblivion – imply modes of receptivity. Indeed, prefiguring his analysis of the tool as something that, in presenting itself to its ‘user’ as a means to an end, partly reveals and partly conceals its true reality, Heidegger emphasized the interdependency between truth understood as a form of unconcealedness and the heedfulness with which it is greeted and which allows its disclosure.

Though on a superficial reading Heidegger’s treatment of *αἰδώς* might appear to resonate with Arendt’s modelling of the intra-subjective dialogue, and indeed has been drawn upon by Agamben in his more recent work on shame, it proves problematic for addressing our concerns – on several counts. The difficulties start with Heidegger translating *αἰδώς* as awe (*Scheu*), rather than shame, and his insistence that the ancient Hellenic thinkers did not understand it as a subjective affect – that in fact the ‘subject’ is a modern construction inconceivable to them. The individual was of no interest to Heidegger; he wrote in the singular of an historical people or Being, its history being a function of its relation to *ἀλήθεια* via *αἰδώς*, understood as a mode of comportment with both theoretical and practical dimensions. More concerning is that Heidegger linked *αἰδώς* to *χάρις* (*charis* – grace; the etymological root of charisma) and the appearance of the divine within the realm of the ordinary (1992: 78). In the context of National Socialist Germany, Heidegger’s teaching would seem to have been defending awe and charisma as bearers of truth.

I want to suggest, if only in passing, that Heidegger – and especially his Parmenides lectures – might offer a valuable case study into the effects of the charismatic voice in Hitler’s Germany. What little critical ink Heidegger lent to illuminating the significance of Auschwitz and his initial enthusiasm for National Socialism has been described as ‘scandalously inadequate’ (Lacoue-Labarthe, 1990: 34). It has been well established that he misrepresented and downplayed his early support for the ‘glorious will of [his] *Führer*’ (Heidegger, 2003 [1934]: 15) and the ‘inner truth and greatness’ of the National Socialist movement (see especially, Wolin, ed., 1993; Ott, 1993; and de Beistegui, 1998). Retrospective revision of work from the period, which Heidegger

falsely claimed not to have made, positioned his commitment as a matter of a mistaken belief that National Socialism was set to stage a decisive, historical ‘encounter between planetary technology and modern man’.<sup>25</sup> That he claimed, in *Die Frage*, to be responding (still!) to a ‘call of unconcealment’ in modern technology (1977: 19, my ital.) casually suggests a link between this theme and the broadcast voice – a link that his reflections, in their paucity, failed to work through and that remains obscure.

We find a variation on the theme in the 1942-43 lectures: ‘Insight into the “metaphysical” essence of technology is for us historically necessary if the essence of Western historical man is to be saved’ (1992: 86). There, however, Heidegger gave little indication that he considered National Socialism to be in a uniquely auspicious position to gain such ‘insight’. He focussed instead on what he identified as the threat: Bolshevism – for which he claimed ‘the complete technical organization of the world’ was ‘the metaphysical foundation for all plans and operations’ (*ibid*).<sup>26</sup> At the same time, Heidegger pursued a startling, sweeping rejection of two millennia of Western political thought, from the Roman *Imperium* to a recognizably contemporary and proximate approach to political right featuring a biologically-grounded will-to-power (*ibid*: 52). Our notion of truth, he argued, has nothing to do with *ἀλήθεια*. Its meaning comes instead via the Roman word for false, *falsum*, and its link to *fallere*, to bring down (to make fall) by deception. ‘The properly “great” feature of the imperial’, he claimed sarcastically, ‘resides not in war but in the *fallere* of subterfuge as round-about action and in the pressing-into-service for domination...encirclement’ (*ibid*: 41). The Schmittian logic of the exception is unmistakably on trial in these lines. Yet Heidegger maintained a perplexing aloofness from anything resembling a productive critique of the movement he had formerly endorsed. The lectures reveal a retreat to the Greek *πόλις* (*polis*), a retreat of the mind to a place the philosopher claimed was only falsely

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<sup>25</sup> This and the preceding quotation are taken from Heidegger’s 1953 publication of his 1935 work *Einführung in der Metaphysik* (cited in Wolin, ed., 1993: 187). Though Heidegger claimed that he had published the work unchanged, Otto Pöggeler (*ibid*) has shown that the second, qualifying phrase – ‘between planetary technology...’ – was a contemporary addition from around the time Heidegger was working on ‘*Die Frage*’.

<sup>26</sup> A contextual detail: at roughly the same time, Goebbels gave his famous *Sportpalast* speech (Berlin, February 18, 1943) calling for ‘total war’ to defend Europe against the threat of Bolshevism with its ‘mechanized robots’. Goebbels positioned this threat as a manifestation of ‘International Jewry’, against which he asserted Germany’s right to take whatever ‘radical measures’ the regime deemed necessary. The text of Heidegger’s lectures does not make this link.

identified with the State and had nothing to do with the modern notion of the political: ‘the abode, gathered into itself, of the unconcealedness of beings’ (*ibid*: 90).<sup>27</sup>

The defining feature of shame, according to Agamben, is that the subject who experiences it neither retreats from, nor deflects, the alterity that has prompted it. Shame holds the subject witness to whatever provokes it: as something its own, as something that defines its subjectivity. In Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, the prince holds Claudius captive in the theatre to witness his own wicked deeds played before him in the hope that shame will speak his guilt. Agamben’s most compelling example of shame is of a student from Bologna who blushes when picked out at random by an SS soldier to be shot to death, during a transfer march between prison camps (1999: 103-104). Shame, he argued, ‘is grounded in our being’s incapacity to move away and break from itself’ (*ibid*: 104). Shame jolts the subject into alignment with its own disorder and impotence; it ‘is what is produced in the absolute concomitance of subjectification and desubjectification, self-loss and self-possession, servitude and sovereignty’ (*ibid*: 107). Precisely this is what we find missing in Heidegger’s work, as his thought fled the present in search of an archaic refuge, while themes and rhetoric echoing National Socialist politics washed amidst it. The philosopher’s encounter with the *Führer*, with his charismatic, technologized call, began with a spark: an ambition to double his role, to *guide* his leadership – *den Führer zu führen* – with the help of philosophy (Elden, 2000: 410). It ended with a thinking stretched across and stranded in two times, millennia apart, unable or unwilling, perhaps in part through self-censorship, to regather itself to adequately confront either the reality at hand or the politically fraught path that same thinking had already followed.

A template for modelling the channelling of shame in National Socialist Germany is provided by Georges Bataille’s remarkable 1933 analysis of ‘The Psychological Structure of Fascism’ (1979). Though Bataille did not refer directly to the unique subjectifying dynamic of shame, his analysis navigated fascism as a particular structuring of forces of attraction and repulsion – forces that strongly imply affects of awe and disgust. To reveal these forces, Bataille classed different elements of fascist

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<sup>27</sup> For a more comprehensive and sympathetic treatment of this ‘retreat from the political’, see Elden, 2000.

society as either ‘homogeneous’ or ‘heterogeneous’.<sup>28</sup> The ‘homogeneous’ component of society, he said, corresponds to society’s productive forces and is what the state serves to hold together (*ibid*: 64-67). It is the functional *status quo*. This means that it works for something beyond itself. It does not have its own internal cause or immanent *raison d’être*. The homogeneous component of society is thus precarious; it needs to be managed or it will fragment and collapse, losing its ‘homogeneous’ quality. The ‘heterogeneous’, by contrast, marks both the sovereign and the repressed elements of society. Bataille’s categories are redolent of Schmitt’s analysis of dictatorship from a decade earlier (1921: 203-204), but his attention to psycho-social dynamics was unique. What is heterogeneous, in Bataille’s analysis, is ‘other’ in the psychoanalytic sense: an uncanny stranger that the self recognizes – often in horror – as its transgressive double. Bataille argued that both *Führer* and proletarianized rabble, the high and low ‘heterogeneous’ components of society, bore a complex affective charge in the eyes and ears of the rule-bound, ‘homogeneous’ bourgeoisie (1979: 67-72). They doubly attracted and repelled.

Fascism, in Bataille’s account, was a psycho-social assemblage in which the sovereign or ruling element worked to monopolize affective hold over bourgeois society. It did this, in part, through a spectacle of excess as it subjected the low, heterogeneous other – Jews, the Communist proletariat and all others identified as political or racial others (*ibid*: 72-76) – to sadistic violence and carnage.<sup>29</sup> Here is not the place to go into the details of Bataille’s intricate analysis, which mapped the position of key social institutions, giving particular attention to the church and military, within the broader schema. The two most significant affective poles, around which the schema holds together, do, however, need to be underlined; for they reveal what I believe was the basic political problem with which the broadcast-voice, with varying levels of success, contended.

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<sup>28</sup> Bataille referred to both Italian and German fascisms, but made several distinctions between them – notably, that Italian fascism grounded its ideology in Hegel’s theory of the state, while in German fascism, race was the key referent (1979: 83).

<sup>29</sup> Competition for ‘heterogeneous’ sovereign power also had to be eradicated. The most notorious instance of this happening occurred during the the so-called Night of the Long Knives, between June 30 and July 2, 1934, when a series of murders took place in which Ernst Röhm and various prominent anti- and left-Nazi figures were assassinated, and the *Sturmabteilung* (SA) Nazi paramilitary division that Röhm headed was decimated. Of unique interest, with respect to Bataille’s analysis, is that the attacks on Röhm and the SA became linked to the regime’s vilification of homosexuality (which had previously been common and largely tolerated in the SA).

At the sovereign level, we find in Bataille's analysis not merely the usual indications of charismatic magnetism – the idealized *Führer*, self-constructed object of mass adulation – but also indications of something abhorrent and repulsive.<sup>30</sup> This double aspect corresponds to psychological research findings about the (superficial) appeal of narcissistic personality markers, which include elements of exploitative behaviour and arrogance along with more positive, carefully cultivated qualities on which the primary narcissistic trait of self-regard grounds itself (Back, Egloff & Schmuckle, 2010). At a certain psychological level, Bataille's analysis suggests, perception of the arbitrary violence of political decisionism would have added to the Nazis' charismatic appeal, even if at various other levels one may have expected it to severely detract from the already meager traditional and bureaucratic legitimacy scraped from the crumbling socio-political and economic conditions of Weimar. Bataille wrote half a decade in advance of the camps. Yet one sees already in the 1933 election campaign poster (Ex. 1.1) – where the whites below the eyeballs show as if Hitler had had to bend forward, lowering himself, to convey his message and where shadow bisects the glacial face of tautly pursed lips and determinedly furrowed brow – that from the very start, the extreme sadism to come was deliberately and meticulously advertised. One of the channels that sadism found, I want to propose, was through the radio, with its documented capacity to humiliate its listeners.

'Life *beyond utility*', the exuberant, unproductive expenditure that consumes the present moment in ecstasy, with no fear of death – Bataille's characterization of sovereignty (1993: 198) – is denied at the homogeneous level, the level that corresponds to the rule-bound Normative State in Fraenkel's analysis. Sovereignty has to be lived at that level through mediation – a point revived in a variant form in Brown's discussions of sovereign power in terms of performative excess. That mediation, Bataille argued, thoroughly transforms the character of life at the homogeneous level, which attains 'existence *for itself*' by denying itself: it absorbs itself into the *heterogeneous element* and destroys itself as strictly *homogeneous*...' (1979: 75).

Bataille understood fascism in terms of the construction of a 'total heterogeneous power'. He called it the 'sovereign form of sovereignty': it 'appears first of all as a concentration and...condensation of power' (*ibid*: 80-81). Its raw material, what it

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<sup>30</sup> Bataille also noted that 'the constitution of royal nature above an inadmissible reality recalls the fictions justifying eternal life' (1979: 75) – a point that relates back to the discussion of Hobbes and vicarious immortality in Chapter Two.

‘condensed’, was the ‘prevailing effervescence’ of its subjects, which is to say: the revolutionary potential, thought in affective terms, born of the crisis-ridden Weimar Republic (*ibid*: 80-81). Unification across classes around the ‘mystical idea of race’ and focussed on the ‘imperative presence of the leader’ provided the key mechanism through which National Socialism pursued this condensation of power (*ibid*: 83, 81). This unification, Bataille argued, was characterized by a ‘properly military affectivity’, made possible because ‘expressive elements of each class ha[d] been represented in the deep movements of adherence that led to the seizing of power’ (*ibid*: 82). He described this military affectivity in evocative detail:

*Human beings* incorporated into the army are but negated elements, negated with a kind of rage (a sadism) manifest in the tone of each command, negated by the parade, by the uniform, and by the *geometric* regularity of cadenced movements. The chief, insofar as he is imperative, is the incarnation of this violent negation. His intimate nature, the nature of his glory, is constituted by an imperative act that annuls the wretched populace (which constitutes the army) as such... (*Ibid*: 77-78)

Sadism – the sadism that produced order, the sadism of the order as imperative, the sadism that infected every gesture – pleated the psychological fabric of fascism, according to Bataille. The rechanneling of subversive energies into the service of the *Führer*’s glorification was achieved through forms of profound subjective violence, as the individual was pushed into a contradictory double identification with the heterogeneous figure of the supreme leader and with his or her own impotence and subordination. It is easily extrapolated from Bataille’s analysis that National Socialism’s condensation of power was bought through humiliation and shame.

When Agamben analysed shame as a core mechanism of subjectification, in *Remnants of Auschwitz* (the third volume of his *Homo Sacer* project), he did so with reference to the problem of testimony and bearing witness to the *Muselmann*,<sup>31</sup> the camp inmate who lived, but without will, had been shorn of citizenship and was available to be murdered at any moment with impunity. In a key passage, Agamben referred to the Voice, a central concern in his earlier philosophical work (on this, see Agamben, 1993: 3-4), as the site where testimony is born from the shame that gathers together the dispersed subject.

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<sup>31</sup> *Muselmann* is the German word for Muslim, but when used to refer to the figure in the camps the word is often left untranslated, as it will be here.

In the non-place of the Voice there is not writing, but witness. And precisely because the relation (or, rather, non-relation) between living and speaking being has the form of shame, of being reciprocally consigned to something that cannot be assumed, the *ēthos* of this gap can only be testimony – that is, something that cannot be assigned to a subject, that constitutes, nevertheless, the only dwelling place, the only possible consistency of a subject.<sup>32</sup> (1999: 130, trans. modified)

In Agamben's work, the Voice (capitalized to distinguish it from the empirical, corporeal medium of speech and song) is something purely negative. He has described it as a place-holder that marks a relationship of negativity between language and speaker ('Language takes place in the non-place of the voice'; 1991: 108); it is like money, a medium through which incommensurables (say, labour time and potatoes) enter into commerce with one another, yet whose inherent value is obscure. Living being cannot be manifested in language without passage through the negative. Agamben has insisted on this:

nowhere, in the living being or in language, can we reach a point in which something like an articulation truly takes place. Outside theology and the incarnation of the Verb, there is no moment in which language is inscribed in the living voice, no place in which the living being is able to render itself linguistic, transforming itself into speech.<sup>33</sup> (1999: 129)

In shame, this cavernous gulf between language and life comes to bear on the subject through the form of testimony. To return to Arendt's simpler language, internal dialogue draws the two-in-one subject, who does one thing and admits to another, into ethical recalibration. The *Muselmann's* testimony was, however, unique. This, Agamben has argued compellingly, is not merely because few survived to tell of Auschwitz. The *Muselmann's* testimony was unique because it gave form, so startlingly, to the 'supreme ambition' of modern 'biopower' (i.e., the rendering of the body politic into a multitude of manipulable bodies under the gaze of the totalitarian imagination): 'to produce, in a human body, the absolute separation of the living being

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<sup>32</sup> 'Nel non-luogo della Voce non sta la scrittura, ma il testimone. E proprio perché la relazione (o, piuttosto, la non relazione) fra il vivente e il parlante ha la forma della vergogna, dell'essere reciprocamente consegnati a un inassumibile, l'*ethos* di questo scarto non può che essere una testimonianza – cioè qualcosa d'inassegnabile a un soggetto, che costituisce, tuttavia, l'unica dimora, l'unica possibile consistenza di un soggetto' (1998b: 121).

<sup>33</sup> 'da nessuna parte noi possiamo raggiungere, nel vivente o nel linguaggio, un punto in cui qualcosa come un'articolazione ha realmente luogo. Non vi è – al di fuori della teologia, del farsi carne del Verbo – un momento in cui il linguaggio si è iscritto nella voce vivente, un luogo in cui il vivente ha potuto logicizzarsi, farsi parola' (1998b: 121).

and the speaking being, *zoē* [natural life] and *bios* [politically qualified life], the inhuman and the human – survival’ (*ibid*: 156).<sup>34</sup>

While Agamben’s treatment of bearing witness emphasized the voice and expression, listening is an equally central part of testimony, shame and the two-in-one intra-subjective dynamic through which it makes itself felt. Listening, I have already said, is always anticipated in the expressive act. The listener hears the voice as a call in which he or she is already inscribed. This is what Lacan meant when he said ‘the letter always arrives at its destination’ (2006: 30): between expressive form and whomever happens to attend to it, an intersubjective relationship is projected wherein intentionality is simulated virtually (thanks to the ‘repetition automatism’ of the attending subject’s drives, Lacan said) – regardless of whether the perceived intention or the subject doing the perceiving actually match the motives of the expressive form’s creator. Thus we find in listening the basic confluence of subjectification (the framing of the listener as addressee) and de-subjectification (its submission to the conjured intention of a commanding Other) that Agamben associated with shame and testimony. And yet shame and the situation of radio listening also appear to be inverse phenomena. Shame, we have seen, gathers up the subject into its ethical ‘dwelling place’, the (negative) gap between language and life, admission and deed, constriction and survival. Radio listening instead offers it dispersal. At the same time as the radio shouts, just like Althusser’s policeman, ‘Hey, you!’ (see Chapter Two), it opens a space of refuge for the listener. (In German, music meant for entertainment is generally called *Unterhaltungsmusik*, which implies that it is something *supportive* – Goebbels often referred to ‘*leichte und unterhaltsame Musik*’ – as well as being a medium for escapist time-wasting [*sich unterhalten* also means ‘to chat’].)

When radio listeners were promised, during a blitz, a dance into the heavens, they complained. The mocking reflection of their pact with the policeman via Friedrich Schröder’s languid waltz tune (from Paul Martin’s 1937 comedy *Sieben Ohrfeigen* – ‘Seven Slaps’, or, literally, ‘ear-boxings’) was evidently too much to bear in silence – somebody had to be blamed. But this was the exceptional case, where some form of subjective limit was trespassed. Every listening entails a pact with the speaker: some form of complicity at that moment where the listener enters the position of addressee

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<sup>34</sup> ‘L’ambizione suprema del biopotere è di produrre in un corpo umano la separazione assoluta del vivente e del parlante, della *zoé* e del *bios*, del non-uomo e dell’uomo: la sopravvivenza’ (1998b: 145).



and takes what is heard as meaningful *to itself*. To some degree, the listener always finds itself being spoken for; but that degree was far from negligible when the medium of speech was state-monopolized radio in a political system that grounded itself on the common racial identity of ruler and ruled. Listening to the Nazi radio meant renewing the pact of being spoken for; it meant accepting the support of the *Unterhaltungsmusik*. But because this ‘acceptance’ doubled as a ticket to flee the ‘unceasing toil’ (Goebbels, cited Ross, 2008: 333) of everyday reality, it needed not be accompanied by the blush of shame that Agamben linked to immobility and the subject’s ‘incapacity to move away and break from itself’. Indeed, I suspect an essentially reverse formulation better captures the scenario of Nazi radio listening: *the more tasteless the programming became, the more shameless the mode of listening encouraged*. The ethical life of the mind was chipped away at through humiliation: the humiliation of the programme of open biopolitical manipulation, the humiliation of Fritzsche’s dissimulations, the humiliation of the bungled promise of racial expression and the humiliation of the murderous ideological scapegoating of Jews (and Communists, homosexuals and so many others) to fuel a regime whose vision of politics was primarily one of violence and war.

This may help clear up a significant piece of the puzzle Arendt left behind: her question of how, in Germany, the educated bourgeoisie so readily abandoned the set of norms it lived by and exchanged them for another. Far from being a conventional propagandizing instrument, the Nazi radio, I have argued (partly speculatively, though guided by documentary evidence), can be understood to have functioned as a dangerous tool of subjective manipulation that worked on the intrasubjective gap where ethical dialogue stitches together language and life, the human and the inhuman, *zoē* and *bios*. In its operation, one glimpses once more the ‘supreme ambition of biopower’ to reduce the human to ‘bare life’, to a subject whose political identity would be coterminous with its biological identity and for whom ethical deliberation could no longer exist. With the radio, however, it was not the racial enemy, the *Muselmänner* of Auschwitz, but the Nazi *Volk* on which this ambition set to work.

### **The sovereign voice**

This chapter has modelled key features of the political functioning of the National Socialist radio, one of the most conspicuous mass media structures in the Third Reich

and the one that ensured the centrality of the sonic in its aestheticization of politics. I have examined the uneasy suturing of the radio's function as a technology of seduction with its role as an instrument of racial expression, clarifying on a theoretical level why regulating charismatic power through the radio was always going to be a somewhat thankless task, though in practice was far from a futile one – despite the radio being pushed beyond its capacity in the final warring years of the Reich. I have sought to illuminate how different aspects of the radio's operation followed an imperial, Schmittian logic, focussed on disactivating potential opposition to the accrual of sovereign power; that it did not simply work to draw listeners into line with National Socialist ideology and that the limits of its political power therefore cannot be measured by its 'failure' to induce a state of total conviction across the body of its listeners. Additionally, I have proposed that we consider part of the political work done by the radio to have been directed at its listeners' subjective interiority, at the mechanics of shame that underpin ethical life – a proposal that is not easily proved, but that may give some insight into the highly troubling question of how long-held moral convictions were apparently so readily abandoned in National Socialist Germany.

It is now possible to develop a theoretical outline of the charismatic voice *as a medium of sovereign presence*. By sovereign presence, I do not mean the presence of someone who is literally a sovereign, but something more abstract: a presence that has sovereign power – the ability, as Weber put it, to provoke affectual surrender. Rather than a thing, a sign, or a quality, it may be more illuminating to think of sovereign presence as verb-like. In any case, it is active and relational. Jean-Luc Nancy, the philosopher who has most penetratingly reflected on the political ontology of presence, described it, simply, as 'what is born, and does not cease being born' (1993: 2). What makes presence *sovereign* is that it is arresting. It afflicts a kind of awe-struck surrender. Charisma is this movement of presence that brings about a relationship of abandonment. Heidegger (perhaps Nancy's strongest philosophical influence) said more or less this in his *Parmenides* lectures, when he spoke of truth, in poetic form, imposing itself on the subject through the interplay of *χάρις* and *αἰδώς*. But in Nancy, the obscurantist mysticism of Heidegger's Hellenism is shorn away. Presence need not be granted the grace of God to be imposing.

The voice attains sovereignty when it commands a certain kind of obedience. Nancy wrote of a speech act that '*constitutes* the law' (*ibid*: 45), imposing itself as a prohibition or a 'ban' (that which brings about 'abandonment'). He meant something

quite different from what in linguistic theory is called the ‘performative utterance’. The performative is, similarly, a vocal command that, through its enunciation, performs a transformation on the order of reality (Austin, 1975: 4-7; Searle, 1989). However, the source of the performative’s power is usually understood to reside with its speaker (acting according to norms inscribed within a particular context), rather than with the utterance itself (Bourdieu, 1991: 107). The waging of war, for example, relies on a delegated power to wage war. The link Nancy established between the voice and law is radically different. ‘What this voice utters’, he explained, ‘perhaps can no longer be described as the command of an action to be carried out or as the injunction of a provision to be observed. Perhaps this order says, in some strange way, *ecce homo*’, ‘behold the man’ (1993: 45-6). The voice commands simply in bearing presence. It is not pre-endowed with authority; rather, the very act of making present – the expressive act – is a commanding: a commanding of presence and a command to give oneself over to it. In charismatic rule, *voice and law become proximate*. ‘*Ecce homo*’ and the Prerogative decree conjoin on the same plane of biopolitical expression. In this respect, it is significant to note that the Normative State fostered sovereign presence with a kind of porousness, protecting a legal space – metaphorically, a space of silence – for the beholders of the *Führer* and his charismatic, technologically extended and enhanced voice to uphold his/its command through their own ‘autonomous’ expressive responses. The Nazis affirmed creative autonomy (within vague, but nevertheless brutally enforced, limits) because it affirmed their sovereignty.

It is a mistake to imagine that all presence is sovereign presence. Echoing Nancy’s style, Poizat wrote of opera *tout court* as ‘the site where the sovereign voice holds the spectator, the subject, or the public, the people, in a state of total subjection, according to a relation of abandonment’.<sup>35</sup> Experience should suffice to confirm that this is an extraordinary exaggeration. Nancy, meanwhile, wrote of the fragility of the boundary of presence (1993: 46). Presence cannot maintain itself as something whole and stable – it is never that – and the law and order it imposes, the abandonment it commands, is always finite and limited. If opera, as an aesthetic institution, were able to guarantee abandonment to its ‘law’ so neatly (as Poizat suggested), it would hardly need to be performed. Were the voice’s iridescent power so determinate, consistent and predictable, there would be no need for its operatic stylization. But opera’s heartland is

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<sup>35</sup> ‘...le lieu où la voix souveraine tient le spectateur, le sujet, ou le public, le peuple, dans une relation de sujétion totale, selon une relation d’abandon’ (2001: 197).

the inconstancy of vocal power. The vocal *éclat* that ordains a theatre to affectual surrender is not always its reality – or even its ideal.

The voice is not charismatic, not sovereign, by default. Nancy followed Schmitt on this: ‘anything that is properly to be called Sovereignty requires the incandescence of the exception’ (Nancy, 2000: 127). Charismatic presence is that mode of presence that somehow determines the outer limit of its own reach. It carves an outside into the order of reality, a periphery between friends and enemies, between those who abandon themselves to it and those who do not, and it brands this outside with the tattoo of the excluded. What is sovereign marks within its law that which it cannot command. Sovereign presence claims mastery over those who turn away at its announcement of ‘*ecce homo*’: ‘Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice’ (John 18:37, King James translation) implicitly claimed what was beyond the reach of the voice to lie in the domain of non-truth. Charismatic presence is not just attractive – and disempoweringly so – it designates those beyond its reach as the forsaken.

Expression, whether it grasps for charismatic sovereignty or maintains a more openly porous facture, moves, as we have seen, across multiple registers. That movement can be modelled through a five-part structure. The ground (1) is what undergirds expression, its source. In Agamben’s analyses it is simply *life*, which has no pre-ordained or pre-structured end. According to Nazi racialists, its co-ordinates were defined by racial markings. This racially coloured ground, they believed, was ultimately determinative over the range and quality of expressive possibilities open to different subsets of humanity. They maintained, moreover, that biological inequality provided the motor for human history, which was essentially a struggle for expressive priority through ongoing conflict across racial divisions. Heidegger, in his important 1964 essay ‘The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking’ (2007), argued that the ground of presence could only ever be approached from present traces. The ground is never directly accessible and can only be inferred from what it grounds.

The second part is Agamben’s ‘Voice’. This is the passage of negation (2) between ground and expressive presence. It is also the gap that gets jolted by shame and by testimony as life and language short-circuit. Agamben argued that in the camps, the Nazis sought to eradicate this gap in order to make biological life (the ground) coterminous with political form (achieved in the figure of the *Muselman* and, arguably, in the *Führer*). I have suggested that the National Socialist radio worked in a similar

direction, partly following a racist conception of expression as the articulation of something already inherent in (racially classed) biology. But there is an obvious contradiction between the biopolitical desire to reduce the voice down to its biology and the endorsements of creative autonomy in the arts made by various Nazi Party elites. Such endorsements acknowledged the expressive *opacity* of the racial ground, the fact that it did not reveal itself clearly in artistic forms – and, indeed, that such forms rarely lived up to the promise of biological superiority. The shared ground of race, between artist and audience, was supposed to guarantee a new social commonality in the experience of art and culture. Instead, differentiation of the spoken for from the speaker continued.

From the opening of the Voice come forms of presence (3), negative manifestations of the ground. What are these forms? They do not literally come out of the Voice; nor are they *ex nihilo* creations. Rather, they are technical contortions, always in commerce with what already exists: artistic conventions, vernaculars, media systems, history. The voice is not, as Adriana Cavarero has claimed, a site of the individual's revelation, which 'proceeds, precisely, from inside to outside, pushing itself in the air, with concentric circles, toward another's ear' (2005: 4) – at least, not in any straightforward sense. The vocal apparatus is no less an instrument demanding conscientious training than a violin is. The voice is like a machine, a black box; when one hears recordings of oneself speak, the strangeness of the voice's sound is often felt with unsettling intensity. The cosy rhetoric of embodiment (which would have us forget this) says more about our unwillingness to acknowledge intimacy with strangers – with alterity – than the 'nature' of expression. For *expression is essentially simulacral*: something roped in through technology to give form to what has no form.

The appropriated form serves as an interface. Nancy wrote of *τέχνη* (*technē*: technics or artistry) 'finishing' Being (2000: 101-143). He meant that Being is constantly at work, crafting its openness (*finir* refers both to completing something and the facture or 'finish' of a surface). And, indeed, since Being's ground is otherwise inaccessible, without this activity of manifestation there would literally be nothing to speak of. Expression is not a matter of a well-defined subject throwing some thing or sentiment out into a void. It concerns *contact*. Presence is always projected into an existing economy of sense relations (4). And since expressive forms are basically inauthentic, they always already belong within complex social systems. Expression is a bit like shuffling the pack: a mini-redistribution of the sensible (to misuse a phrase from

Jacques Rancière [2006]) – or at least a move in a much longer game. The brilliance of Hitler’s trained voice alone could never have established his sovereignty; yet it was no mere ornament to an autonomous juridical, economic and political structure either. It was projected into an ‘economy’ that included didactic indications to respond to it according to political affiliation (seen in Riefenstahl’s invocation to sing and more forcefully in the *Hitlergruß* legislation), as well as ongoing efforts to control and disable enemy voices (exemplified through *Büro Concordia*’s programme of covert radio mimicry). It was conjoined with aesthetic forms via feedback mechanisms aimed at harnessing and accruing affective power, and at the same time, its passage was tempered by the experience of crisis, by ideologically fuelled racial hatred, resentment over the Versailles Treaty and fear of Communist revolution, by law and by perceptions of political possibility that came with the birth of a new media system. The voice bathed these elements in a new light – while its henchmen worked diligently to make known (within the voice’s range of audibility) that those who did not hear it were forsaken.

All of this takes place across the blank script of time (5). Expression positions the subject within a relational field in the present (with its politically governed rhythms of otium and work); it also participates in orienting that field of relations temporally. The ‘finishing’ of Being concerns not only its expressive presentation, but also its temporal *finiteness*: the ‘problem’ of mortality, which shadows meaning in the present with the nothingness into which transient phenomena dissolve. The activity of expression flings stabilizations of sense at time’s blank page, stabilizations aimed at the memory or encrypted on durable technical supports; as Paul Virilio has written, ‘*the pursuit of form is only a technical pursuit of time*’ (1991: 14).

A certain symmetry is observable here. The gap between time’s blankness and the economy of sense, the gap that frames the intersubjective relation in the present, echoes in form the gap of the Voice: the space of ethics between life and language. This other gap is the realm where foundations may be built for a just society (insofar as justice entails relations of responsibility *across* time). It is also where differences are stabilized into hierarchies and glory-shrouded despotisms. This other gap is the domain of politics – but it can be identified as such only with caution. For obviously the Voice and expressive articulation do not lie outside of the domain of politics. And yet neither are they fully held within it; they are not like matryoshka dolls, each enclosed in another larger than it (the largest being time). The two gaps, the ethical and the political, fold into and out of each other. They are like surfaces on a Möbius strip that weaves together

being and time through expressive form. And both take the same mobile frontier between norm and exception as their site of deliberation (in the case of ethics) and action (in the case of politics).

On June 29, 1937, Goebbels called together a Commission for the Protection of Time-Documents (*Kommission zur Bewahrung von Zeitdokumenten*). Announcing that ‘the original origin of National Socialist teaching is really just the *Führer*’, Goebbels called for the creation and protective archiving of ‘time-documents’ that would capture this ‘original originary source’ and stop it from drying up with Hitler’s inevitable passing. This way, he maintained, future generations could be saved from the arbitrary tastes of priest-like National Socialist exegetes.<sup>36</sup> What Goebbels had in mind, it seems, was developing a method of relaying temporal experience across time, such that the *Führer*’s charismatic power would become forever reliveable and thus eternally maintain its hold.

The fantasy of the time-document, unmistakably a product of the totalitarian imagination, was to cement together levels one and five of the structure of expression given above: being and time. As Goebbels imagined it, the time-document would seem to combine the experiential immediacy of the religious relic with the temporal coordination implied by the revolutionary calendar. Unmediated temporal communion with an unchanging form would make ethics and politics as we know them redundant. The time-document belonged to a fantasy of synchronicity without exception. However, the fantasy also betrays desperation. Circumventing the radio’s reliance on the affective and popular just as the air-time given to ‘light and supportive’ music was being ramped up, it seems to belie the Nazis’ ideological promise of racial *Gemeinschaft* by siding

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<sup>36</sup> ‘Wir müssen uns klar darüber sein, dass es für die nationalsozialistische Lehre einen originellen Ursprung überhaupt nur im Führer gibt. Wenn der Führer einmal nicht mehr lebte, so würde diese originelle Ursprungsquelle versiegt sein. Die nachkommenden Geschlechter werden dann immer nur Ausdeuter sein können, Kirchenväter, die nicht selbst eine Lehre erfinden, sondern sie höchstens nur zu kommentieren in der Lage sind... Je weniger nun an greifbarem Material vorhanden ist, umso mehr ist dann den späteren Kommentatoren die Möglichkeit gegeben, das nach eigenem Geschmack auszulegen’ (‘Rede des Reichsministers für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda Dr. Goebbels...’, BArch, R55/1241, Bl.125; cited Favre, 2007: 97).

This peculiar fantasy initiative led, in 1939, to the founding of a Reich Sound Archive (*Reichschallarchiv*), as well as a Reich Image Archive (*Reichbildarchiv*), which, together with the existing Reich Film Archive, would attempt to control in advance the Reich’s historicization.

with the singular charismatic power of the *Führer*. The fantasy's allegiance was clearly to the exceptional presence and not the power of race to transform the *Volk*.

The radio, I have argued, served as one of the most significant playthings of totalitarian fantasy. As the time-document would have done, it exploited new possibilities of the age of technical reproducibility in the interests of stabilizing and bureaucratizing charismatic production.<sup>37</sup> Yet the logic of the exception also marked the Nazi radio's use: in the shameless, desubjectivating provocation of 'friends' and the attempt, through 'black' broadcasting, to confuse 'foe'. The simple fact of that matter, to which the foregoing analysis of the radio has born witness, is that the relationality of expression cannot be eradicated. It is always composed of, and holds itself open to, an alterity, harnessed technologically. Indeed, perhaps what most clearly distinguishes sovereignty from the totalitarian imagination is that the sovereign, rather than fantasizing that this relationality might somehow be done away with, sets about mastering it.

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<sup>37</sup> Indeed, Boberach, ed., 1984, BdIII: 741 (Feb 1940) reports of the success of a radio emission 'Der Weg des Führers' ('The Way of the *Führer*'), which included excerpts from different Hitler speeches and may have been designed as a prototype of the time-document.



## **Conclusion to Part I. Responsibility and critique**

Sound was integral to the aestheticization of politics that ensued in Germany under Hitler's rule. Helped especially by the active expansion of the radio's sphere of influence, music and other forms of sonic expression insinuated themselves in all domains of life, from the home to the extermination camps. Among those the National Socialist Reich favoured, forms of musical excellence were nurtured, while censure, intimidation and murder worked to keep creative activity in check with the regime's ambitions.

Music and propaganda formed an intimate companionship. The cinema newsreel reports of military actions and diplomatic events were never without orchestral commentary or brass fanfare. But I have argued that the partnership's political significance ran more deeply: that sonic expression was crucial to the Reich's sovereign command structure in its leadership's effort to extend and stabilize its charismatic rule. Whether musical or oratorical, sonic expression was charged with affirming the ideology of racial superiority, while also being used to do affective work on its listeners, shaping their subjectivity in complex ways. It may be difficult to identify a specifically 'Nazi' music, with political meaning encrypted in favoured styles, formal tropes, harmonic configurations or rhythmic propulsions. More problematic still is the notion of an ideological coding of musical experience carried out at the level of discourse. Yet my contention has been that sonic expression was able to do significant political work all the same, both lending sense to, and offering refuge from, the terrifying and humiliating world of National Socialism.

The prominence of sonic expression in the Third Reich followed from the elevated rank art music had attained in Germany's earlier cultural history. That prominence was buoyed as radio emerged as a mass-medium, sparking the political imaginary. Hitler's trained and carefully mediatized 'charismatic' voice, meant to exemplify the potentiality of race, would find its audience in this acoustic context; though its prerogative power was also the legally circumscribed product of the Reich's Dual State legal structure, which itself was constructed out of a complex and dynamic political and historical situation.

Reinhard Koselleck, the great German conceptual historian, argued that modernity was defined by new forms of temporal consciousness and experience. ‘Progress’, the concept he claimed best articulated this new orientation with respect to time (Koselleck dated the term’s modern usage, in what he called the ‘collective singular’, to the eighteenth century; 2002: 229), linked a belief that human activity eternally improves, perfecting itself, to a form of expectation, a futural projection, that all aspects of the human world would change – and do so for the better (see especially, *ibid*: 218-235). However, for as long as the concept of progress has guided human activity, Koselleck argued, it has been shadowed by the complementary concepts of decline, decay and crisis (*ibid*: 218-247). Paradoxically, since its motor is self-critique, the reality of progress is to throw up challenges to its own perceived status and authority. As Arendt put the matter:

What we commonly call nihilism – and are tempted to date historically, decry politically, and ascribe to thinkers who allegedly dared to think ‘dangerous thoughts’ – is actually a danger inherent in the thinking activity itself. (2003: 177)

The fate of Schmitt’s theory of political decisionism, which paved the way for the legal empowerment of the Prerogative voice, drastically illustrates the problem. Epistemology of the highest order slipped into a blind upholding of the most ruthlessly vile expression of power.<sup>1</sup>

Yet we cannot grasp the historicity of this at once seismic and barely perceptible shift without bringing it into relation with another dynamic, pertaining to the age of revolutions. The political task of this age was not solely a negative one. Liberation from oppression is a precondition of revolution (Arendt, 1977: 32); but from liberation follows the need to found and articulate new relations of being within a common world. In conjunction with this task, *expression* emerged as a political problem central to modernity.<sup>2</sup> It is in relation to this that I have sought, guided by Benjamin, to shed light on the historicity of National Socialism’s aestheticization of politics.

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<sup>1</sup> Arendt referred to Schmitt, perhaps mockingly, as an ‘outstanding scholar’. Though she never explicitly engaged with Schmitt’s work in any substantial way, various scholars have explored hidden dialogue and critique in her writings. See, for example, Kalyvas, 2008: 194-253 (the citation to Arendt’s description of Schmitt as an ‘outstanding scholar’ appears on p. 194).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Sophia Rosenfeld’s (2011) account of the widely-voiced perception that public discourse, in the immediate aftermath of the French revolution, had been rendered utterly cacophonous through the eradication of the hierarchizing norms that had

Schmitt, we have seen, claimed the ‘originary democratic phenomenon’ to be ‘acclamation, the cry of approval or rejection of the united masses’ (1927: 62). Hitler’s ‘charismatic’ voice, legally framed and amplified technologically, concerned *their* expression. But what it offered those it spoke for was a form of biopolitical reduction that would prove literally genocidal. National Socialism sought to answer the task of political expression in a way that would extend and stabilize the regime’s charismatic power, while shrinking its subjects down to their (imagined) biological determinants, thereby making political life coterminous with animal life (cf. Agamben, 1998a). The Nazi Reich’s relationship to modernity is to be seen in the way these dynamics – the nihilistic, the expressive, the biologizing – interlock within it, providing the matrix for its horrors.

If we wish to grasp the political dimension of musical activity, I have argued, we need to consider the particular ways in which music produces sense. Yet doing so lands us with a paradox. Music’s agency is composed; the four classes of sonic activity outlined at the beginning of Chapter Two – the affective, the synchronizing, the attractive or impressive and the affirming – are products of the particular form music takes, products of the presentation of musical sense. At the same time, the composition of music’s agency occurs in dialogue with an alterity that will always elude mastery, to some degree. Expression has a certain bricolage structure. The forms it takes are always borrowed and its attractiveness is less an object of authorship than of discovery. When it ‘makes sense’ it conjures an order beyond the immediate sequencing of sounds and in doing this, music positions its listeners in a world – seemingly – of order. When it invokes the eternal, it dialogues with a time beyond finite experience, holding out vicarious immortality to its listeners in a way that may touch the fears and desires in which politics plants its deepest roots.

Sonic expression’s projection of sense, and the relations of being it constructs and articulates, are essentially propositional. It calls forth, but also depends upon, its listeners; and its power to position them – whether affectively, temporally, or in some other way – tends to be finite and precarious (though this is not to say that it is negligible; it is not). The Third Reich’s charisma machine sought to violate this propositionality: to exercise a form of sovereign expression by mastering and

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previously framed and delimited expressive intercourse. Many thanks to Flora Wilson for alerting me to this fascinating text.

neutralizing potential opposition to its command. In doing this, it has scarred sonic expression with the memory of the murderous violence perpetrated through it.

Three aspects of expression have come to appear particularly troubling in the foregoing analysis of its political deployment in Nazi Germany: its claim to serve as a medium of testimony; its commerce with technology, particularly as an affective agency; and its marshalling of the temporality of experience. We see the problem of testimony most clearly in the tasking of music with the job of affirming racial vitality. Where music was supposed to speak a truth, it instead simulated sense in a way that could bolster ideological claims without actually verifying them. The relationship between the first three levels of the model of expression given at the end of Chapter Three clarifies why testimony is a problem: where expressive presence promises to directly manifest the ground undergirding it, it must always lie. Truth, in expression, tends to be bid for rhetorically, through recourse to forms already marked with authority.

The voice's intercourse with technology is raised as a problem most starkly by Goebbels's approach to the radio as an instrument of affective, biopolitical manipulation. I have suggested that radio technology both encouraged and discouraged particular modes of thought in the Third Reich: that it spurred the totalitarian imagination, while potentially supporting an etiolation of the ethical life of the mind. Whereas I referred to *contact* at the fourth level of the model of expression, Goebbels approached the seductiveness of song as something much more flatly tool-like; and song's power, it seems he believed, might be amplified without limit through technological extension. Rather than it being open and propositional, he worked to transform sonic expression into a medium for biological regulation and control.

Finally, we find the danger residing in the interaction between expression and time exposed most strikingly, not, as might have been expected, in a musical example, but in the mad fantasy of the time-document eternalizing Hitler's charismatic voice and thereby assuring National Socialism's hold over the future. This was, of course, a fantasy without legs. Yet it was the same ambition to stabilize the regime's charismatic rule through technological means, I suggested in Chapter Three, on which its aestheticization of politics centrally rested. That musical form works to mark and order temporal experience, as registered at the fifth level of the model of expression, lent it ideally to the task.

The three chapters comprising the second part of this thesis will take these three aspects of sonic expression – the testimonial, the technological and the temporal – the political stakes of which were so problematically exposed in National Socialist Germany, as their main points of focus. Each chapter explores different developments and polemics in postwar sonic arts practices that have answered, in some way, that problematic exposure of the political in sonic expression. As these ‘afterlives’ elaborate the music historical impact of National Socialism’s aestheticization of politics through the various departures they make in response to it, we see in them, I argue, the outline of a larger, though previously undefined, project: that of recomposing the political form of the voice.

I frame the question of responsibility vis-à-vis National Socialist Germany’s political functionalization of music in this way (in terms of the recomposition of the voice) in part to move beyond the limitations of an approach that has tended to let the effort to exercise judgment slip away in the moral haze of a past long gone. In connection with his denazification trial of October 1947, composer Werner Egk spoke cynically of requesting his ‘punishment to be increased should it turn out that a more fundamental relationship exists between [his] professional activity and the criminality of the camps’ (cited Heister & Klein, eds, 1984: 313). Egk had been one of the most significant composers in Nazi Germany. He wrote several works specifically tailored for Nazi usage, was awarded the Reich’s highest cultural laudations, given a major post in the Reich Music Chamber and then went to great lengths to manufacture testimony for his trial that spuriously portrayed him as a figure of the German resistance (Kater, 2000: 3-30). His activity is easily classed as morally repugnant; however, as Kater has argued, much of it is also comprehensible if one places oneself in his shoes and bears in mind that ‘in the Third Reich, no one forged a career for himself whom the National Socialists did not want’ (Fred K. Prieberg, cited *ibid*: 22).

Putting oneself in the other’s shoes, often deemed an essential prerequisite for moral adjudication, can easily lead in the opposite direction. At the same moment as it flares up, the determinate act, for which one might posit responsibility, vanishes within a swarm of social, political and economic pressures. Arendt often complained of Nazi criminals accounting for themselves as ‘cogs in a machine’ and thereby displacing their individual culpability and guilt onto a larger system (2003: 148). Guilt, she insisted, always singles out the individual. There is no such thing as collective guilt: claiming

‘we are all guilty’ is tantamount to agreeing that nobody is – it is an expression of acquiescence (*ibid*: 147).

Her argument is well heard in connection with the analysis of National Socialism’s aestheticization of politics I have presented. In claiming that sonic expression had a significant role in the production and maintenance of Hitler’s charismatic sovereignty, I am claiming that the relationship between professional musical activity in the Reich and the criminality of the camps was far more than rhetorical. The structure of correspondences we have seen in Riefenstahl’s films and elsewhere suggests, moreover, that a work written for the express purpose of Nazi glorification and one that was not, but nevertheless seemed to give testimony to the depth of spirit of its creator, lay on overlapping planes of political usefulness. Additionally, we have seen how technical reproducibility meant that one could not easily control the context in which one’s creative activity was put to work (that a recording of Bruckner’s seventh symphony, made by Wilhelm Furtwängler, accompanied the German broadcast announcement of Hitler’s suicide was not down to Furtwängler and certainly not to Bruckner). With deeds reified, multiplied and used independently from their doers, it is very easy to speak of cogs in a machine.

There is no satisfying measure for innocence in the Reich context. Otto Kirchheimer suggested that, from a legal standpoint, ‘withdrawal from significant participation in public life’ might prove a more adequate yardstick than ‘active resistance’ (1961: 331; cited Arendt, 2003: 155). But this seems hardly realistic for musicians, whose job was to work in the public gaze. In any case, as Arendt pointed out, ‘[n]onparticipation in the political affairs of the world has always been open to the reproach of irresponsibility’ (though she expressed a skepticism that bordered on contempt concerning the many who tried to rationalize their career advancement in the Reich with the slogan of trying to ‘prevent worse’; *ibid*: 156).

What matters is neither empathy, nor finger-pointing, but particular deeds – and that we recognize that they matter, three-quarters of a century later, *for us* (cf. Broszat & Friedländer, 1988: 87). More importantly, rather than imagining ourselves in the culprits’ shoes, washed along by the same currents, we would do better developing strategies to avoid ever finding ourselves in them (cf. Adorno, 1973: 365). We need to exercise judgement where we deem judgement has previously faltered. And we need to determine for ourselves what kind of relationship we are willing to entertain with the cultural produce that remains with us from the Third Reich, without simply recuperating

it into an unproblematized musical canon on the basis of some kind of purely musical worth, as Potter has suggested we do (2005: 443). But we also need to critically analyse the social and media systems that shape and constrain human activity, while taking up the problem of expression creatively as a problem that, while it bears the scars of history, is also our own.

It was in relation to the first part of this task – the critical analysis part – that the social theory associated with the ‘Frankfurt School’ Institute for Social Research defined its purpose. Max Horkheimer, writing as an émigré in New York in 1937, invited a practice of emancipation through social analysis and the development of the ‘critical mind’ (1982: 233). While the war was still being waged, he turned this critical mind to what, together with Adorno, he called the ‘culture industry’ (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002: 94-136). Horkheimer and Adorno’s analysis linked the two philosophers’ experiences of contemporary Germany and North America, making little distinction between the cultural logics of Nazi totalitarianism and US monopoly capitalism. Together they argued that the new monopoly culture had penetrated every nook of the social imaginary, shaping the most intimate of human relations and lending models for the massified individual to affirmatively identify with the servility and impotence imposed upon it by society. But since the authors of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* treated the aesthetic autonomy of *l’art pour l’art* as if it were culture’s natural state, they were not attuned to the rise of expression as a political problem – a problem that breached the closure of the domain of art and culture – as Benjamin had been. Their perception that ‘[t]he *Führer*’s metaphysical charisma [was] merely the omnipresence of his radio addresses, which demonically parodies that of the divine spirit’ (*ibid*: 129) consequently fell short of Benjamin’s greater insight that what was at stake, as the mass media amplified and made ubiquitous the *Führer*’s sovereign presence, was an economization of political expression.

Arguably, the political significance of the problem of expression has been marginalized by subsequent critical social theory. Jürgen Habermas’s (1984-1987) detailed philosophical defence of the integrity of democratic procedure’s rationalization of communicative action seems symptomatic of the problem’s marginalization: his work clinically distilled the production of universalizable legal norms from all other forms of cultural, expressive activity. And yet it is far from certain that art and cultural expression have become democratic, in any meaningful sense, in National Socialism’s wake. Art institutions, beatifying the world’s geopolitical centres, continue to invigilate

a professionalized hierarchization of artist and audience, despite the continual sprawling of artistic activity outside of their bounds (which began with the early twentieth-century avant-garde and has never stopped). Conversely, the new social media of the early twenty-first century radically promise a universally accessible *τέχνη* for individual expression (provided the requisite infrastructure is in place). Yet these *τέχνη*-networks, as Jodi Dean (2009) and others have argued, channel the unfathomably abundant smog of expressive production they elicit into abstract circulating content, locking them into the movements of financial exchange value. They have neither met, nor should be expected to meet, the revolutionary task of articulating new relations of being, within a common world, through a remaking of expression.

And the task will never be met while we focus only on the stage – the institutions that support expression – and forget about the expressive form. After all, it is the speech, in its always relational articulation of being, that ultimately affirms the stage. The programme of emancipation laid out by critical theory can only be met through an active *recomposition* of the expressive voice. The second part of this thesis follows tentative efforts in this direction – efforts that have framed the question of responsibility after National Socialism as the responsibility to remake the political form of sonic expression.



## Part II.

### Fascism's musical afterlives: recomposing the voice

*A blade of grass grows in the head. If we speak, it gets mowed down. But also if we're silent. And a second, third blade grows back, as is its wont. And we're in luck, nevertheless.<sup>1</sup>*

– Herta Müller

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<sup>1</sup> 'Das Gras steht im Kopf. Wenn wir reden, wird es gemäht. Aber auch, wenn wir schweigen. Und das zweite, dritte Gras wächst nach, wie es will. Und dennoch haben wir Glück' (Müller, 2007: 8).

## Chapter Four. Speaking to history: Nono, Zimmermann

The history of postwar modernism has long been declared stacked. Positioning Arnold Schoenberg as emblematic of the modernism Nazi Germany rejected, persecuted and exiled, it has unduly favoured those claiming to further his work (and that of his students), at the expense of greater diversity and – so the argument runs – beauty (see especially, Potter, 2005; and Ross, 2003). Speaking at the Darmstadt *Ferienkurse* in 1957, Luigi Nono proposed that one might refer to those followers, himself included, as a ‘Darmstadt school’ of serial composers, in the way one speaks of ‘Bauhaus’ design (2001, v. 1: 34). His moniker conjured a shared approach to music making, its riches linked to a privileged locality. Yet in the same year and forum, a significant lecture would be presented that took a key step in the opposite direction, toward aesthetic differentiation and division. Within a decade it would become preferable, even among supporters of serial composition, to speak of myriad heterogeneous ‘post-serial’ practices, rather than serialism as a unified style or project.<sup>1</sup>

The lecture was Karlheinz Stockhausen’s ‘Music and Speech’ (*Musik und Sprache*), a commentary on contemporary text-setting practices. It polemically contrasted his *Gesang der Jünglinge* (1955-1956) and Boulez’s *Le marteau sans maître* (1953-55) with Nono’s *Il canto sospeso* (1956), which had been composed around short fragments taken from letters written by various European anti-fascist resistance fighters sentenced to execution for their political activity (published as Malvezzi & Pirelli, eds, 1954). I turn to the dispute here because it raises salient questions about the possibilities of musical expression as a form of testimony, specifically in relation to the fascist past – questions sharpened by the way the dispute intervened into the course of postwar serial

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<sup>1</sup> Attinello (2007) has argued that this transformation began around 1956, though also highlighted the unique significance of Cage’s presence at Darmstadt in 1958. Drawing loose connections between the work of Kagel, Sylvano Bussotti and others and the so-called post-structural philosophy of Jacques Derrida and Roland Barthes, Attinello’s claim, however, was that this transformation was not from serial to post-serial practices, but from modernism to postmodernism. There is some danger in this. Associating Derrida and Barthes with postmodernism rather than modernism is already a contentious move. But Attinello can also be seen to reductively homogenize musical modernism by eliding it with early serialism so as to rescue a (later) heterogeneous and pluralist Darmstadt from its anti-modernist critics.

composition while the latter was still busily constructing its authority from Schoenberg's legacy.

As is well known, Stockhausen claimed that Nono's *Canto* neither interpreted nor commented upon the content of these text fragments through his musical treatment, but 'drove out' their meaning (1964: 158). Stockhausen suggested, moreover, that in engaging with such historically weighty documents Nono was morally and politically positioning himself in a way that was opportunistic and had little bearing on the artistic merit of his work. This is well known because Stockhausen made it so: he published his commentary at least four times in the next decade and presented it as a radio broadcast in Germany and in lectures across North America.<sup>2</sup> Nono eventually responded with his own lecture, presented at Darmstadt in 1960, which caustically likened Stockhausen's interrogation of his use of the texts to questioning 'why one uses the letters s-t-u-p-i-d to pronounce the word "stupid"' (*ibid*: 82). Unlike Stockhausen's, Nono's lecture, 'Text – Music – Song', would await publication for fifteen years (first appearing in Nono, 1975: 41-60). Following the death, in late 1961, of Wolfgang Steinecke, the founder of the *Ferienkurse* and Nono's close friend and mentor since the beginning of the 1950s, Nono dissociated himself from Darmstadt. He had given up on the 'school' of less than half a decade earlier.

Stockhausen's charge of incompetence hides a serious, though unintended, challenge to serialism's claim to speak to history – a challenge that cuts to the heart of later critiques of post-Schoenbergian modernism. The letters from the condemned resistance fighters speak of dying for a future justice, of 'freedom bells' and 'a world which will shine with light of such strength and beauty that my own sacrifice is nothing' (Konstantinos Sirbas and Anton Popov in Nono, 1995a: 90). They gave testimony to a past that had inscribed hopes and debts in the present. Stockhausen could not ignore the letters' significance, which, he said rather crudely (almost as if it were an objection), 'for the most part provoke shame for having had to be written' (*ibid*: 158). Yet, he questioned their suitability for serial treatment merely on the basis of their

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<sup>2</sup> 'Musik und Sprache' was published in the *Darmstädter Beiträge* 1 (1958); *die Reihe*, 6 (1960), 36–58, which appeared in English translation in 1964, and the second volume of Stockhausen's *Texte* (1964: 58–68, 149–66). A version was broadcast on the Südwestrundfunk (SWR) and Stockhausen refers to a lecture on 'Musik und Sprache' as one of three he prepared for his tour of the US and Canada in late 1958, where he was scheduled to give no fewer than 27 presentations, as well as various radio and television broadcast appearances (Stockhausen, 1964: 219).

everyday linguistic form: ‘Far less than in the *Marteau* could syllables or words serve as serial elements, since their linguistic meaning is quite fixed’ (*ibid*).

Today, the contested historical legitimacy of serial composition demands that we pose Stockhausen’s question in reverse, as this chapter frames it. Not, how suitable were the letters for serialism?, but, how suitable was serialism for the letters?: how adequately did it speak to their historicity? their yearning for a different future? This chapter explores these questions in relation to three works that mark two-decades of serial (and post-serial) composition, each of which was also significant in its effort to rethink key aspects of vocal expression: the *Canto*; Bernd Alois Zimmermann’s apocalyptic allegorical opera *Die Soldaten*, begun in 1958 and premiered in 1965, almost a decade after the *Canto*; and Nono’s stage work (or ‘*azione scenica*’ – ‘scenic action’) *Al gran sole carico d’amore*, premiered in Milan a decade later again, which revisited and transformed various ideas from the earlier work. I am concerned with how, in the wake of sonic expression’s loud and truthless alliance with racialist ideology in National Socialist Germany, these works problematized music’s capacity to act as a medium of historical testimony,<sup>3</sup> framing expression as a complex site of authority and power.

In its invocation of the traumas and debts of recent history, Nono’s *Canto* was a relatively exceptional work in the 1950s German Darmstadt context.<sup>4</sup> M. J. Grant has pointed out that in the eight volumes of the core journal devoted to European serial composition, *die Reihe* (co-edited by Stockhausen and Herbert Eimert), only a single

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<sup>3</sup> The idea that music bears witness to history, or to some form of transcendent truth, has long roots in German idealism and is to be found among such diverse thinkers as Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Adorno (on the latter’s recurrent description of music as a ‘seismograph’ of the traumas of modernity see Payette, 2008: 132-135). It was also the basis of Nazi racial expressionism, where, as I noted in Chapter One, it pointed back to origins in theological thought and ancient pneumatology.

<sup>4</sup> In addition to the *Canto*, the Einaudi collection attracted compositions from Bruno Maderna (*Quattro lettere*, 1953) and Vittorio Fellegara (*Lettere di condannati a morte della Resistenza italiana*, 1954) (Joachim Noller cited in Nielinger, 2006: 93). Also of interest is Herbert Eimert’s slightly later *Epitaph für Aikichi Kuboyama* (1957-62), which electronically manipulated spoken text relating to the death of Japanese fisherman Aikichi Kuboyama, who became the first casualty of the hydrogen bomb after radiation exposure from US testing on Bikini Atoll in 1954. Like Nono’s *Canto*, Eimert’s *Epitaph* was an attempt to bear witness to a tragedy that was at once political and historical. However, it arguably sought to do this through a displacement that problematically framed Germany’s recent history as being already out of date.

reference – appearing in a footnote – was made to the National Socialist past (2001: 199; the text in question is Eimert, 1959: 9). Most of Germany’s serialist composers were apparently avoiding the recent past at any cost, perhaps once more enamoured of the autonomous artwork after being stung into shock by an era of total politicization.

The tendency to respond to the past through repression was examined in an important psychoanalytic study in the late 1960s (Mitscherlich & Mitscherlich, 1975). The study termed the psycho-social pathology it articulated an ‘inability to mourn’, linking it to the ‘monomaniacal’ spirit of enterprise in the 1950s and ’60s that was causing ‘German political life gradually to freeze into mere administrative routine’ (*ibid*: 23, 9). Part of the cause, as the study’s authors saw it, was the manifest lack of a notable German anti-fascist resistance movement during the Reich period to which postwar Germans might look for alternative role models (Italy, by contrast, had had a significant resistance movement and in turn fostered a much more politically attentive immediate postwar culture).

Analyses of how postwar West German politics and culture have engaged with the fascist past generally take this psycho-social immobilism into account – though this cannot alter perceived lacks in the cultural production of the period.<sup>5</sup> Many of the responses National Socialism elicited were neither direct nor immediate. The earliest work I address here was written a decade after the defeat of the twelve-year Reich; the latest, three – while the next chapter engages with still more recent material. This reflects not only how gradual the confrontation has been with which the problems raised by Germany’s fascist past and the role sonic expression played in its aestheticization of politics. It reflects how those problems have remained with us – remained open.

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<sup>5</sup> In this respect, the quite inordinate amount of musicological attention that the *Canto* has received – there are two academic monographs on the work (Motz, 1996; Feneyrou, 2002) and two further lengthy full-work analyses (Bailey, 1992; Nielinger, 2006), compared to only one readily available recording of it (performed by the Berlin Philharmoniker, conducted by Claudio Abbado and paired with Mahler’s *Kindertotenlieder*: Sony Classical, 1993) – is, on some level, almost certainly symptomatic of anxiety concerning the cultural value of 1950s serialism (Nono’s corrective being emphasized to dissemble a perceived, otherwise ubiquitous lack).

These existing analyses have sought in different ways to appraise the expressivity of Nono’s text setting and to find correlations between it and his method of composition (the technical details of which have been analysed all but exhaustively through copious amounts of note counting and sketch studying). My own engagement with the work proceeds differently, framing it (following Nono) in relation to issues of historical legitimation.

## Negative testimony

Stockhausen began his lecture on text-setting by stating the need to consider the works it discussed in their different ‘spiritual’ dimensions, rather than merely in their technical detail (1964: 149). He described Boulez as an atheist and Nono as an idealist Communist, while presenting himself as a ‘metaphysician’. Stockhausen praised Boulez’s setting of René Char’s ‘typically surrealistic’ poetry in his *Marteau* as ‘incomparably good’ (*ibid*: 150, 156). The music, he said, thoroughly penetrates the poetry’s text; through various forms of word painting and sensitivity to the phonological and rhythmic structure of the words and phrases, Boulez underscored and elaborated the poetry’s peculiar structuring of meaning. This meaning, Stockhausen suggested, is ultimately the poem’s designation of itself as ‘poetry’ in an abstract sense (*ibid*: 156). Consequently, he was particularly impressed by how the voice moves across a spectrum of modes of enunciation in the concluding movement of Boulez’s setting: from speech-like, to closed-mouth humming, before being supplanted by alto flute (Ex. 4.1). A clear trajectory is marked that passes from speech to the arabesques of the aesthetic, before the work concludes as mere vibration, left to resonate ‘*jusqu’à [l’]extinction du son*’ (‘until the sound dies out’; Boulez, 1974: 95).

Stockhausen’s response to *Il canto sospeso* was quite different. He criticized Nono for treating the letters as if they were little more than repositories of phonetic material. Unlike the Char poems, the letters from the resistance fighters have a straightforward linguistic form. They are syntactically logical and use colloquial expression (*ibid*: 158). And yet, Stockhausen complained, throughout much of the *Canto* (notably, the second, parts of the third, the sixth and the ninth movements) Nono’s serial manipulation and distribution of the text across multiple voices made it acoustically incomprehensible.

Ex. 4.2 (bars 567-573), an excerpt from the score for the ninth and last movement, clearly illustrates the problem. The word *condannato* (‘condemned’, bars 572-573) is split across four voices. Each adds to the still-held tone of the last to form a phonetically muddled cluster; each has a different intensity marking. There is no linear continuity in any sense and the natural rhythm of the word – *condannàto* – is disfigured. The enunciation is also blurred by several incarnations of the word *vado* (‘I am going’), which shares vowel sounds with *condannato*, but actually comes from a different letter

fragment.<sup>6</sup> Thus Nono seemed to have reduce everyday language to a haze of vowel sounds. Noting how Nono's serial technique entailed ascribing dramatic *crescendi* or *diminuendi* to notes of very short duration, Stockhausen further implied that mechanistic carelessness on Nono's part made the *Canto* practically unperformable, as well as aesthetically incoherent (*ibid*: 165).

However, the accusation of carelessness came tempered. Nono, Stockhausen said, 'does not interpret, he does not comment on [the letters]' (*ibid*). His setting seemed, paradoxically, to prise them from the public eye, to make of them something private.<sup>7</sup> And yet while certain parts of the *Canto* 'approach the dissolution of linguistic sense' ('*gehen bis zur Auflösung des Sprachsinnes*'; *ibid*), Stockhausen acknowledged that others (notably movements five and seven) clarified the text musically in ways comparable to what he observed in Boulez's *Marteau*. One can only conclude, he suggested, that Nono *consciously* 'drove out' the meaning of certain parts of the text. Using nonsense syllables, Stockhausen said, could never have created the effect of bare 'singing', with the mouth closed at the very end of the work, like in the *Marteau*, since this depended on the negation of meaning remaining traceable:

Because the meaning of the speech-text only becomes enclosed in the vocal structure when the listener is able to trace, follow or otherwise becomes aware of the fact that there is something quite specific that, in the given context, is not supposed to be heard, and that that which is given and specified in the moment, as the music is heard, is obviously not so important.<sup>8</sup>

Nono rejected Stockhausen's account of the *Canto* as 'absolutely senseless' (2001, v. I: 80). Consequently, the version of the lecture published in the second volume of Stockhausen's *Texte* in 1964 explained in a note that the reader might do better to ponder the analysis in relation to his own work (1964: 159). And, indeed, in his

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<sup>6</sup> Three text fragments were used in the ninth movement: 'non ho paura della morte' ('I am not afraid of death', Irina Malozon, USSR); 'sarò calmo e tranquillo di fronte al plotone di esecuzione. Sono così tranquilli coloro che ci hanno condannato?' ('I will be calm and at peace facing the execution squad. Are those who have condemned us equally at peace?', Eusebio Giambone, Italy); 'vado con la fede in una vita migliore per voi' ('I am going with faith in a better life for you', Elli Voigt, Germany). (Translations modified from those given by Peter Owens in Nono, 1995a: 89-90.)

<sup>7</sup> 'In manchen Stücken des "Canto" komponiert Nono den Text aber so, als gälte es, dessen Sinn wieder zurückzuziehen aus der Öffentlichkeit, in die er nicht gehört' (*ibid*: 158).

<sup>8</sup> 'Nur dann läßt der Sprachsin in einer Vokalstruktur sich verschließen, wenn der Hörer wissen oder spüren oder nachprüfen kann, daß er etwas ganz Bestimmtes nicht verstehen soll – in diesem Zusammenhang – und daß dieses Bestimmte in dem Moment, wie er diese Musik hört, offenbar gar nicht so wichtig ist' (Stockhausen, 1964: 159).

discussion of the *Gesang der Jünglinge* one finds Stockhausen explaining how he used a ‘row of levels of comprehensibility’ to organize the kind of differentiation between clear and unclear speech enunciation that he respectively praised and criticized in Boulez’s and Nono’s works (1964: 61).

The idea of a negative testimony, the invocation of an absent presence, nevertheless deserves further consideration, particularly insofar as it relates to various notions about the ‘unrepresentability’ of Auschwitz. In the final lines of his 1951 essay ‘Cultural Criticism and Society’, Adorno famously remarked that ‘writing a poem after Auschwitz is barbaric’ (1997b: 30; trans. modified from 1967: 34). His remark is often assumed to be a pronouncement on the impossibility of giving artistic form to the atrocities of fascism, but the meaning intended was, I think, both more general and much more specific. Adorno objected to the seeming repulsiveness of life’s stubborn onward march with its back turned to the horrors of the immediate past (he even questioned – less compellingly – the ethical status of survival as such; 1973: 355). He was irked by the fact that poetry, so long as it spoke from the side of life, seemed to contradict historical reality (which, under the shadow of Auschwitz, spoke from the side of death). The critic’s task *to elucidate the historical truth of the poem* – Adorno’s readers often forget that the essay is about literary criticism, not poetry – could thus no longer be met without calling first upon oblivion:

Cultural criticism finds itself up against the last stage of the dialectic of culture and barbarism: writing a poem after Auschwitz is barbaric and it also corrodes recognition of *why* today writing poetry has become impossible.<sup>9</sup>

Adorno did not say that it was impossible to write (good) poetry *about* Auschwitz, that the experience of the latter was too immense and devastating, too sublime to be given adequate artistic representation – this is all extrapolation. His writings suggest almost the opposite: that as long as it failed to invoke Auschwitz, *all* culture and criticism abandoned its claim to mark history and was ‘garbage’ (1973: 367).

Yet, as Agamben has argued, testimony *does* contain ‘a lacuna’ (1999: 33). ‘We survivors [of Auschwitz]’, Primo Levi wrote,

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<sup>9</sup> ‘Kulturkritik findet sich der letzten Stufe der Dialektik von Kultur und Barbarei gegenüber: nach Auschwitz ein Gedicht zu schreiben, ist barbarisch, und das frißt auch die Erkenntnis an, die ausspricht, warum es unmöglich ward, heute Gedichte zu schreiben’ (1997b: 30).



are...an anomalous minority: we are those who by their prevarications or abilities or good luck did not touch bottom. Those who did so, those who saw the Gorgon, have not returned to tell about it or have returned mute. (1989: 83-84; cited Agamben, 1999: 33)

The lacuna Agamben spoke of refers to the subjective destitution of the *Muselmänner*, those sunk through degradation, forced labour and starvation to a point from which language could no longer surface to tell of their suffering. Of this destitution, which the testimony we have speaks of as a destitution without experience, the survivors spoke as proxies, even if they spoke of themselves as they once were. The problem is not that archival documentation fails to convey the horrific emotional experience of life in Auschwitz (thereby needing aesthetic supplementation, as Matteo Nanni [2004], writing on Nono's work, has claimed). It is that what was suffered in the worst instances, those instances that transgressed the very notion of what it meant to be human (we can only assume from the millions dead that they were the rule, not the exception), entailed a complete deadening of experience.

Bearing witness always entails some form of displacement coupled with the assumption of the burden of truth and this is nowhere more evident than with the case of the *Muselmann*. This coupling of displacement and assumption is what we have already seen in the discussion of guilt (Chapter Three), as the subject gathers itself to its actions through the acknowledgement, *that was due to me*. Agamben has suggested it is also this structure that 'founds the possibility of the poem' (1999: 36), a point supported by the five-part model of expression presented at the end of the last chapter (which framed the expressive form as a negative and borrowed manifestation of the expressive impulse grounding it – levels 1-3). In a very general sense, the poem's testimony is always a negative testimony, a marking of absences. There is no poetry without metaphor, just as there is no expression without the negation of the Voice. It is nevertheless illogical to speak of something being represented by not being represented. Representation can approximate something, it can invoke it by name, it can reveal traces or scars that bind with it historically – or it can bear no relationship whatsoever to something.

Staging 'meaninglessness' as a representation of the 'meaninglessness' of Auschwitz not only risks mocking the latter's reality and implications, it risks being perceived as meaningless and nothing more. It is understandable that Nono would reject Stockhausen's imputation that this is what he had done. In Adorno's aesthetic theory, bearing historical witness is deemed possible – indeed, to occur somewhat automatically and unconsciously – because artworks are 'products of social labor',

‘sedimentations or imprintings of social relations of production’. As such, he claimed, art ‘harbors what is empirically existing in its own substance’ (1997a: 5). Again, at a certain level of abstraction, the claim seems feasible. But Adorno’s argument rested on a problematic metaphysical conception of history that viewed it as a ‘total social process’, rather than as the fragile outcome of particular and plural decisions and actions – a conception which cannot capture the interplay of nihilism and decision that I have argued defined the historicity of National Socialist rule (Chapter Two). I will shortly argue that that interplay of nihilism and decision was equally germane to developments in serial composition. My question here is, how could culture bear witness to that historicity?

### **Nono’s history lesson**

Nono responded to Stockhausen with a history lesson. His two-part lecture, ‘Text – Music – Song’ (published in German in Nono, 1975: 41-60 and Italian in 2001, v. I: 57-83), dismissed Stockhausen’s present-absence interpretation of *Il canto sospeso*, pointing to precedents for his treatment of the text. Citing phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s argument that ‘there are no qualities or sensations so bare that they are not penetrated with significance’,<sup>10</sup> Nono argued that linguistic meaning is never entirely separable from the phenomenology of the signs and objects that embed it. He questioned Stockhausen’s assumption that the transmission of a text’s meaning is dependent upon its acoustic comprehensibility and indicated possible models for his own ‘pluridimensional’ approach to the text (in the ninth movement of the *Canto* and elsewhere) in moments of textual polyphony in Bach, Mozart, Gabrieli and Gesualdo. His principal argument though was that the materiality of the word has its own aesthetic and proto-semantic reality and that musical treatment can and should engage language as a material-semantic complex in ways that bring to it a ‘new expressive-structural dimension’ (2001, v. I: 75). The rich expressive possibilities of song remain concealed as long as one considers it the conjunction of two independent realities: text plus music.

The very phrase *text-setting* conjures this problematic conjunction, as if song-writing meant providing a musical backdrop (a ‘soundtrack’) as an *occasione* for

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<sup>10</sup> The quote is actually a close paraphrase of Jean-Paul Sartre’s gloss of Merleau-Ponty in *What Is Literature?* (1949: 8; cited Nono, 2001, v. I: 62), not actually taken from the phenomenologist.

conveying the written word. Romanticism, Nono suggested, arrived at a ‘naturalistic conception’ (*ibid*: 58) of the text-music relationship; ‘the composer treated the word almost uniquely as a vehicle of semantic meaning’ and neglected phonetic considerations (*ibid*: 66). By contrast, the earlier examples of religious music that Nono pointed to as precedent for the *Canto* aimed at *amplifying* the word’s splendor.<sup>11</sup> The *Kyrie* of Bach’s B minor Mass creates ‘sound fields’ of polyphonic ‘syllabic constellations’ (*ibid*: 68); to describe it as either conveying or confusing semantic content would be to misunderstand it on both aesthetic and theological grounds.

In a text that Nono regarded highly, Italian critic Massimo Mila described the *Canto* as a ‘freedom mass’ (Nono, 1975: 384). However, Nono explained clearly that he took from the history of the mass to serve secular emancipatory ends. In the polyphonic superimposition of voices, he found the promise of new possibilities for forming expressive relationships able to reveal common meanings in the interplay of differences. The intermingling of the words *condannato* and *vado* in the *Canto*’s ninth movement (mentioned above, see Ex. 4.2) illustrate this well. The multiple statements of ‘I am going’ greet the pronouncement of condemnation with a gesture of resoluteness in the face of death, shaped expressively by a number of dynamic surges (after half a page mostly confined to the *pp* – *mf* range, there is a flurry of *ppp* < *f* markings).

Nono wrote of a ‘musically increased potency of intensity’, comparing his technique to the eight-part polyphonic rendering of the concluding *alleluias* of Gabrieli’s dual choired *O magnum mysterium* (2001, v. I: 73; see Ex. 4.3). He said, however, that it was ‘obtained in a manner radically opposed’ to Gabrieli’s intention and this is quite evident from his treatment of the four repetitions of the interwoven words *vita* and *migliore* (‘better life’, from Elli Voigt’s text ‘I am going in the belief of a better life for you’) toward the end of the *Canto*’s final movement (Ex. 4.4). In contrast with Gabrieli’s final multiplication of *alleluias* across five asynchronous but simultaneous statements (after an already lengthy monorhythmic fanfare of them), Nono’s choral texture instead *thins* to a single, low bass tone with the first repetition of *migliore*. After a denser, more complex second repetition, the sound again disperses. The final *migliore* ascends, chromatically, to form a bare minor-second discord between soprano voices, before being answered by two strongly articulated, overlapping statements of *per voi* (‘for

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<sup>11</sup> Nono used the verb *ampliare*, meaning ‘to extend’, rather than *amplificare*, but the two words are closely related semantically and etymologically.

you') by the choir's lower voices. The 'amplification' of the voice and the marking of its fragile dependency are given as two sides of the same coin.

This differentiation between a jubilatory theological music and a music aimed at encouraging new secular relationships of commonality was the underlying concern of Nono's lecture.<sup>12</sup> The implicit target, it can be assumed, was the 'metaphysician' Stockhausen's *Gesang der Jünglinge* (1955-56), the third and final work discussed in his 'Musik und Sprache' commentary. Stockhausen's *Gesang* staved off the problem of text incomprehensibility by setting the 'Song of the Three Holy Children' from the Book of Daniel (deemed apocryphal by the Protestant Church). This text repeats the phrases '*Preiset den Herrn*' and '*Jubelt dem Herrn*' (both mean 'Bless the Lord') over and over, accompanied by a delineation of the many 'works of the Lord'. Even with vocal delivery subjected to electronic manipulation, the repetitiveness of Stockhausen's text made issues of comprehensibility largely irrelevant.

The history lesson with which Nono responded ran from thirteenth century motet polyphony, through the Franco-Flemish school, Monteverdi and up to the so-called realism of Verdi, Mussorgsky and Janáček. Nono pointed to how, over the course of almost a millenium, the music-text relationship had been gradually transformed, mediated by changing pedagogies of rhetoric and diction, the study of emotive declamation and, crucially, popular song and everyday speech (*ibid*: 58). Secularization had been a central motor force of this ongoing change and Nono illustrated this by drawing an analogy to the example of Galileo Galilei disseminating his work in vernacular Italian (rather than the Latin Vulgate), so that it might find a broader readership at a distance from the authority of the church (*ibid*: 60). A scholastic/theological conception and practice of song, he argued, was gradually displaced by that of the modern individual, who 'lives and moves amongst its own kind with a greater awareness of their environment'.<sup>13</sup> *Modern* musicians no longer oriented their actions toward an extraterrestrial City of God.

Stockhausen's *Gesang*, the lecture implied, was a throwback to the Dark Ages, not a legitimate response to the problems of contemporary composition. But Nono's history lesson also made two other points that related more substantively to his own

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<sup>12</sup> Goehr's (2003: 626-627) suggestion that the *Canto* followed the model of Schoenberg's theologically grounded treatment of the voice in *Moses und Aron* and elsewhere obscures this central aspect of Nono's aesthetic and political thinking.

<sup>13</sup> '[L'uomo] vive e si muove soprattutto tra i propri simili con una comprensione maggiore del loro ambiente' (*ibid*: 58).

compositional practice. The first of these concerned *humanization*: the idea, strongly articulated in Marx's writings, that modernity entailed a becoming-human of human life and experience, which is to say a mental (and political) appropriation of human industry as testimony to the creative potential not of God, but of the human as social being. For Nono, 'nature's becoming man' (Marx, 2000: 102) was far from a matter of 'disenchantment'. His turn to the colloquial expression of the letters, like his use in other works (including *Al gran sole carico d'amore*) of pitch and rhythmic material drawn from popular worker and revolutionary songs, was to be part of it.

This 'humanization' of culture has nothing to do with what the word 'populism' today conjures. Marx's valorization of culture was quite the opposite, as the following quotation from Dahlhaus explains:

The number of those able to follow music on a high formal level has always been small, in all past forms of society. But what Marx had in mind was not the suppression of the complex for the sake of a mass audience which had not as yet had the chance to cultivate aesthetic sensibilities, but the exact opposite, the attempt to make universally available those accomplishments which had been developed by a privileged few. (1987: 17; cf. Marx, 2000: 95-104)

For many commentators (for example, Taruskin, 2005, v. 5: 88-89), it has proved a point of great confusion that Nono, who joined the Italian Communist Party in 1952 and ran for office in 1963, retained Marx's investment in the enrichment of human perception and society through cultural complexity. This relates to the second key point made in Nono's lecture. Though engagement with popular song and vernacular speech, particularly in the first half of the nineteenth century, was aimed at giving musical phraseology and gesture the outward appearance of simplicity, Nono argued that this had occurred through and in conjunction with the invention and development of aspects of musical construction that pushed in the opposite direction (*ibid*: 61).

In 'Musical Power' (2001, v. I: 261-271; 1975: 107-115), a text from the twilight of the student movement almost a decade later, Nono would decry cultural Eurocentrism, paternalism and aristocratism, instead calling for a culture that would incite participation in ways 'not different from...a demonstration or a clash with the police, or, as could be the case tomorrow, armed struggle' (2001, v. I: 268). Need this be viewed as antithetical to Nono's serialism? Marxian socialism did not seek to eradicate wealth and poverty from society, but, paradoxical as it may sound, to make them replete and common to all: 'the wealthy man and the plenitude of human need', Marx wrote in his 1844 manuscript 'Private Property and Communism', the need, that is, for 'a complete

manifestation of human life’ – and this included for Marx the ‘poverty’ of the bond of dependency on others, through which that need and wealth are refracted – ‘[must] take the place of economic wealth and poverty [in socialism]’ (Marx, 2000: 102-103).

### **The zero point**

More than any of his Darmstadt colleagues in the 1950s, Nono drew on historical arguments to legitimate his actions. ‘From the first stages of “serialism” to today’, he wrote in a 1957 text published in the first volume of *Darmstädter Beiträge zur Neuen Musik*, ‘there is only *logical historical development*, no rupture, just the time necessary to become conscious of the time itself – that is, of history – and to actualize it’.<sup>14</sup>

This notion of history logically and progressively actualizing itself as human consciousness carries along is also characteristically Marxian. It was precisely this idea that history – the history of politics and human consciousness, no less – was a quasi-natural process, transcending the messy contingency of human action, that led Arendt to strenuously critique Marx’s work (though he had adopted this conception of history from Hegel). Marx, she maintained, held a ‘notion of society as the product of a gigantic historical movement which races according to its own law of motion to the end of historical times when it will abolish itself’ (Arendt, 1973: 463). Such a notion, she complained, denies human agency its inherent meaningfulness – and as we saw in Chapter Two, she associated this denial of the individual’s agency with totalitarianism: ‘[t]he law of Nature or the law of History, if properly executed, is expected to produce mankind as its end product; and this expectation lies behind the claim to global rule of all totalitarian governments’ (*ibid*: 462).

Like Boulez, who claimed that ‘any musician who has not experienced...the necessity of dodecaphonic music is USELESS’ (1991: 113), Nono seems to have taken it for granted that serialism was on the side of the law of History. In ‘Musical Power’, the text from 1969 cited above, he outlined five positions that differently framed the contemporary relationship between music and politics (2001, v. I: 264-268). His selection, however, might seem less an acknowledgement of the pluralism of the

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<sup>14</sup> ‘Dal primo stadio “seriale” a oggi c’è solo *sviluppo storico logico*, nessuna rottura, solo il tempo necessario per la presa di coscienza del tempo stesso – cioè della storia – e per la sua attuazione’ (2001, v. I: 19).

contemporary musical situation than a reassertion of serialism's claim to have uniquely represented it.

Boulez, he said, assumed that there was no relationship between music and revolution, and Nono associated this compartmentalization of art and politics with the capitalistic ethos that allowed fascism to flourish decades earlier. Kagel, meanwhile, believed art could be revolutionary, but only within its own domain, independent from class struggle; he suffered from a 'bad, or too well intended Adornoism' that isolated the intellectual 'left' from the proletariat (*ibid*: 265; Nono's scare quotes on 'left'). Stockhausen, third on Nono's list, was attacked as a handmaiden to imperialism for conferring aesthetic value on the techno-scientific 'evolution' that structured geopolitical hierarchies between the First and Third Worlds. The fourth position belonged to certain groups on the left that rejected current musical practices as inherently bourgeois, assumed it to have no revolutionary potential and held out for a post-revolutionary culture yet to be imagined. Finally, Nono's position: he attempted to make of culture 'a moment of taking consciousness, of struggle, of provocation, of discussion, of participation' (*ibid*: 268). This plethora of positions reinforced Nono's point that serial composition would never contribute to revolution disengaged from the political sphere. It said nothing against the 'logical historical development' he had earlier claimed serialism represented.

I will not labour the point that this was an absurd claim. To call twelve-tone technique and then serialism 'logical historical developments' from the breakdown of tonality fudged the element of decision (and hence agency) in the postwar revival and creative transformation of the Second Viennese School aesthetic. We saw in Chapter Two how Hitler's rise to power was framed by a dangerous intimacy of decision and law, the permanent state of exception legally sanctioning his arbitrary, Prerogative command. The overindulgent seasoning of 1950s serialist discourse with references to laws and necessity hints loudly at a comparable defensive alliance with the arbitrary (see Chapter Two, note 11). Of course to respond by dismissing serialism as historically illegitimate would miss the point: no claim that history provides a legitimating measure for creative activity can be justified without qualifications. What is of interest from a musicological perspective is how the interplay of history and decision was inscribing itself within creative production.

The original historical anchorage point to which serialism looked back was the so-called emancipation of dissonance, associated with Schoenberg's work in the first decade of the twentieth-century, prior to his development of the twelve-tone method. The phrase, Dahlhaus explained, refers to a music-historical transformation of arguably epochal significance, whereby sonorities formerly treated as dissonant within tonal contexts came to be perceived as sonorities in their own right and were no longer expected to resolve onto consonant sonorities (1987 [1968]: 121). Such a profound transformation of musical logic could never have been brought about wilfully by a single composer; yet Schoenberg is supposed to have recognized himself as being at the tail end of it and worked to bring the process to completion, inventing a method of composition in response to the implications of emancipated dissonance – hence his unique association with it.<sup>15</sup>

But what were those implications? According to Dahlhaus, the confounding corollary of this emancipatory history was that the liberated sonorities 'lacked consequence' in their newly attained, monad-like consistency (*ibid*: 125). Since it no longer calls for resolution, the emancipated sonority, Dahlhaus wrote, 'no longer leads anywhere' (*ibid*: 123). The 'necessity' of the twelve-tone method thus referred to the *problem* of forming new compositional relations between sonorities (and also motifs) as the old ones were rendered inoperative – not to the quite arbitrary 'solution' Schoenberg invented to answer it.

We see in the emancipation of dissonance and the construction of twelve-tone compositional method the same historical dynamic traced in Chapter Two, whereby a legitimation crisis in the domain of political epistemology paved the way for National Socialist Germany's regime of Prerogative (arbitrary) command. And this is no mere coincidence. Both were born of the same progressive impulse, so defining of modernity, the age of nihilism and revolution. An impulse, both irrepressible and irreversible, that

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<sup>15</sup> The objection remains that tonal relational logic has persisted: that its obsolescence and exhaustion were merely projected perceptions. Yet this persistence is comparable to that of marriage as a lifestyle technology in the post-marital age. A relationship is constructed at will, rather than an imposed norm obeyed or transgressed. (Dahlhaus blurred this distinction in the final sentence of his otherwise brilliant essay on the 'Emancipation of Dissonance' by referring to 'the formal instinct of the genius' – i.e., the constructive will – as the 'law-giving authority in the case of musical phenomena'; 1987: 127.) The tonal relation and the 'dissonant' non-relation have both increasingly become matters of sound quality – of *timbre* – in twentieth-century music.



would upend conventions and gnaw at the foundations of authority, and in doing so, open a space for groundless – political (in Mannheim’s sense) – assertion.

In the visual arts, the history of painting and the monochrome are marked by the same dynamic. Kazimir Malevich’s *Black Square* (1915) – the most famous of his resolutely non-representational applications of pigment to canvas, mimicking only the basic form of the canvas itself – was created just over half a decade after Schoenberg’s Op. 16 *Fünf Orchesterstücke*, with its third movement of languidly meandering harmony that caresses the ear like an exploratory lover lost from time. In the context of political revolution, Malevich wrote of the need to construct a way of *overcoming* progress (1968: 85; cited Groys, 2011: 15). He had recognized the historical tendency, articulated almost half a century later by influential New York art critic Clement Greenberg (1993: 85-93, 131), for painting’s sphere of reference to be folded back onto questions pertaining to painting itself and for its content to be broken down and reduced. Malevich’s monochrome was an attempt to fast-forward progress, pre-empting the history of painting’s nihilistic end. Thus art could finally ‘move from representing to transforming the world’ (Groys, 2011: 14), as the artist metamorphosed into an engineer of human consciousness, taking pure form as his or her material. Aleksandr Rodchenko, a key figure of Russian Constructivism, engaged in a similar gesture of ‘ending’ the history of painting with his 1921 exhibition of three monochromes *Pure Colours: Red, Yellow, Blue*. Construction was to be based on artistic decision, not some supra-human organic movement of history. The Neo-Plasticism of Piet Mondrian and the *De Stijl* movement, though grounded in theosophy, was otherwise similar in dissolving representation into construction.

Schoenberg is generally associated with expressionism rather than the classical avant-garde movements that sought to transform the art-life relation. His monodrama *Erwartung* (‘Expectation’), Op. 17 (1909), written before his development of twelve-tone technique, seems to confirm this differentiation. *Erwartung* sought to answer the problem of the emancipated sonority’s inconsequentiality by enlisting it within an expressive programme. Schoenberg drew out the evocative, representational potential of timbres, harmonies and gestures to compensate for their temporal ambivalence. The monologue’s scenario allegorized this compositional approach (quite baldly). Imagining in horror to have stumbled across the dead body of her lover whilst searching for him at night in a forest, the protagonist discovers that she has encountered a mere semblance of him (a stump of wood); it turns out, however, that her lover is dead after all and she is

left wandering, directionless, in the night, her relationship severed. Her ‘emancipation’ (a decidedly negative affair) leaves her an aimless atom in a void that at first throws up false appearances to mask her reality, and then – nothing.

The idea that a *Stunde Null* or ‘zero hour’, a point of rupture and new beginning, occurred in immediate postwar German politics, society or culture has been treated with caution and scepticism by historians. In West Germany in particular, too many professionals and ideas circumvented the hoops of denazification, passing from one context to the next, to speak of a proper break from the past. The notion that society was nevertheless starting afresh whitewashes this reality and the experiential memory of the past with it.

By contrast, it seems legitimate to speak of a zero hour – or perhaps better, *zero point* – in music’s history with respect to the emancipated dissonance, the sonority that stands alone, without implication. This sonic atom ‘liberated’ from the time of functional harmony, allegorized by the figure of privation in *Erwartung*, is an index of the modernity that was to yield Hitler his stage. As such, it holds unique interest for the question of testimony and, though the sonic monad would re-emerge in multiple musical guises in the 1950s beyond Darmstadt, the capacity of serial composition in particular to speak to, and draw authority from, history.

I will call this sonic monad, simply, the ‘point’. It cannot be accounted for as part of an abstract, linear development in compositional technique. And it was not exclusively the defining musical element of serialist pointillism: the sample in *musique concrète* and the environmental sound, allowed to ‘be itself’, in Cage’s chance music are also prominent examples of ‘points’ from the same period. Serialism was the legitimate heir only to a death that might also have been a liberation; laws claimed in its name were constructions, their authority grounded in the pretence that they drew implications from the higher authority of the deceased – an authority stone-cold and mute. Rather than describing serialism’s historicity in terms of ‘progress’, we may find more incisive tools for capturing it in Stockhausen’s pair, ‘discovery’ and ‘invention’ (1963: 222-258): ‘discovery’ of the problem of the sonority free of temporal consequentiality; ‘invention’ of ways to compose with it.

## Point suspensions

Each of the nine movements of the *Canto* treats its ‘points’ differently. Yet it does not seem too drastic a simplification to thematize the work’s approach to expression in terms of a fragile projection of relationships of commonality across an unfolding temporal constellation of atomized acoustic quanta. Such relationships have been noted above in the text-setting of the ninth movement. They are clearer, however, in the purely instrumental fourth movement.

Without the strings, the fourth movement could be a textbook example of musical pointillism. One note follows another, each generally of a different pitch, timbre and duration from that before. The sequence does not reveal a graspable pattern. Even if the listener catches Nono’s tone-row – it unfolds in a zig-zag: wedge-like, with each pitch a semitone higher or lower than the ones before (A, B $\flat$ , A $\flat$ , B, G, C, etc.) – as it is sounded out *pianissimo* at the movement’s very beginning and end, the row does not directly determine the note sequence for the rest of the movement. György Ligeti said of this ‘all-interval-row’ that it was not actually a conventional row at all, ‘but simply a regulator to ensure an even distribution of the 12 notes’ (Ligeti, 1965: 6). And, indeed, study of Nono’s compositional sketches and a great deal of note counting and diagram drawing by quite a number of music analysts has shown how he used the row in this movement, in conjunction with what Veniero Rizzardi and Gianmario Borio have called a ‘technique of displacements’, to determine the recurrence of individual pitches, rather than their immediate sequence.<sup>16</sup> The row was not used to compose recurrent, perceptible intervallic relations. It merely determined where each individual pitch would recur in the overall sequence of notes and did so in a way that ensured an always changing constellation of pitch-atoms.

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<sup>16</sup> For example, following Nono’s permuted number chart designating, among other things, pitch recurrences, the A, the first note in the series, would repeat after five other notes; hence it is heard again with F $\sharp$ , the seventh note of the series (5 + 1 + 1); it is then heard alone after another ten notes and then after another three with B $\flat$ , the second note in the series, which is appearing for only the third time, having recurred after ten and then eight notes (where Nono’s algorithm leaves gaps in the pitch sequence, they are filled by non-pitched percussion). This chart, which read a different way gives the sequence of duration multiplication factors, is given in Nielinger, 2006: 100. It was first published by Wolfgang Motz in Borio, Morelli & Rizzardi, eds, 1999: 53-54; Nono’s ‘technique of displacement’ (developed in collaboration with Bruno Maderna) is explained in Rizzardi’s contribution to the same anthology (pp. 15, 17).

Konstantinos Sirbas's text in the third movement – 'They are hanging me in the square because I am a patriot. Your son is leaving, he will not hear the freedom bells' (Nono, 1995a: 90) – is answered by the bell-like sounds of pitched percussion, treble brass and wind (Motz, 1996: 72; the entire movement's activity is confined to a narrow, treble octave range). The first notes are all *ppp* tremolos, vibrations that barely pass the threshold into sonic presence. With each occurrence, though, their volume increases a notch, until the trumpets and trombone are blaring at *fff*, after which the volume gradually decreases back to *ppp*. Meanwhile, every twelve notes the common duration multiple shrinks (from a triplet quaver, to a semi-quaver, to a quintuplet semiquaver, to a septuplet semiquaver), noticeably increasing the frequency of activity and creating the effect of a kind of temporal dilation, which, similarly, reverses into contraction in the second half of the movement. Each note is thus doubly marked: as both absolutely singular and a near statistical moment in the unfolding of the musical structure. Nono's way of composing here – his assimilation of the point to the structural arc, which organizes it in time – seems to have followed the modelling of history that Arendt so detested in Marxism, wherein transformative agency is posited at an abstract level in a way that effectively denies the individual its freedom to act to shape its world.

The strings add another, rather different layer to the movement. They double the notes sounded by the rest of the orchestra, but sustain each pitch until the end of its next recurrence (Ex. 4.5). Beginning with solo violoncello and contrabass performing artificial harmonics, these suspensions gradually increase (and later decrease) in volume in accordance with the changing dynamic levels and the movement's dilation-contraction structure (with *tutti* upper strings and violoncello at mid-point).

Given both the title of the work and the content of the letters (transmitting a plea for a future justice from the past through the present), it seems reasonable to ascribe conceptual significance to the strings' activity as they sustain from point to point. They suggest a carriage or transference across time, a sort of upholding of the monad as its resonance without consequence inevitably dies out. That Nono thought of the movement this way seems to be confirmed by his reuse of it (something quite common for Nono; more will be said on this shortly) in his stage work *Intolleranza 1960* (premiered 1961). It is heard at the end of scene IV, immediately after the voice of French-Algerian journalist Henri Alleg recounts, 'For whole nights, for a month, I've heard the torture victims screaming. Their shouts are engraved on my memory' (cited

Motz, 1996: 72; Nono, 1995b: 125). Nono stated in connection with *Intolleranza* that all of his work sprang from some form of ‘human “provocation”’: an event, an experience, a text from our life provokes my instinct and my conscience to give testimony as a musician/human being’ (2001, v. I: 102, punctuation added). The strings do not word paint or allegorize; their dramatic and colouristic significance is secondary. They suspend across time the expressive particle – itself implicated in the history to which the letters relate – as memory sustains another’s torture or hope.

There are several reasons why this reworking of expression may seem unsatisfying. One relates to the apparent anthropomorphization of the sound point. In *Erwartung*, the allegorization of the emancipated dissonance is supported by a gestural musical style that approximates the psychological state of the speaker registered by the monologue. In the *Canto*, there is no such mimetic resemblance offered between a person and, for example, a half-second B $\flat$ , flutter-tongued as quietly as possible on a flute. The condition of the emigrant, the main protagonist in *Intolleranza* (which, perhaps tellingly, was dedicated to Schoenberg), echoes that of the woman in *Erwartung*. Whereas she finds herself lost in the night without direction and with the bond of love shattered, he labours far from his homeland, unable to form lasting relationships grounded in trust and commonality. But while *Erwartung*’s text basically admits that its anthropomorphization of the emancipated dissonance is delusory, Nono’s pointillism may come across as less convincing precisely because it is not gesturally suggestive in the way it seeks to frame the point as a medium of testimony. That said, M. J. Grant has argued, correctly I believe, that Nono’s frequent use of held tones without melodic inflection does evoke human presence insofar as it ‘reflects the extension of vowels which is characteristic of singing’ and one of the things that distinguishes song from speech (2001: 205). Yet even if we accept that these sonorities are ‘vocal’, stretched from the temporality of speech, they are also mere vibrations, without memory of their own. They cannot suffer the shame concomitant with testimony.

There is confusion between model and reality. Nono described *Il canto sospeso* as an amplification of his own subjectivation as a witness:

the message of those letters of men condemned to death is engraved on my heart as it is in the heart of all those who see in these letters documents of love, of conscious choice and responsibility in life’s confrontations and examples of the spirit of sacrifice and resistance against Nazism, this demonstration of irrationality that tried to destroy reason. (2001, v. I: 81)

Within that amplification, many smaller compositional amplifications are presented that illustrate the work's purpose in miniature. But what is the effectiveness of such techniques when held within the frame of the work? A 'cello can sustain a B $\flat$  until its recurrence six bars later, but not past the end of a concert. Subtle gestures such as the repetition of the fourth movement's dilation-contraction structure in the final movement's *bocca chiusa* coda (bars 595-605) come across as formal niceties (if one notices them at all) rather than as determinate retentions. The same is generally true of Nono's continual appropriations from his earlier work throughout his career.

To be a successful *medium* of testimony, the *Canto* depended on its listeners. Its testimonial suspensions and amplifications would have been meaningless if they themselves were not 'witnessed' and carried on. At moments, the work offers hints of acknowledgement of this dependency. Listening, I catch tentative melodic lines, mimicry, fleeting oases of harmonic consistency (Ex. 4.6), but can never be sure quite where they lie between compositional intention, algorithmic accident, the performers' efforts to make sense of the score and my own effort to make sense of theirs. It is in these moments, where the point seems suddenly to abandon its isolation and become two or three, a micro-eruption of sense, that the openness of Nono's endeavour – its almost propositional quality – seems most apparent. *Il canto sospeso* could not be described in terms of the Brechtian participation with which Nono would identify his work in 1969. On balance, it is too representational, too much a matter of a composer articulating his convictions in a controlled, relatively closed form that claimed its legitimacy on an abstract historical teleology. As we will see, though, what Nono later made of it suggests that he recognized that the *Canto*'s great strengths lie precisely in those moments where the work exposes its impotence and fragility.

### **Zimmermann – Lenz – Kupfer – Brecht**

Before examining *Al gran sole*, I want to turn to an opera written in the interim years that much more explicitly – but also more problematically – linked language, history and music: Bernd Alois Zimmermann's *Die Soldaten* ('The Soldiers'). Zimmermann began work on *Die Soldaten* in 1958, between Stockhausen's lecture and Nono's reply, the year Cage lectured in Darmstadt and also the year an article featured Zimmermann's work in *die Reihe* (Schubert, 1960; the issue was on Darmstadt's 'young composers' and included Zimmermann despite the fact that he was forty years old – a decade older

than Stockhausen). The work was a colossal attempt to make over a cultural form that, as Zimmermann had no hesitations noting, had frequently been declared dead (1974: 93). It calls for a multi-level performance space, three cinema projectors and three ensembles of stage musicians, a bloated orchestra (including a large array of pitched percussion, piano, harpsichord, celesta and organ) and ten loud-speaker groups for electronic music. In 1960, Zimmermann stopped work on the opera, having completed the first two acts and part of the third, when Cologne Opera refused to stage it, apparently judging it ‘unplayable’ (Albèra, 2007: 456). After a ‘Vocal Symphony’ drawn from the work was performed with great success in 1963, Zimmermann received a new contract with Cologne Opera and the work was finally finished and performed in 1965.

Zimmermann’s libretto derived, with relatively minimal changes, from J. M. R. Lenz’s play of the same title (1967: 181-247 [written 1774-75]). The composer had read the play in his youth and became reacquainted with it through a 1954 staging that prompted him to study Lenz’s ‘Observations on the Theatre’ (1966: 329-362 [1774]), a significant theoretical text from the *Sturm und Drang* period (Gruhn, 1985: 11; Zimmermann, 1974: 96). Though Zimmermann seems not to have known this, in 1950 Brecht’s Berliner Ensemble had performed an adaptation of Lenz’s *Der Hofmeister oder Vorteile der Privaterziehung* (‘The Tutor, or, the Advantages of Private Education’, 1967 [1774]: 9-104), greeting the founding of the East German socialist state with a warning for its audience against the patterns of servitude that crystallize social hierarchy and division. In this extraordinary work of social commentary and critique from the immediate pre-revolutionary period, a private tutor castrates himself so that his sexual drive will no longer get in the way of his job of teaching the children of the aristocracy and bourgeoisie to, respectively, command and obey (for a discussion of Brecht’s staging of *Der Hofmeister*, see Bryant-Bertail, 2000: 91-103). *Die Soldaten* engages similar themes, drawing together a degraded image of a military culture that cares only for sex, cheap laughs and mateship, with an unflattering portrait of bourgeois marital aspiration. Both plays feature the same fraught crossing of the body, as a site of sexual appetite and drive, with forms of social hierarchy and difference that are manifested and reproduced through culture and language.

Lenz’s ‘Observations’ defined the difference between modern tragedy and comedy as a portrayal of individual, autonomous characters, on the one hand, and of ‘things’, or

‘situations’ on the other (1966: 359). The ‘Observations’ discuss at length the conception of tragedy given in Aristotle’s *Poetics*, rejecting it for being fatalistic and dependent on religious belief for its effectiveness (*ibid*: 340-341). Lenz suggested, meanwhile, that modern tragedies were essentially dramas about heroes, geniuses or otherwise beyond-ordinary characters. Both *Die Soldaten* and *Der Hofmeister* are subtitled ‘a comedy’ – this was Lenz’s ironic way of designating them as social studies, rather than cathartic thrillers or works serving to reaffirm the distinction of the few. As Bruce Duncan has written, ‘instead of whole living characters who are distinguishable from their environment, [*Die Soldaten*] portrays automatons whose language reveals their complete conformity to the social and economic forces that shape them’ (1976: 515). Little wonder then that Brecht claimed Lenz as one of the forefathers of his ‘epic theatre’.

It bears noting how different the narrator of *Erwartung* is from Lenz’s automata-protagonists. The latter are nothing but social relations and language. When, in *Der Hofmeister*, body emerges as a surplus of sexual drive between the lines of social text, it is hacked away. Lenz, like Brecht, showed that that text was not fixed; and that theatre was changing along with the social order and mores it represented – and that things could be different again. It is still, nevertheless, the paternal bond that brings redemption in Lenz’s *Soldaten*. Having climbed a ladder of three men and one woman, Marie, the play’s main character, is reduced through sexual violence to the status of a beggar. In the final act’s penultimate scene, she is reunited with her father after he initially fails to recognize her. Zimmermann rewrote this scene in the spirit of *Erwartung*. He left the woman unrecognized and destitute.

Duncan has highlighted how Marie’s language – and that of others in Lenz’s play – vacuously mirrors the desires of others. In the opening scene, she has her sister check a letter she is writing, with much difficulty, to the mother of the man she desires, Stolzius. Her sister pulls her up for forgetting the first-person subject pronoun ‘wir’, to which she responds: ‘Er, what’re you talking about, daddy writes like this too’ (Lenz, 1967: 183). In place of revealing anything about her personality, Lenz opens the play by showing that Marie cannot spell *Madame* (she over-enunciates the consonants and spells it *Matamme*). Her social status defines her: the poorly educated daughter of, appropriately enough, a vendor of *galenterie* (accoutrements for improving one’s standing in the eyes of the opposite sex). Stolzius is a cloth merchant, presumably of equal status to Marie’s father. But the letter-writing scene ‘underscores [the] abandonment of her identity to her



social pretensions' that will follow as these pretensions inflate throughout the play and Marie begins to pursue liaisons with the nobility (Duncan, 1976: 516).

Correspondingly, Zimmermann gave us an opera of voices unable to maintain autonomous styles. Marie, in particular, is an operatic chameleon. In the first scene she reproduces her sister Charlotte's broken, declamatory lyricism, singing relatively simple rhythms of quavers and longer notes that are rarely melismatic or ornamented (Ex. 4.7). In the first act's third scene she sings much more rapid, complex rhythmic figures as she appropriates the melodic configurations and repeated tones of Desportes, a nobleman in the French services (Ex. 4.8). Her voice mirrors the social rank she aspires to, as if from an empty core. She is not exceptional in this. Her father, likewise, replicates Desportes' style later in the same scene. Lack of vocal autonomy is the opera's norm (cf. Becker, 1981: 100-102).

More noticeable is how declamation shifts as characters strain to reproduce the normative codes corresponding to their social positions (actual or desired). Throughout the opera, the greeting of others by title is musically exaggerated, often with widely leaping melodic arabesques, grace notes or complex rhythmic articulation (Ex. 4.9). The frequently comical figures that result do the job of erotic seduction and the dialogues of courtship need not move far beyond the articulation of social status. Strained projections of rectitude are marked by monotone delivery, generally from the upper limit of the vocal range. Pirzel, a character who uses a simplistic theological argument to morally defend the debased activities of the soldiers – 'My dear comrades, you are honourable creations of God, thus can I only respect and elevate you' (Act II, Scene 1) – sings almost entirely in '*molto espressivo*' monotone with minimal rhythmic suppleness (Ex. 4.10). The style conjures religious intoning and this correlates with Pirzel's theologism and the profession of his debating partner, Father Eisenhardt, whose own tendency toward monotony is subtler but still distinct. Throughout the opera, the singing moves between this polarity of strained monotone and its counterpart, normal speech. It is as much gestural as symbolic: a marker of discomfort bubbling beneath all of the pretense.

This approach to the voice contrasts strongly with Nono's approach to the singing in *Il canto sospeso*. There are, in fact, various superficial stylistic similarities between the two works (the composers also maintained correspondence during the years in which Zimmermann worked on *Die Soldaten*). Movement 6a of the *Canto*, with its monotone vocal lines and dynamically volatile bands of brassy, cluster harmony and timpani rolls,

may have provided a source not only for Pirzel, but for the rhythmic, repeated-note brass clusters that open *Die Soldaten*'s first act. However, if for Nono song stretched the word out of the temporality of speech, liberating it from its functionalization in the here and now, Zimmermann's voices register song as a marker of social distinction. As it would be for Pierre Bourdieu (1984), the aesthetic, in *Die Soldaten*, inscribes social status more strongly than words. This is illustrated strikingly in the fourth scene of the third act. Countess de la Roche, the character with the highest social ranking in the opera, speaks with her manservant, who responds to her panicky display of vocal prowess with an expressively barren speech style that is measured, sedate and affirms his servility (Ex. 4.11). This is language that marks positions. It has little to do with understanding. In several key scenes, *Die Soldaten*'s characters sing at one another simultaneously, without pausing to listen, as if knowing in advance the content of the others' speech. Tensile cacophonies of layered vocal lines ensue in place of dramatic dialogue (Ex. 4.12). The incredible noisiness of the opera – it begins with an eruption of *fortissimo*, sustained, metallic clusters and the 'iron' beating of a bass drum, then rapidly devolves into a gurgling polyrhythmic morass of meandering discords that sets the tone for the rest of the work – is intimately related to the conception of vocal expression it presents.<sup>17</sup>

Zimmermann described *Die Soldaten* as a work about opera (1974: 93-94). Marie is one of a long line of allegorical ciphers – including Lulu and the Queen of the Night – that embody the powers (and failures) of song. She is a near replica of the Marie of Alban Berg's *Wozzeck* (1914-22), who yearns for class advancement through a relationship with the Drum-major. But Zimmermann's Marie is a relatively typical operatic feminine seductress, whereas Berg's is rather exceptional insofar as it is instead *her* passion that is excited sonically (from the passing military march in Act 1, Scene 3).

Yet *Die Soldaten*'s most obvious reference point is not opera, but National Socialism and the collapse, both military and moral, of the Third Reich (the final scene shows military tanks being transported and columns of fallen soldiers). Zimmermann's initial attraction to Lenz's play, he explained, was the way it encapsulated

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<sup>17</sup> It should be noted, however, that the effect of the more cacophonous sections of the opera are amplified through a deft use of contrast: many scenes in *Die Soldaten* take place in domestic settings and involve vocal declamation of rare clarity with relatively minimal accompaniment (below I liken it to *recitativo secco*).

the situation whereby the ‘soldiers’ ...like all people, get caught up, more by innocence than by guilt, in the inescapable impulse of a scenario that leads to rape, murder and suicide and, finally, the annihilation of the existing state of affairs.<sup>18</sup>

The opera’s noisy amassing of expressive voices that crowd out comprehension makes palpable this nihilistic impulse. But though Zimmermann’s problematic universalization of the soldiers’ ‘situation’ in the above quotation conjures precisely the ‘cogs in a machine’ disavowal of responsibility that made Arendt recoil, his positioning of Marie as a cipher for operatic power frames the cacophony less as a symptom of the soldiers’ progressive, ‘inescapable’ debasement than as its cause. In this respect, it is significant that Marie cannot be identified with her chameleonic voice. Opera sings through her and ravages her in the process.

Following Lenz, Zimmermann argued that the soldiers were ‘[n]ot so much conditioned by fate – “blind *moira*”, as the Ancient Greeks understood it’; in all social contexts, he said, individuals become bound to particular events ‘through the constellations of classes, relationships and characters’.<sup>19</sup> But his opera expresses fatalism all the same, through its framing of the voice and of musical time. Zimmermann wrote of musical time having a ‘spherical form’ (*Kugelgestalt*) in which past, present and future are made simultaneous, held together as a self-enclosed totality, unlike lived time, which is open and finite (1974: 96; on this, see Dahlhaus, 2005: 294-299; and Gruhn, 1983: 290-291). In Chapter Two, I modelled classical sonata form in a way that emphasized how it structured its articulation of sense as a dramatic struggle against the finitude of the moment. Insofar as it treated the sound to be heard at any moment as featuring in a dynamic relationship with what had already been heard and what remained to be heard, the classical sonata could also be linked to a *Kugelgestalt* approach to musical time, integrating past, present and future. However, Zimmermann’s thinking on musical time stemmed from the treatment of duration in 1950s serial

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<sup>18</sup> ‘der Umstand, wie alle Personen der...“Soldaten” unentrinnbar in eine Zwangssituation geraten, unschuldig mehr als schuldig, die zu Vergewaltigung, Mord und Selbstmord und letzten Endes in die Vernichtung des Bestehenden führt’ (1974: 96).

<sup>19</sup> ‘Nicht etwa so sehr durch das Schicksal bedingt, “die blinde Moira” – wie sie noch die alten Griechen verstanden – werden Menschen, wie wir ihnen zu allen Zeiten begegnen können, durch die Konstellation der Klassen, Verhältnisse und Charaktere einem Geschehen unterworfen, dem sie nicht entfliehen können’ (1974: 96).

practices, as they sought to integrate their arrays of fragile singularities – points without tonal implication – into unified totalities (1974: 36).<sup>20</sup>

Exactly how that thinking manifested itself compositionally in *Die Soldaten* is difficult to pin down. Vocal lines that avoid strong rhythmic profiles, the abrupt flurries that accompany them, conjuring the ghost of *recitativo secco*, and sustained cluster sonorities, whether orchestral, electronic or from the organ, are three of the elements used most liberally in the opera and they are each used in ways that work *against* the projection of dynamic experiences of temporality of the kind found in classical repertoire. It is Zimmermann's use of layering and contrast that does most to define the work's projection of temporality. Simultaneous, but decidedly non-synchronous, sonic meanderings, perhaps originating from different parts of the multi-level stage, suggest a scenario, uncontainable yet contained, in which multiple possibilities present themselves. Dense, cacophonous textures that suddenly give way to near silence suggest the unresolved implications of a decisive event. Perhaps the most telling juxtaposition occurs at the work's outset with the bass drum's beating of time against the sustained (time-less) cluster squeals. Yet it is in later parts of the work, featuring the stylistic 'pluralism' for which Zimmermann is best known, that the sense of time's passage accumulatively revealing a pre-fixed unity is most forcefully projected. Renaissance polyphony, Bach, Jazz and the 'twist or whatever dance is actually contemporary' (Act IV, Scene 1; 1966: 464-465) increasingly make themselves heard among *Die Soldaten*'s screeching harmonies and post-Weberian melodic ejaculations as the work builds to its violent climax. Music's history is presented as a massive, almost deafening accretion, as if every moment belonged to the ominous revelation of a self-enclosed totality, frozen beyond human time.

*Die Soldaten* seems to register and condemn some form of complicity between National Socialism and the operatic voice, as its screech devastates dialogue and understanding. But Zimmermann's treatment of temporality painted the whoring and rape of Marie as if it were a folly of music's *Kugelgestalt* time: as if the complex of actions through which it came about were all part of the inevitable revelation of some preordained truth. *Die Soldaten* conflates and confuses the given and the possible. Consequently, its treatment of the voice can only amplify social division and

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<sup>20</sup> His thinking on the subject seems to have crystallized around the time of the publication of Stockhausen's '*...How Time Passes...*' (1963: 99-139 [written in 1956]; Zimmermann's short text 'Interval and Time' [1974: 11-14] is from 1957).

breakdown without pointing to any alternative. The work's critical gesture in linking aesthetic expression and social distinction is all but undone by its self-positioning as heir to the riches and authority of history. And yet the way Zimmermann took up the legacy of Schoenberg and serialism in his effort to remake opera in the shadow of Auschwitz failed as testimony to those wronged. His operatic allegory seems more akin to a declaration of victimhood on the part of those real soldiers who got 'caught up' supporting the forces that led to the atrocities.

In 1988, the Stuttgart *Staatsoper* produced a staging of *Die Soldaten* by one of the East German Democratic Republic's leading opera directors, Harry Kupfer (chief director of the *Komische Oper* in Berlin from 1981-2002).<sup>21</sup> Counting Brecht as one of his forebears, Kupfer offered a subtle 'epic' twist to the work's conclusion. The first scene of the final act stages, in Zimmermann's words, 'the rape [or violation – *Vergewaltigung*] of Marie as an allegory of the rape of all those embroiled in it: brutally physical, psychical and mental violation'.<sup>22</sup> In keeping with the billowing of simultaneous voices and scenes, the score suggests that singers may be doubled by dancers and again by actors. Kupfer doubled Marie and had the double strung up naked like an abattoir kill, then dumped, bloodied and lifeless at the beginning of the final scene, while the other Marie survived to beg for alms from her father. This simple theatrical gesture ruptured the work's temporal closure (and therefore its *Kugelgestalt*). Positing the dead Marie as also living on, albeit in an unrecognizable state, makes her contemporary. It *decontextualizes* her: extracts her as a living being from the context that killed her, as a way of marking that things could have been otherwise.

We need to scrap the illusion, Brecht wrote shortly before setting to work on *Der Hofmeister*, 'that everyone behaves like the character concerned. "I am doing this" has become "I did this", and now "he did this" has got to become "he did this, when he might have done something else"' (1964 [1948]: 195). Benjamin, a decade earlier, had written of epic theatre removing the 'abyss which separates the players from the audience as it does the dead from the living' (1973 [1939]: 150) and Heiner Müller (Kupfer's neighbour at the *Volksbühne* in East Berlin) similarly referred to 'the

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<sup>21</sup> A film of the production (RM Arts, 1989) was subsequently released, which I rely on for my discussion.

<sup>22</sup> 'Die Szene stellt insgesamt die Vergewaltigung Mariens als Gleichnis der Vergewaltigung aller in die Handlung Verflochtenen dar: brutale physische, psychische und seelische Vergewaltigung' (Zimmerman, 1966: 460).

simultaneity of the living and the dead' as being at the core of Brechtian theory (Müller & Kluge, 1993). Zimmermann also invoked a simultaneity between the living and dead: that of opera, which anachronistically 'remains living, despite being a completely "impossible" form' (1974: 95). Yet his vision of a 'theatre-city' (1974: 44) that would dwarf Wagner's Bayreuth as it unremittingly amplified the follies of History had less to do with epic theatre (which, Benjamin [1973: 144] stressed, must relax its audience if it wanted to encourage thought, not blast it with cacophony) than the living dead of horror films. *Die Soldaten* was like a zombie, risen from the grave. In death the zombie assumes the sadistic power that eluded it in life. The opera is a milestone in German cultural history for explicitly linking musical expression and the atrocities of National Socialism. As an attempt to rework the political form of sonic expression, though, it flounders.

### **Deola: potentiality and breath**

Nono would later refer to the problem of composing sounds that, like the characters in Brecht's epic theatre, exposed the contingency and tentativeness of their sounding: sounds that would announce the possibility that they might have been otherwise. In connection with his 1981 work *Das atmende Klarsein* ('The Clarity that Breaths'), he wrote elusively, though evocatively: 'diversity and multiplicity of sound, *in the same instant*, possible, otherwise, like that of thoughts and of feelings, of creativity' (2001, v. I: 487). The aim of composition, for Nono, was no longer to affirm particular configurations of sense as if they were eternal truths snatched from the flux of time, or to affirm the *Kugelgestalt* of musical temporality, as Zimmermann had sought to do. It had become a matter of *marking potentiality at the interface of expression*, where transitory alliances form between, for example, breath and flute.

What was at stake here is explicitly thematized in the 'scenic action' *Al gran sole carico d'amore* (premiered 1975). In his first letter to the Soviet director and founder of the Moscow Taganka Theatre, Yuri Lyubimov, who collaborated on the work (it was Lyubimov's first project outside of the Soviet Bloc; Nono was able to secure his participation through his connections with the Italian Communist Party), Nono explicitly referred to *Al gran sole* as 'epic theatre', citing the influence not only of

Brecht, but also Vsevolod Meyerhold, Erwin Piscator and the Black Panthers.<sup>23</sup> The libretto Nono and Lyubimov produced brings together fragments from a range of literary and documentary texts that relate mostly to women engaging in revolutionary struggles that failed to realize the emancipation they sought. Nono imagined a work that would be truly global in its outlook, bringing together material from Latin America, Asia and Africa. What he and Lyubimov achieved fell short of this, engaging mainly with Europe and Latin America (Part II, Scene 6, briefly invokes contemporary Vietnam; otherwise the work makes no reference to Asia or Africa). At a time when voices raised against the systematic exclusion of women from cultural and political historiographies were still relatively isolated (Linda Nochlin's important essay, 'Why Have there Been No Great Women Artists?', was first published in 1971), their array of heroines was impressive nonetheless: Paris Commune intransigent Louise Michel; Tania Bunke, who fought alongside Che Guevara in the Bolivian Insurgency of 1966-67; Haydée Santamaria, who participated in the 1953 Cuban Moncada Barracks attack led by Fidel Castro; the central protagonist from Maxim Gorky's novel *The Mother* about the Russian revolutionary struggles of 1905; the prostitute Deola, drawn from Cesare Pavese's poetry, whom Nono associates with the worker uprisings of 1950 in Turin; and Jeanne-Marie, from Arthur Rimbaud's poem about the beauty of revolutionary strength, *Les mains de Jeanne-Marie*, the source of the work's title.

Threaded together, the fragments of text do not produce a synthetic whole. Like the superimposition of texts in *Il canto sospeso*, they offer points of commonality and allow listeners to construct relationships and draw comparisons. They are shorn from their contexts; their historical significance is left for audiences to determine, through their own research if need be. Much like the suspended sound-points of the *Canto*, these floating metonyms are relayed through one another, as hope, desire, frustration and sacrifice are buoyed from context to context across a century of revolutionary struggles. This buoying is given poetic image in the excerpt from Rimbaud's poem, presented in Part I, Scene 4, from which the work's title derives:

*Jeanne-Marie has strong hands,  
dark hands, tanned by summer [...]  
they have paled, marvellous,  
in the hot sun, filled with love,  
on the bronze of machine-guns*

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<sup>23</sup> Archivio Luigi Nono, catalogue reference: Ljubimov/J 72-11-??\*d.

*moving across insurgent Paris!*<sup>24</sup>

The aesthetic logic by which the fragments accompany one another is that of the solar love that gives warmth to the insurgent from afar as she takes to the streets.

My analysis of the work will confine itself to a discussion of a section of the fourth scene of Part II: Deola's aria. Nono said that with *Al gran sole* he 'wanted to test what he had done in the past, but at the same time also the possibility of new perspectives' (cited Stenzl, 1998: 84). An article by Harry Vogt has shown the extent to which this 'testing' literally meant recycling material from other works, which Nono did extensively enough for Vogt to argue that he 'viewed his musical products and ideas not as ends in themselves, styled "for eternity", but, rather, as reusable, variable and open for diverse possibilities' (1984: 135). Deola's song is where *Al gran sole* pointed most clearly to Nono's future work. It was the fruit of this stocktaking, looking back to the themes of *Il canto sospeso* in search of new possibilities that might grow from its strengths and weaknesses.

The earlier sections of the scene weave together a number of features. A chord is built up from alternating perfect fourths and tritones across the range of the orchestra, *crescendo* and *diminuendo*. This chord recurs throughout the piece and is marked in the score as '*macchina repressiva*' ('repressive machine'; Ex. 4.13). It was taken from *Intolleranza*; though Nono noted that the tritone-fifth combination was also used frequently by Scriabin, Schoenberg and Varèse (2001, v. II: 496; cited Nielinger, 2006: 116).<sup>25</sup> Subsequently, a dialogue ensues, taken from Gorky's *The Mother*: workers threaten to strike in response to a pay cut. The music shifts turbulently between relatively classical recitative, choral textures, sharply articulated, three-beat orchestral clusters and the wordless singing or drumming of the Russian worker song, *Dubinushka* (famously set to music, though with its melodic identity largely destroyed, by Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov as his Op. 62). Then around halfway through the scene, the music

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<sup>24</sup> 'Jeanne-Marie a des mains fortes, / mains sombres que l'été tanna / [...] / elles ont pâli, merveilleuses, / au grand soleil d'amour chargé, / sur le bronze des mitrailleuses / à travers Paris insurgé!' (Rimbaud, 1998: 132-134).

<sup>25</sup> As Nicolaus A. Huber, one of Nono's students, has argued, tritone dissonances seem to have already assumed a musico-symbolic role at various junctures in *Il canto sospeso*, such as in the brass harmony (F#, G, C: tritone plus fourth) that accompanies the phrase 'Here are our assassins' in movement 6a (bars 330-337). Huber has also suggested that the pitched interval E $\flat$ -A, which appears in various places (it is made of the first and last notes of the series), is code for the Nazi SA (1981: 66; cited Nielinger, 2001: 119).



quickly dissolves into an almost glacial texture of voice and electronics from which a single soprano line emerges.

This is Deola, a great enigma. Her character featured in the first two scenes of this second part of the work, where lines that echo Rimbaud in describing a strength wrought from nature (from clouds, from the sea) are sung by a quartet of sopranos. Here, for the moment, she sings as a single voice. She sings once again not about striking or revolution, but of the breath of dawn as it floods the empty city with renewal:

*The breath of dawn  
breathes with your mouth  
down empty streets  
grey light your eyes  
sweet drops of dawn  
on the dark hills  
your step and your breath  
like the wind of dawn  
submerge the houses [...]*<sup>26</sup>

Her melodic line begins with a simple *pianississimo* rise and fall of three notes, B $\flat$ , C $\sharp$ , B. The figure is repeated, ever so slightly louder, with the mouth opened from *u* to *o*. Each note is given a different duration as if Deola were making time for herself, dwelling in her song. Another repetition: Deola sings *Lo spiraglio*, a word usually translated as ‘glimmer’ or ‘gleam’, but linked etymologically to *spirare* (breathing) and *spirito* (spirit); in the context of the poem it is semantically closer to ‘breath’. The line wavers back to B $\flat$ , then leaps a fifth from B to a hushed F $\sharp$  (Ex. 4.14).

The gesture ghosts an imperfect cadence, hinting, perhaps, at the tonal origins of the material: a line from the *Internazionale*, ‘non più servi nè padrone’ (‘no more slaves nor masters’), sung at the conclusion of the previous scene, used the same pitch-class set, inverted, but with a similar melodic contour (Ex. 4.15).<sup>27</sup> Arpeggiations across the

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<sup>26</sup> ‘Lo spiraglio dell’alba / respira con la tua bocca / in fondo alle vie vuote / luce grigia i tuoi occhi / dolci gocce dell’alba / sulle colline scure / il tuo passo e il tuo fiato / come il vento dell’alba / sommergono le case’. From the poem ‘In the Morning You Always Come Back’ (titled in English; Pavese, 2002: 340-341; translation modified).

<sup>27</sup> Amongst the sketches for *Al gran sole* contained in the Archivio Luigi Nono there is an analysis of another song, *La comune di Parigi*, which features near the beginning and elsewhere in the work. The score is marked with different coloured pencils, divided into phrases and rhythmic units, and the recurrence of different elements is counted. The relevance of this analysis to the composition of *Al gran sole* is not, however, apparent from the analysis itself or from other sketches in the Archive.

soprano range answer this spectral cadence, then everything begins again with the tentative three note rising and falling figure – again with different durations. Now something remarkable happens: for the only time in the work, what appears to be a twelve-tone row is sounded out, almost note by note, made up of pitch-class sets used (apparently) freely throughout the work, but never in series like this (Ex. 4.16).<sup>28</sup>

As the ‘repressive forces’ close in on her, Deola sings. Her song looks back to Nono’s earlier work, including the *Canto*, particularly the solo soprano line in the seventh movement with its gentle, eery punctuation by pitched percussion, flute flutters and strings plucked, muted or playing harmonics. Deola’s line is similarly marked by bells, which sometimes double her notes at the end of phrases, as well as electronically manipulated sounds that often hint at a vocal origin, but glide in and out of resonant presence like other-worldly sighs. These sounds herald her imminent death, but the bells also underscore the temporal elasticity of her song, as it seems to stretch itself out of time (several individual words are held for as long as six seconds and again Nono used open vowels to echo their sounds, thus extending and amplifying their presence). The repetitions are not efforts to capture and solidify sense in the face of death. They are openings from which different possibilities are cast like dice. They are thus at once vastly different to the impotent ‘points’ of Nono’s earlier music and, nevertheless, entirely in keeping with the historical problem they represented. Deola, across whose body nature and the political economy process their transactions to the rhythm of the falling and rising sun, is, like the *Muselman* and the emigrant, another exemplar of biopolitical modernity. For her, the most intimate form of human relationship blurs with the half-hour contract. Her expressive dice throw is so different from Mallarmé’s or Cage’s because the arabesques of her song, now rising, now falling, now a little faster,

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<sup>28</sup> The first and third of these four-note sets, {0, 2, 3, 7} and {0, 2, 4, 7}, and their inversions, give a major or minor triad with added fourth or second. Nono’s use of them, both broken down into parts and in combination, appears to have been highly flexible; they allow him to approximate the (tonal) melodic features of the various worker and political songs incorporated throughout the work while avoiding the pulls of functional harmony. By contrast, the second pitch-class set, {0, 1, 2, 6}, affords more conventionally dissonant possibilities and contains within it the building blocks of the *macchina repressiva* chord. In the opening minutes of the work, a solo soprano sings ‘ivre de solidarité’ (‘delirious with solidarity’) across a succession of fourths, seconds and sevenths that outlines various configurations of this set (*come preludio*, pp. 3-4; bars 14-16). In part I, scene i (p. 29; bars 137-152), Tania Bunke’s melody begins with the same rising E $\flat$ -A $\flat$ -E of Deola’s ‘Luce’ and continues with only minor (mostly temporal) differences.

now more relaxed, are tethered to the breath and the potentiality marked by its constant variation.<sup>29</sup>

Perhaps where Deola's song most clearly approaches dodecaphony, with the ambivalent line 'grey light your eyes', it was meant to hint that something was left of the progressivist dream of serialism from the 1950s, that, like the *Dubinushka*, vitality might still have lurked behind the failure of its revolution. There are orchestral passages in *Al gran sole* that follow in the selection-and-construction vein of serial composition. They have no apparent expressive function beyond demonstrating, sometimes quite methodically, the orchestra's capacity to articulate different sounds, which are laid out like a child's building blocks or the elements of a periodic table. The note-by-note presentation of the *macchina repressiva* chord is one instance of this. During the prelude and elsewhere in the work sound clusters fan open and closed, as if to reveal their harmonic make up (Ex. 4.17) – that they are, after all, merely composed material. These unusual analytic gestures seem to suggest that, like Deola's song, the violent dissonances and the oppression with which they are associated throughout the work could have been otherwise.

I suggested earlier that the strengths and weaknesses of *Il canto sospeso* were tied up with the quality of the relationship it proposed to its listeners. When Deola sings, she sings to herself, but not in a conventional monologue. She uses the second person – not referring to herself, 'you', but to attributes: your mouth, your eyes, your step, your breath. She 'alienates' her capacities, in the Brechtian sense of rendering them free from the context in which they operate. But she does this in a way that is now explicitly propositional: her 'your' marks her dependency as it awaits the echo of recognition, *your*, without which, her social situation never would be different.

## Conclusion

Marie and Deola, for all their similarities (the degraded, abandoned 'soldier's whore' and the prostitute left to the mercy of 'Nazi-fascist' soldiers), inhabit opposite corners of the expressive universe of modernity. Marie is allied to cacophony, Deola to the silence of the breath. The characters neither act politically nor articulate political ideals.

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<sup>29</sup> Nono may have taken the vocal lines of Vincenzo Bellini, who, he said, had 'a conception of song highly influenced by the articulation of the voice and the breath' (2001, v. II: 431), as a partial model for Deola's continually transforming song.

It is their modes of expression that take political forms: a mimicry that in pursuing social distinction augurs catastrophe; and an ‘epic’ singing that strives to mark itself as a propositional, relayed gesture. My interest has been in how the compositional practices these figures represent have reframed and recomposed the testimonial aspect of sonic expression – music’s power to speak to history, and the authority it draws from it – following its flagrantly problematic partnership with ideology in the Third Reich.

At the time of Nono’s *Canto*, it is clear that its composer identified serialism with the progressive vanguard of history’s march and presumed this link offered him the requisite grounding to speak, through his work, to the atrocities of the immediate past. Perhaps it does, precariously – though I have argued that this is due to the peculiar historical status of the ‘point’, as it registers the same conjunction of nihilism, emancipation and decision from which those atrocities erupted. Zimmermann’s ‘pluralist’ composition is more ambiguous with respect to the notion of musical progress. Yet insofar as the *Kugelgestalt* temporality that *Die Soldaten* conveys gathers up history into a totality that is seemingly detached from human agency, the way the work speaks to the horrors that it conjures is far more problematic. By contrast, with *Al gran sole*, though the work presents a ghost land of past yearnings, Nono began to elaborate an expressive style that would register the non-consequentiality of historical time and the gap that separates the expressive form from the life it represents – the gap traversed through the act of testimony. This epic singing would eschew any claim to sovereign expressive power drawn from the assertion that serialism represented progress. Its riches would be tied to its acknowledgement of its dependency on the responses of others. The meaning of history, this epic singing suggests, must be the emancipation we devise for ourselves.

## Chapter Five. Concerning technology: Stockhausen, Kubisch

Nono's association (in 'Musical Power') of Stockhausen with an imperialism articulated through technological development was one of a series of politically oriented attacks on the (then) most famous of the post-'Darmstadt school' composers. The most notorious of these was Cornelius Cardew's invective, 'Stockhausen Serves Imperialism', published five years later (1974), which was essentially a blanket critique of art music. Cardew argued, often through lengthy slabs of quotations from Marxist authorities, that 'avant-garde' art music was the product of bourgeois capitalism's need to legitimate its aggressiveness and violence, which it did, he said, by cultivating socially and politically detached manifestations of 'genius'. Cardew associated what he saw as the uniquely mystical aspects of Stockhausen's work with an impulse to obscure this dynamic and for that reason singled him out for special condemnation. Marginally earlier, Konrad Boehmer (1970; 1972), writing in German, had made comparable, if more considered, charges against Stockhausen. But the composer had been the target of public accusations of fascism and racism since at least 1964, when, in New York, figures associated with the fledgling Fluxus movement picketed a concert of contemporary German music sponsored by the Federal Republic (April 29) and then, several months later (September 8), the New York premiere of Stockhausen's theatrical collaboration, *Originale* (1961).

It is this work, *Originale*, created as an extension of one of Stockhausen's most ambitious engagements with technology and while he was in the process of rethinking the ordering of musical sense in time (after pointillism), that will sustain my attention in the first part of this chapter, as well as the attacks made on it by a movement – Fluxus – associated with reordering the relationship between art and life. We saw in Chapter Three how sonic expression was exploited in complex ways as a tool of biopolitical manipulation in Nazi Germany, as radio technology fuelled the criminal totalitarian imagination. My concern in this chapter will be with how the ordering power inherent in music, revealed by that problematic political deployment of it, has subsequently been negotiated in two very different creative practices – the second being that of Christina Kubisch, one of the most significant figures in the development of sound art (particularly during the 1980s).

The many attacks directed at Stockhausen (and his alleged fascism) have overlapped with more broadly pitched critiques of late modernist musical activity that have deemed engagement with technological research and development to have been privileged at the expense of aesthetic and social reflection (notably Stroh, 1975, and Born, 1995). They also blur with critiques of historiographic ‘techno-essentialism’, whereby the history of modern music is recounted as if it entailed a quasi-evolutionary series of technical compositional developments<sup>1</sup> – a conception of history not too dissimilar from the one we saw Nono reframing his position towards in the last chapter. But if, as Olivier Lussac (2010: 141-142) has suggested, these repetitions and contiguities point to a very real problem, the content of the attacks levelled at Stockhausen has been diverse enough to leave us puzzled about its nature and, indeed, whether Stockhausen’s musical activity was even its cause or merely its symptom. Where one set of voices chastises his futurism, another sees him as the exemplar of his time and yet another portrays him as a remnant of the nineteenth century: a latter-day Faust (Dick Higgins, 1964: 2), whose approach to music was ‘essentially conventional’ (Hannah Higgins, 2002: 72). Stockhausen became a very unique modernist scapegoat without his work being compellingly located in relation to the key tensions that framed aesthetic modernism (cf. Heile, 2009a). In this, he has no real parallel in the literary or visual arts. By returning to his work here, I want to further the interrogation of the place of the technological (and of the technical research paradigm) in the legitimation of modernism, in a way that broaches the question of how music itself functions as an ordering device within society – a question I extrapolate from the Fluxus polemic, but that in certain respects looks back to the context of Hitler’s interventions into art and culture. While I maintain a critical position toward Stockhausen’s work, I want to complicate the constructed divisions used to narrate the history of modernism and his place within it.

Tools and technologies are bound up with questions of power. Tools sharpen and differentiate human capabilities. They are instruments of knowledge and emancipation from need. Yet because of this, they also enter into the production of social difference and frequently serve to sustain social and political hierarchies. The word technology began to be used to refer to tool-like objects only around the turn of the twentieth-century. Prior to that, it referred primarily to technical knowledge discourses (and before the late eighteenth century, exclusively to those of the arts and crafts and to

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<sup>1</sup> Williams, 1993: 42. Williams’ term is endorsed in both Cook & Pople, eds, 2004: 4; and Taruskin, 2005, v.4: 195.

grammar).<sup>2</sup> This change of reference – from knowledge to thing – hints at the ambivalent significance of technology within modernity. We saw in Chapter Three how Heidegger strikingly captured this ambivalent significance, problematically framing his engagement with National Socialism in relation to it, and how his postwar writings suggested that he felt that the dangers modern technology posed remained as substantial as ever.

The political problem concerning technology is essentially this: how do we engage with it in such a way that it contributes to revealing our freedom to us (i.e., to act politically), rather than closing that freedom off (by determining our situation through its ordering powers)? Heidegger emphasized the aspect of knowledge – the key word in the above sentence is *revealing* – but, paradoxically, this was because the problem is a *practical* one, not something that can be solved in theory, outside of the movement of ordering and revealing. If one tries to imagine a Rousseauian social contract formed not between individuals with regard to the use of technology, but actually *with* technology, as an agent harbouring its own concealed interests in the ordering of society, harbouring its own alterity, the stakes – and strangeness – of the problem become clearer.

How the emancipation-domination polarity has featured in Stockhausen's allegedly imperialist engagement with technology is one of the key questions guiding the first part of this chapter. *Originale* is a relatively little-known theatrical elaboration of the much more famous work *Kontakte* (the version for electronics, piano and percussion), which is performed, though broken into short segments of between four and just over seven minutes, as part of the theatrical activity.<sup>3</sup> It is an atypical work, often described as Stockhausen's 'Happening' (with reference to the performance genre developed in the late 1950s by Allan Kaprow, who directed the New York staging of the work). Indeed, artist Mary Bauermeister, Stockhausen's mistress at the time and later his second wife, has recently claimed that *Originale* was not sole authored and that she had

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<sup>2</sup> These observations are made on the basis of the historical entries included in the Oxford English Dictionary.

<sup>3</sup> Stockhausen published as Nr. 12, Nr. 12 ½ and Nr. 12 ⅔, respectively: the purely electronic four-track tape version of *Kontakte*, designed for spatialized diffusion through four loudspeaker groups that would encircle listeners (two- and one-channel versions were also made for radio and vinyl); a version that added to this parts for two performers, one playing piano and both playing a range of percussion instruments; and *Originale*.

been commissioned, and devised the work collaboratively, with him<sup>4</sup> – although he never credited her as its co-creator and advertising for the work’s performance listed Stockhausen’s name only. This notwithstanding, *Originale* proves unusually illuminating with respect to the question of Stockhausen’s engagement with technology. It makes repeated theatrical references to different forms of technological mediation and these create various analogies with aspects of the technical ordering of sound forms in *Kontakte*. Locating the work in relation to Fluxus and its imperative to transform the relationship between art and life, this chapter examines that technical ordering as, equally, an ordering that concerned Stockhausen’s social function as an artist. At the same time, I challenge the claims made on behalf of Fluxus – I focus particularly on the activity of Henry Flynt and George Maciunas, who led the 1964 picket of *Originale* – to have successfully transformed that relationship, developing a vibrant new political model of culture, where Stockhausen, derivatively aping their innovations, failed.

Following the analysis of *Originale* and Stockhausen’s relationship to Fluxus, the chapter moves forward in time to Kubisch’s work. Drawing from both Fluxus performance and the theatrical work of Mauricio Kagel (among myriad other creative fonts), Kubisch has sustained a continuous, conceptually rigorous engagement with technology: from the constrictive and purificatory aspects of instrumental performance, its tools and its historical legitimation, to self-constructed technologies that register and sonify otherwise imperceptible forms of electromagnetic radiation environmentally. That engagement has, moreover, been deeply embedded in reflection on the political and ethical relationship between artist and society – reflection that has been closely linked to Kubisch’s decision, around 1980, to work outside of the composer-performer-audience power dynamic conventional to musical performance and to develop different modes of mediating aesthetic exchange. My analysis follows the ways Kubisch has put sonic expression to work to expose how our experience of it is framed by the technologies that, with their peculiar agency and alterity, bring it, imposingly, to presence. A strongly articulated feminist politics and, increasingly, ecological concerns

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<sup>4</sup> Bauermeister, 2011: 64-75. Lussac (2010: 130) cites a letter to Bauermeister from artist André Thomkins that appears to confirm this. Additionally, Lussac has noted that Bauermeister, a major presence in the Cologne art scene at the time, had worked on the stage design for a performance of Brecht’s *Dreigroschenoper* at the Cologne *Theater am Dom* (the commissioning venue) shortly prior to the performance of *Originale*. It seems possible that the work’s instigation had as much to do with Bauermeister’s connections as with Stockhausen.



have guided Kubisch's thought and practice. But across her extensive oeuvre, there are also various striking references to the National Socialist past, which hint at a further impulse behind the radical transformation of sonic arts practice she has led.

### ***Originale* as work**

*Originale* has often been treated as a relatively trivial – even incoherent – work, so this part of the thesis presents a schematic outline of how it engages with Stockhausen's key aesthetic concerns, particularly his thinking on the ordering of musical sense in time, and how his approach to technology shaped that thinking. An impression of a haphazard, overcrowded and absurd spectacle is given by publicly available documentation of performances of the work – photographs from the Cologne performance published with the score and a film, *Doubletakes*, made of the New York staging of *Originale*,<sup>5</sup> but stitched together from footage taken on two nights, with no sound and image synchronization, and shrunk to a third of the performance duration. None of this documentation conveys the temporal fabric of the work, which can only be sensed by considering how action and sound interrelate (Stockhausen's score – or 'Textbuch' – gives precise time cues that allow this).<sup>6</sup> *Originale* is unthinkable without *Kontakte*, so I will orient my discussion of the theatrical work via several observations relating to the source work and Stockhausen's wider aesthetic thought and activity, before looking more closely at it as theatre and then examining its proximity to Fluxus.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *Doubletakes* was completed and produced by art historian Barbara Moore after the death her husband, photojournalist Peter Moore, in 1993, using footage he had taken of the performances. The film is available at: [http://www.ubu.com/film/stockhausen\\_originale.html](http://www.ubu.com/film/stockhausen_originale.html) (accessed 19/09/2012).

<sup>6</sup> What I have just said is contradicted somewhat by Stockhausen's recommendation, in the *Textbuch* (1964: 110), that different sections of *Originale* be performed simultaneously on different stages. Though Stockhausen said this would come closest to how he imagined the work, a relatively cursory examination of the performance instructions confirms that this cannot have been the case. It would not be possible to perform the work in such a way without doubling many of the parts; performers would otherwise frequently have to be in two or more places at once.

<sup>7</sup> Like *Il canto sospeso*, *Kontakte* has been subjected to an unusually large amount of musicological analysis (including two monographs that take the work as their main focus: Heikinheimo, 1972; and Mowitz, 2002) – almost certainly more than any other primarily electronic work. Part of this interest has clearly followed from Stockhausen's publication of a detailed 'realization' score for the electronic version/component (Dack, 1998, is exceptional in having attempted a partial, primarily 'acousmatic' analysis of the first few minutes of the work). My engagement with *Kontakte* here is relatively

Charlotte Moorman, who organized the New York performance of *Originale* as part of her second New York Avant-Garde Festival, explained the work's title – German for 'originals' – as a description of how the work stages individuals playing themselves.<sup>8</sup> Actors appear as actors, musicians perform as musicians, a newspaper vendor vends newspapers, Nam June Paik was to perform an action as Nam June Paik. The idea came from Carlheinz Caspari, director of the Cologne *Theater am Dom*, which commissioned the work. Caspari had links to the Situationist International milieu associated with Guy Debord (Lussac, 2010: 125-132) and championed an art that could serve as 'a model of social construction' characterized by a 'permanent de-fixing' of creative labour and expression.<sup>9</sup>

*Originale's* *Textbuch* hints at this 'permanent de-fixing' in its slippage between prescription and documentation (a version is reproduced in Stockhausen, 1964: 107-129). Like a conventional score or theatre script, the *Textbuch* provides detailed performance instructions, implying the work's repeatability. However, it also historicizes the work, detailing the scandal and success of its premiere run,<sup>10</sup> listing the cast<sup>11</sup> and even wavering in its instructions between reference to abstract roles and to actual people. It has an indeterminate status between documentation and template; whether it was meant to refer to a singular or a repeatable event is unclear. The poster made for the Cologne performances captures this in its announcement: *uraufführung täglich 20.30 uhr* ('premiere daily 8.30pm'; reproduced in *ibid*: 108).

Relations between the singular and something repeatable, eternal or otherwise 'absolute' are framed throughout Stockhausen's work and writings. One of the most explicit examples of this appears in the score for *Aus den sieben Tagen* (1968), which instructs performers to play vibrations 'in the rhythm of [their] body...of

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schematic, so it has not been feasible to review this sizeable literature, little of which even acknowledges the existence Stockhausen's theatrical elaboration of the work.

<sup>8</sup> Moorman interviewed by Harvey Matusow at the BBC New York Studios, October 1969, available at: <http://www.ubu.com/sound/moorman.html> (accessed: 20/09/2012).

<sup>9</sup> This art was referred to as *Labyr*, a play on 'labour' and 'labyrinth'. 'Caspari considère le Labyr comme une défixation permanente de la création et comme un modèle de construction sociale' (Lussac, 2010: 129).

<sup>10</sup> After the second evening of the twelve-night Cologne season, members of the local council objected that the work was not 'culturally valuable', the theatre's subsidy was revoked and Stockhausen was forced to pay an entertainment tax (Stockhausen, 1964: 107).

<sup>11</sup> A version of the *Textbuch* released by Universal Edition that gives no clear indication of its publication date is particularly strange in this respect for listing the cast of the series of performances that took place in New York in 1964.

enlightenment...of the universe' (1970: 7). Prior to *Kontakte*, Stockhausen had insisted that, rather than working from recordings of 'live' sound, electronic music composition needed to take as its starting point the bare sine wave (on this, see Toop, 1979).

Fourier's theorem framed this 'pure vibration' (Stockhausen, 1963: 42) as a mathematically eternal, universal constituent of all complex periodical wave-forms and Stockhausen had embraced it as 'the elemental, the ground of all sonic multiplicity' (*ibid*). In this, the later *Aus den sieben Tagen*, and more broadly across Stockhausen's career, traits from a panorama of mystical thought are strongly evident.<sup>12</sup>

It hardly bears repeating that the quality of the relationship structured between the singular element and the totality of the work was central to Stockhausen's early serial composition. He wrote of bestowing equal rights ('*Gleichberechtigung*') on every sound and every element of sound (1963: 230), which meant that each 'point' (and later 'groups' and 'collectives' of points) and each parameter through which it was ordered had to be treated in ways that assured an equivalent relationship to the whole. This entailed developing ways to 'unify' different aspects of the ordering of different sounds, aspects which, Stockhausen reasoned, were all related since even pitch and timbre were ultimately products of the same *temporal* articulation of sound *as vibration*.<sup>13</sup>

Related to actual history and the National Socialist past, Stockhausen's invocation of an eternal, sacred time could be mistaken for implying, problematically, some form of reconciliation or recuperation – an issue underscored in the last chapter in relation to Zimmermann's work and his notion of spherical time. Yet if, as Nono believed, Stockhausen sought to evolve through his 'new acoustic spaces, new environments, new auditory psychology, new aesthetics' a 'higher humanity' (2001, v. I: 267; my ital.), this clearly implies a rejection of the past and of the Nazi Reich with it.<sup>14</sup> The eternal, for

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<sup>12</sup> Richard Toop (1979: 383) has linked the sine wave 'adventure' to Catholicism; by contrast, Bauermeister (2011: 219) has noted that at the time of *Aus den sieben Tagen* Stockhausen was reading the work of Indian spiritualist and freedom fighter Sri Aurobindo.

<sup>13</sup> In the final passage of one of his most widely read texts, '*...wie die Zeit vergeht...*' ('How Time Passes'), written in late 1956 and published in *Die Reihe* the subsequent year, Stockhausen imagined an 'ideal instrument' of the future that would allow its user to perform unified transformations across all temporal levels, from the microstructure of individual sounds (timbre and pitch) to the macrostructure of the work (1963: 138-139).

<sup>14</sup> National Socialism had left Stockhausen an orphaned adolescent – his mother, who suffered a mental breakdown in 1932, had been sent to a Sanatorium and was probably murdered by the state for which his father then apparently died fighting in 1945 (see Kurtz, 1992).

Stockhausen, seems to have been a state of being that had to be reached through mystical/musical activity and its non-exclusivity made it incompatible with Nazi racial division.<sup>15</sup> Stockhausen's fixation on the absolute and eternal can be seen to have had more to do with getting away from the past – with disavowing and forgetting.

Technology and research, in producing the new, also promised historical oblivion.<sup>16</sup>

Stockhausen's technology of choice for *Kontakte* was an impulse generator, an old invention used mainly to test equipment for possible electrical shock damage. Impulse generators produce constant pulse streams of electric current, steady electrical data flows: no sound, just the on-off, on-off of 'a brief energy impetus, comparable to a leaping spark' (Koenig, 1961: 32; trans. modified). Stockhausen could manipulate two variables: the individual impulse durations and the rate of repetitions. He 'recorded' data flows onto magnetic tape. Speeding up the playback, lifeless, staticky, steadily clacking noises would stabilize into thick, depthless, reedy hums, shadowed by flat, unmoulded sideband noises – nothing like the 'pure' sine tone that had earlier been the central element of his electronic composition.<sup>17</sup> Relayed through various filters, which would amplify certain bandwidths and attenuate others,<sup>18</sup> far more promising sounds emerged. As Curtis Roads has explained,

[i]f the original source is spectrally rich and the filter is flexible, [this kind of] subtractive synthesis can sculpt close approximations of many natural sounds (such as voices and traditional instruments) as well as a wide variety of new and unclassified timbres. (1996: 185)

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<sup>15</sup> Stockhausen's later invocation and championing of a supra-geo-political 'world culture' (1978: 468-476), though problematic in many respects (see note 29 below), also confirms this.

<sup>16</sup> In Stockhausen's later work *Hymnen* (1966-67, 1969), amongst the various national anthems, the Nazi Horst Wessel Song is heard. Challenged about its inclusion, Stockhausen described it as 'only – a memory'. For a discussion of the problematic neutrality of this description, which serves to reinforce my broader claim that the National Socialist past impelled Stockhausen's work in significant ways, but as a force he was unable to confront constructively, see Powell, 2004.

<sup>17</sup> Stockhausen (1964: 105) reported that he was able to obtain rates of between sixteen impulses per second and one impulse every 16 seconds with the generator (durations ranged between 0.0001 and 0.9 seconds). At 256 (i.e.,  $16^2$ ) times their original speed, the obtainable pitch spectrum from the impulse rates (ranging from 16 to 4096 pulses per second) would approximate that of a concert piano (approximately 27.5 to 4186 hz).

<sup>18</sup> Stockhausen followed a technique developed earlier in the decade by physicist and information theorist Werner Meyer-Eppler, who had supported the development of the Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk electronic music studio Stockhausen was using in Cologne (Ungeheuer, 1992: 121).

*Kontakte* foregrounds this imitative potential by staging ‘contacts’ between familiar instrumental timbres and others arrived at through experimentation.<sup>19</sup> The electronic sounds, Stockhausen explained, ‘establish relationships and points of transition between the instrumental sounds [which, in planning the work, he had classified according to their timbral, pitch and percussive properties], merging with them and estranging themselves into as yet unknown sound spaces’.<sup>20</sup> *Kontakte* structures different grades of relationships between the familiar and the unheard. Machinery, process, sound and concept are closely linked.

Part of what attracted Stockhausen to the impulse generator method was that it allowed him ‘to compose the temporal ordering of impulses’ within sounds (1963: 214). But the difference between the (theoretically eternal) sine wave and the electronic spark is striking. *Kontakte* exploited this difference acoustically. It bubbles with percussive explosions (increasingly, as the piece progresses). At times the sound resembles the gently resonant bursts of a marimba. Such sounds come from individual sparks, setting the resonant filters into vibration, not continuous pulse streams. By contrast, in Stockhausen’s earlier electronic studies, sound often seems as if it were sucked into presence without any immanent motivating force; the *Gesang*’s sound complexes stiltedly ripple about at breakneck speeds, but never froth or explode with life. The difference is also conceptual, though, and the significance of this is evident from the profound changes to Stockhausen’s aesthetic thought that his engagement with the impulse generator appears to have provoked. In a remarkable lecture reflecting on *Kontakte* from the following year, ‘Momentform’ (1963: 189-210), Stockhausen suggested, entirely against the grain of his other statements on his method, that his work’s aesthetic riches were concentrated in the succession of individual moments and that the temporal part-to-whole relationship was all but irrelevant.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Stockhausen’s use of the word experimental (*experimentell*; 1963 [1961]: 214), which came to be associated (after Nyman, 1974) with Cage’s work, rather than the supposedly highly controlled sound-forming procedures of the European serialists, marks the significant tension in his thought around the time of his work on *Kontakte* – though use of the term in relation to serial practices and electronic music was altogether unusual at the time.

<sup>20</sup> ‘Die elektronischen Klangkategorien stellen Verwandtschaften und Übergänge zwischen den instrumentalen her, verschmelzen mit ihnen und entfremden sich in bisher unbekannte Klangräume’ (1964: 104).

<sup>21</sup> Responding to complaints from listeners that *Kontakte* was too long, Stockhausen stated that when ‘one has learnt to listen actively and critically’, one will be able to determine how much of a work one wants to listen to and to concentrate one’s thoughts

The Momentform lecture has been read as a negation of classical form and temporality. In it, Stockhausen described an approach to composition

far removed from the scheme of dramatic closed [*finalen*: end-oriented] form; that neither aim[s] toward *the* climax, nor toward several prepared and thus expected climaxes, and do[es] not put forth the usual...development arc relating to the overall duration of a work; that [is] much more *immediately* intense and...seek[s] to keep up the level of the serially-presented ‘main ideas’ [*fortgesetzter ‘Hauptsachen’*]; ...in which every single Now is regarded...as something personal, independent, centred, that can exist for itself...<sup>22</sup>

‘Moment form’ is not presented as a fixed structure, entailing particular functional, or even proportional, relations. Consequently, many who have defended the notion, such as Jonathan Kramer, have treated it as if it were an *anti*-principle of form.<sup>23</sup> This, however, fails to grasp the lecture’s most provocative idea.

Stockhausen referred to shattering the experience of temporal continuity. But he stated that this was to occur through a ‘concentration on the Now – on every Now’, in a way that would make an eternity ‘reachable in every moment’ (1963: 199). Contemporary compositions, he said (clearly with his own at the front of his mind), were becoming ‘over-centred’ (*überzentriert*) (*ibid*: 209). They were not temporally flat-lining because they had dissolved musical centricity. Their individual moments had become like compressed matter that fissures under concentrated pressure, effervescing and releasing its energy to bind with other matter. Stockhausen’s engagement with the resonating spark of the impulse generator had transformed his approach to the ordering of musical sense in time.

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elsewhere – or ‘go out’ – when enough has been heard (1963: 192). Stockhausen was not being facetious, as the breaking up of the *Kontakte* performance in *Originale* demonstrates. Nevertheless, in the 1961 text cited above, ‘The Unity of Musical Time’, he returned to his usual line: ‘we must compose each individual sound within a particular work for general conformity to natural law to prevail in all of the time domains’ (1963: 221). As I suggested in Chapter Four, this kind of recourse to ‘natural law’ probably betrays a deeper unease.

<sup>22</sup> ‘die von dem Schema der dramatischen finalen Form weit entfernt [ist]; die weder auf die Klimax noch auf vorbereitete und somit erwartete mehrere Klimaxe hin zielen und die üblichen Einleitungs-, Steigerungs-, Überleitungs- und Abklingstadien nicht in einer auf die gesamte Werkdauer bezogenen Entwicklungskurve darstellen; die vielmehr sofort intensiv sind und...das Niveau fortgesetzter ‘Hauptsachen’ bis zum Schluß durchzuhalten suchen; ...in denen nicht rastlos ein jedes Jetzt...als ein Persönliches, Selbständiges, Zentriertes, das für sich bestehn [*sic*] kann...’ (1963: 198-199).

<sup>23</sup> ‘To remove continuity’, Kramer wrote, ‘is to question the very meaning of time in our culture and hence of human existence’ (1978: 178).

Immediately after the famous glissando meltdown of pitch into rhythm half way through *Kontakte* (*Struktur X*<sup>24</sup>), there is about a minute during which a single tone is held over against background ‘noise’ from the last of the dying, reverberant pops. One gets a sense of how this over-centricity functions at this juncture, where the work’s momentum has all but ceased. Both tone and background gradually change their timbres, their thickness, their volume, each moving into, and out of, prominence against the other, as if in turn leaching and nurturing. Eventually, the ‘background’ comes to predominate, becoming thicker and more polyphonic. Then short figures begin to be spat out and the activity picks up.

Moment form, for Stockhausen, concerned structuring in an active sense. It referred to the formation of localized, qualitative relationships: the intermediation of ‘moments’ that, true to the emancipation of dissonance, imply no specific consequence, yet nevertheless must appear set to implicatively burst. The Now here is not a Now fixed across past and future, but a Now holding absolute claim to the present, magnetizing attention away from the flow of time and the perception of duration. Whereas Nono attempted to mark in sound its potential to have been otherwise, Stockhausen’s moment form composition overfills the moment by having it spill over into, or resonate with, the next – or by playing off foreground against background. There is never a ‘could have been otherwise’ moment, that might spark a reimagining of histories – something we saw in Chapter Four to have been of major significance to Nono – because fullness is conjured through the interplay; it is an effect dependent on how the moments *actually* change through their intermediation.

There is already an idea of music theatre at play in the instrumental version of *Kontakte*. Around two thirds of the way into the work (*Struktur XI*), Stockhausen has first the percussionist, then the pianist, move from their respective positions at opposite sides of the stage to perform at the central gong and tamtam. They make contact (Blumröder, 1984: 433-434; this contact moment is also marked in the *Originale Textbuch* [1964: 125]). This contact refers back to an earlier one, when the pianist initiated the work, moving from piano to tamtam and brushing it with circular motion, cueing the tape and

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<sup>24</sup> References are given to Stockhausen’s division of *Kontakte* into sixteen *Strukturen*, in large part because these are reproduced in the ‘Elektronische Musik 1952-1960’ CD released by the Stockhausen-Verlag (1991) and so may serve as useable reference points for listeners. The *Strukturen* are not marked in the *Originale Textbuch*.

visually rhyming with the movement of the reels being set in motion. All this serves as a theatrical visual counterpart to the exceptionally spatially mobile four-channel tape component of the work, parts of which, as is well-known, Stockhausen had dubbed from a set-up of spinning loudspeakers (and on the commercial stereo version often have an amusing wheezing sound). Music theatre, Stockhausen said, is the ‘composition of movement which arises through...and during the production of music’ (quoted in Wörner, 1973: 188). The theatrical gestures in *Kontakte* serve to elucidate the conceptual dimension of the work by forming visual resonances with it. *Originale* further amplifies these elucidatory gestures.

*Originale* commences without beginning. The synchronized starting of two giant stop-clocks by the pianist (near the tamtam at centre-stage) and the sound engineer cues the beginning of *Kontakte*, but Stockhausen’s script calls for the musicians, lighting and camera team, and the director, to have been onstage ‘preparing’ for some time as the audience arrives. And they continue ‘preparing’ as the performance of *Kontakte* commences, testing their equipment and shouting instructions at one another. A little over two minutes in, the playing stops and the sound engineer, who has been recording, rewinds the tape (audibly, in play-back mode) and the performers check what they have just done against the score. They discuss and rehearse several details, technical equipment is adjusted, and at six minutes by the stop-clocks, now with attention from lighting, camera and director, they begin *Kontakte* again, this time performing for just over seven minutes.

Several other theatrical activities ensue from this ‘*Probeaufnahme*’ (‘rehearsal’). ‘Action musician’ Nam June Paik hangs up a sand clock and squeals. A child starts building a tower out of blocks at centre-stage, indifferent to his or her surroundings (this activity continues for over quarter of an hour; when the tower falls, the director is called, then it is rebuilt). A model, indifferent to the child, but not the brooding, low, drawn-out metallic sounds of the section of *Kontakte* she hears (*Struktur III*), tries on the latest fashion. And, toward the end, a busker (locally known in the Cologne staging; Moorman in New York) has a five second outburst in a corner.

Considering that this is over thirteen minutes of material, the theatrical activity is actually quite minimal. Paik and the busker are only of interest momentarily. By contrast, the child and model are each onstage for around quarter of an hour. They serve as relatively conventional signifiers: the building child (performed on alternate nights in Cologne by Stockhausen’s son and daughter) indicating potential and permanence; the



model, repetition and transience. Both form clear symbolic resonances with the scenario of rehearsal and recording. They also seem to pose questions about the value of what is being witnessed: whether it is indeed culturally worthwhile, high fashion or just juvenile dabbling. Paik and the busker burst into the performance at moments of energy release, when *Kontakte*'s momentum is on the verge of dissipating (Paik toward the end of the playback section; the busker at the drum-roll where the main activity of *Struktur III* plateaus and dissolves into a series of quiet drones). These musical 'others' – Paik, the aesthetic vandal, heralding apocalypse with his sand clock, antithesis of the building child; the busker, economic outcast, studiously avoided by the camera and lighting operators – mark the performance as a kind of universe of imbricated opposites in which even the excluded and the destructive flash into presence.

Before and after the performance of the next chunk of *Kontakte*, the pianist (before) and the percussionist (after) change into outfits brought to them by a costume lady – respectively: 'cultic apparel' and a fencing suit. Their activity is pre-empted by that of the model (who is still on stage while the pianist redresses) and re-invokes her presence after her departure. It prompts a different reflection on music's peculiar social ontology (between ritual, sport and violence). Meanwhile, a troop of actors replace model and child, as if the theatrical part of the '*musikalisches Theater*' (as the performance was billed) were finally arriving. Tellingly, as the first of the actors comes on stage and begins to recite a tragic monologue (in Cologne it was Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*), the pianist has a choreographed contact moment. He goes to the tamtam at centre-stage and strikes it with enough force to completely drown out the actor's speech, confirming, perhaps, the primacy of the music.

The actors perform a kind of parody of late modernist composition, reciting blocks of monologue and dialogues from different theatrical genres, using different degrees of overlap, durations and styles of recitation and gesticulation. For four minutes (from the thirty minute mark), four of the actors speak respectively only three, five, eight and thirteen words, evenly spaced in time.<sup>25</sup> They visibly jolt with each new word, but otherwise move with extreme slowness. Against this a fifth actor performs virtuosically according to a strictly delineated block structure, with the various parameters of his or her speech and gesture de-constructed and set against one another. Amusingly, the parody is subjected to further parody fourteen minutes later. Animals are brought on

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<sup>25</sup> Following the Fibonacci series – used, incidentally, for ordering some of the sound parameters in Nono's *Canto*. (On use of the series elsewhere, see Kramer, 1973.)

stage and everything is fed (audience, a plastic tree, a stuffed bird). A number of recordings of Stockhausen's work, including the radio lecture on moment-form, are then played back loudly on the tape recorders 'in every variation possible' (at different speeds, forwards and backwards) – again, for exactly four minutes.

Resonances, commentaries, inversions and parodic re-mobilizations are as much the substance of *Originale* as the 'moments' of activity it stages, which constantly enter into exchange with the sounds and performance of *Kontakte*, each playfully elucidating the other. But much more explicitly than the flow of sonic transmogrifications and conjunctions in *Kontakte*, the activities of *Originale* underscore their technical mediation. It is this that makes the work of particular interest for grasping the political form of the relationship between artist and audience – art's status in shaping the ordering of society – proposed in Stockhausen's work more broadly.

This happens, notably, through the lighting and filming (or not filming) of various activities and audience responses to them, and the immediate projection of what is being filmed. It happens through the recording and almost instantaneous playback of ambient sound that thickens the acoustic atmosphere and produces a doubling effect that preempts Steve Reich's minimalist phasings of half a decade later. It happens through the evocation of silent film when the tamtam drowns out the Shakespeare recitation and when a film of the cast is projected without sound toward the end of the performance (a scene where contact is doubled and missed: the cast represented on screen is lively, while the onstage cast appears to be sleeping; meanwhile, the musicians' climactic choreographed meeting occurs, but happens in darkness, necessary for the film projection). The underscoring of technical mediation also happens, in a way that looks back to the incorporation of everyday news media in Dada performances and Cubist collage, when the local newspaper seller arrives to sell the daily paper – from which the actors then read the obituaries.

But there are two particularly significant invocations of technical mediation. A little over half way through the performance, immediately following the feeding and playback scene mentioned above, there are two minutes of complete silence in which the cast freezes and stares impassively into the eyes of the spectators as if being photographed. Three minutes before the end of the performance, this Cagean homage is inverted with a violence that looks back to the retinal torture of the curtain of light globes designed by Francis Picabia for his ballet with Erik Satie, *Relâche* (1924). Following a series of percussive snapping sounds, the whole cast bustles on stage and

(with the exception of the performing musicians) takes up cameras to flash photograph the audience, doing this as many times as possible and ensuring that every audience member is captured individually. The cast then leaves, irregularly and through as many exits as possible, with the exception of the musicians and sound engineer who are abandoned to complete the final passage of *Kontakte* as its disorienting pulsations of high frequency noise that circle rapidly around the auditorium (sounding not unlike the clattering of broken glass) gradually peter out into nothing.

The other key moment occurs 36 minutes into the performance, when the transition from music to theatre (described above) has been established. A conductor mounts the stage and draws the entire cast, busker included, under his control. In Cologne, Stockhausen took this role, rising from the front row of the audience (in New York it was Alvin Lucier). The photographic documentation published with the *Textbuch* suggests he took a light-hearted approach (in two photographs he almost appears to be sneezing; in a third, he grins as if he has just performed a childish prank; 1964: insert after p. 110). Yet slapstick and ironizing or not, this movement between observation and command reveals more about the sociality of contact performed in *Originale* than any other ‘moment’. For conjunction and disjunction do not simply ‘happen’ in Stockhausen’s work. They are stage managed and technically organized. And it is at the moment that Stockhausen climbs onstage to take direction not only of the musicians and actors, but even the lighting, that the political dimension of his engagement with technology in *Kontakte* and elsewhere receives due theatrical image. Key to the encounters, resonances and commentaries that ‘happen’ within the frame of the work – which, we have seen, is marked as thoroughly porous and inclusive (i.e., of the busker and the newspaper vendor) – is that Stockhausen makes them happen. The meeting of these over-centred, eternal moments, the gesture says, cannot be left to chance; the artist’s supervision of this universe where art and life collide is, at least occasionally, absolutely necessary.

### ***Originale* and Fluxus**

‘Fight the rich man’s snob art’, read one of the placards brandished outside Judson Hall on the night of the New York premiere of *Originale*.<sup>26</sup> A flyer designed for the protest

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<sup>26</sup> As quoted ‘Avant-Garde: Stuffed Bird at 48 Sharp’, *Time*, Sep. 18, 1964.

by artist and musician Henry Flynt expressed its aggression more directly: ‘Stockhausen-patrician “theorist” of white supremacy: go to hell!’ (reproduced in Higgins, 2002: 73). Reports differ on who the participants of this protest were, but Ben Piekut has listed Marc Schleifer, Alan Marlowe, Tony Conrad, Takako Saito, George Maciunas and Flynt (2011: 65-66). Other artists associated with Fluxus were performing inside, including Nam June Paik, Jackson Mac Low and Dick Higgins; while according to art historian Hannah Higgins – though her account is frequently unreliable – at least three people both performed and protested against the work: her parents, Dick Higgins and Alison Knowles, and Allan Kaprow, who was directing the performance.<sup>27</sup> At least two press critics, Harold C. Schonberg and Jill Johnston writing for, respectively, the *New York Times* and the *Village Voice*, conjectured that the protest may have been a part of the performance (Piekut, 2009: 38).

Hannah Higgins has cited the event as illustrative of the diversity of Fluxus (2002: 71). Maciunas, with whom the word Fluxus originated in 1961, had wanted it to be the name of a contemporary art journal and then a special art publishing monopoly. The word, which comes from the Latin for ‘flow’, got away from him; according to Higgins, the more he tried to dictate who Fluxus designated and what it meant, the more impotent he proved himself. Piekut has suggested we view Fluxus as a dense network of relations and ideas, rather than a uniform movement or school. Manifestos that went unsigned and policy newsletters that nobody agreed to were part of the Fluxus experience (*ibid*: 75-80).

Yet Fluxus was also not without conspicuous qualities and concerns. Maciunas wanted to purge all professionalized, commercial, dead and European art and to promote in its place a universally accessible ‘living art, anti-art...non art reality’ (reproduced *ibid*: 76). Higgins has pointed out that many associated with Fluxus would reject his proposals for activist – sometimes terrorist – anti-art actions (such as abandoning cars at major intersections in New York City during peak hour; *ibid*: 75). Nevertheless, on a certain level, the deskilled, do-it-yourself, often participatory, mixed-media (or ‘intermedia’, Dick Higgins’ [1966] term for art that situated itself between

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<sup>27</sup> Alison Knowles is not among the cast listed in the programme for the performance, nor are several other people Higgins (2002: 72) has claimed to have participated. Her account of the protest attendance also differs from Piekut’s.

different media) aesthetic generally associated with Fluxus was in keeping with Maciunas's avant-gardist desire to rewire the relationship between art and life.<sup>28</sup>

The attack on Stockhausen's *Originale* positioned him as the antipode to Fluxus's 'living art, anti-art...non art reality'. Flynt's flyer claimed to quote a lecture given at Harvard University in 1958, alleging Stockhausen to have said: 'jazz [Black music] is primitive...barbaric...beat and a few simple chords...garbage...[or words to that effect]' (the parentheses are included in Flynt's flyer, which is reproduced as Ex. 5.1). The flyer also targeted him for his work as editor of *Die Reihe*, claiming: 'Stockhausen's real importance...is that he is a fountainhead of "ideas" to shore up the doctrine of white plutocratic European Art's supremacy...'. The representation has had traction. As an art historian, Hannah Higgins's ignorance in describing Stockhausen's music as having a regular beat and conventional musical form (2002: 71-2), partly to condone the attack, is somewhat comprehensible. But recent musicological references to the work have followed suit. Eric Drott (2004: 229-232) has accused Stockhausen of recuperating the radical anti-art gesture of Fluxus, even though *Originale* was first performed before anything had been achieved in the name of Fluxus. Similarly, Piekut, writing on the New York protest, scarcely questioned the appropriateness of the target. He wasted no ink trying to illuminate the event from the perspectives of Stockhausen and *Originale*, which, he claimed, 'relied on old conventions to achieve [its] aura of transgression' (2009: 45). I agree with Piekut that it is important to move beyond discussion of the protest as an 'interartistic spat' (2011: 69) and to examine the coherence of the positions behind it. But this requires a critical comparative analysis of how *both* sides, in their differences, but also in their historical overlap, *failed* to reconcile art and life.

Hannah Higgins has suggested that the accusation of racism followed a conflation of Stockhausen's work with Adorno's 'antiethnic' critiques of jazz (2002: 78). Lussac (2010: 141) has instead pointed to a text published in *Die Reihe* by Wolf-Eberhard von Lewinski (1960), which is referred to and paraphrased in Flynt's flyer. Von Lewinski's text is rhetorically elitist, dismissing 'light' and 'entertainment' music and claiming that

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<sup>28</sup> Ken Friedman (in Friedman, ed., 1998: ix) has provided a more comprehensive list of twelve ideas or issues that defined Fluxus's orientation: 'globalism, the unity of art and life, intermedia, experimentalism, chance, playfulness, simplicity, implicativeness, exemplativism, specificity, presence in time and musicality'.

serialism had inaugurated a new period in music history. However, it is not racist. No texts among Stockhausen's published writings match Flynt's description of the Harvard lecture. In Stockhausen's published report on his tour of North America in 1958, he described three lectures he had prepared that would seem to correspond to the texts 'Elektronische und instrumentale Musik', 'Musik im Raum' and 'Musik und Sprache', which all appear in the first two volumes of his collected writings and make scant reference to Jazz (1964: 219). In fact, as Lussac (2010: 141) has noted, it is in that report, where Stockhausen describes a visit to the Birdland jazz club in New York, that Stockhausen's language comes closest to Flynt's paraphrase.

There, in the final page of the report, Stockhausen wrote of how he listened with interest for two hours to 'incomparably good' playing (1964: 232). He described the musicians – including Count Basie and Dizzy Gillespie – as being without exception, friendly and likeable', though he noted the socio-cultural division whereby he knew of many of them but gleaned from their gestures that this awareness was not mutual. Then, however, he recounted how a 'famous negro female singer', clearly heavily drugged, suddenly took to the stage, sang incompetently, unable to remember lyrics, and finally collapsed in a fog of smoke. Dragged back to her table, she spent the rest of the evening staring ashamedly at her lap. 'The whole thing was like an event of nature', Stockhausen exclaimed.

Even the playing, the gestures, the way they were together. As soon as I listened through to *what* they were playing, just for a moment, the magic was destroyed. Banalities, clichés, dead musical formulae were to be found that had originated long, long ago in Europe and were now so exhausted they said nothing to me.<sup>29</sup>

Stockhausen continued, his tone becoming increasingly arrogant and chauvinist, by describing how self-conscious he felt as the embodiment of European music history in a place that reflected back to him a caricature of European music fifty years out of date. Flynt's flyer responded by proclaiming the 'vitality the cultures of these oppressed peoples have, which is undreamed of by their white masters'. '*You lose this vitality*', Flynt taunted, arguing that the 'laws' invoked in European aesthetic discourse were contrivances designed by the imperialist centres of the Old World to project historical

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<sup>29</sup> 'Das ganze war wie ein Naturereignis. Auch das Spiel der Musiker, ihre Gebärden, ihr Zusammensein. Wenn ich aber nur einen Augenblick lang zwischendurch auf das hörte, *was* sie spielten, war der ganze Zauber zerstört. Banalitäten, Klischees, tote musikalische Formeln, die vor langer, langer Zeit einmal ursprünglich in Europa erfunden wurden und jetzt so ausgedroschen sind, daß sie mir nichts mehr sagen' (1964: 232).

priority over all other cultures. ‘[N]obody who acquiesces [*sic*] to the domination of patrician European Art can be revolutionary culturally’, he asserted.

Two issues are folded together here: the theologically grounded historical chauvinism one finds in Hegel that posits a single line of progress and assumes that anyone not at the vanguard has been left behind (see Hallam, 2008-09: 76-77), a chauvinism Flynt rightly linked to imperialism; and the direct, racially framed expression of hostility. While the chauvinist claim to represent history was undeniably typical of Stockhausen (as we saw it initially was for Nono in the last chapter), direct racist hostility was not. The outburst in his report appears to have been an isolated instance, at odds with his later writings on World Music and the universalism of his mystical thought.<sup>30</sup> And although he called what he saw an ‘event of nature’, his short text hinted that he was referring more to the effects of social breakdown and neglect.

I find Flynt’s reverse racism more difficult to swallow. Piekut has insisted that the anti-Stockhausen protest was conceived by Flynt as an art action – one of several ‘Actions Against Cultural Imperialism’ – integrally linked to his broader thinking on cultural politics and his associations with the Marxist-Leninist Workers World Party. But this thinking apparently entailed a thoroughly fetishistic fixation on qualities of ethnicity and nativism. Flynt celebrated Ornette Coleman as an ‘untrained “folk creature”’ and on leaving Harvard, having studied classical violin, he claimed that he ‘assumed’ the musical identity of the ‘hillbillies’ of his native region in the US, though he never ‘had significant social contact with the people who created the musical language’ he used (2002). Flynt was a latter-day Gauguin. His rejection of ‘patrician European art’ was tied to a theory of ethnic vitalism that would scarcely have been tolerated in postwar Germany. He was arguably far more condescending toward the musicians he lauded than Stockhausen was to those he at least spoke with at Birdland and whose talents he praised.

In Chapter Two, we passed over how the root problem, to which Flynt and Fluxus more generally were responding – the problem of restructuring the relationship between art and lived reality – had been articulated by Benjamin in the 1930s, how it came to be associated with the early twentieth-century avant-garde and how Hitler, too, took it as

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<sup>30</sup> For a helpful critical discussion of Stockhausen’s notion of World Music (*Weltmusik*) and how the chauvinist Eurocentric and neo-colonialist aspect of his thinking featured in it, see Heile, 2009b: 104-108.

one of his regime's tasks to rewrite aesthetic experience and regulate leisure. Art, in modernity, had become socially detached, an 'autonomous' phenomenon that prized sensation and private affections. It was deemed to run to its own historical time and instead of being integral to the ordering of society – Benjamin (1973: 83-107) wrote of the lost tradition of storytelling as an exchange through which social knowledge and authority was negotiated – modern art's most overt social function came to be the reflection of class pretensions (as registered, notably, in Bourdieu, 1984; for a more substantial treatment of these ideas, see Hallam, 2012). It is in connection with this need to reconfigure the relationship between art, society, knowledge and power, already articulated repeatedly in the interwar decades, that Fluxus's anti-art gestures must be considered if their full political and art historical significance is to be captured.

Flynt's 1968 essay, 'Art or Brend?', gave a succinct version of the avant-garde dilemma and posed a solution in pseudo-logical terms. Art's only real legitimacy lies in the pleasure it affords, Flynt wrote: 'it is very difficult to defend art without referring to people's liking or enjoying it'. But if its justification lies with those who enjoy it for their own idiosyncratic pleasure and not with the artist, who has no true contact with that pleasure, on what basis, Flynt asked, can the artist justify producing works? 'The artist tries to "be oneself" for other people', he answered dismissively, 'to "express oneself" for them'. And so Flynt proposed instead to do away with art and the artist completely and leave people to content themselves with the objects of their private affections – objects that Flynt referred to using the cryptic neologism *brend*.

It seems scarcely credible that somebody who called himself a Marxist – and thus presumably had a vision of communism that entailed communal relations – could have written this without the smirk of a satirist. And, indeed, Flynt's 1961 essay 'Concept Art' (1963) set out a program of aestheticizing conceptual theorems 'without considering whether they are true'. It is not at all clear whether or how one should try to judge these essays aesthetically, but they seem to resemble labyrinths of disavowal. Flynt's argumentation positioned them not as universally valid statements, but merely as the products of the private fancy of their author. Yet their mode of address is universal ('[t]he product is not personal to you'; 1968), betraying a social yearning at odds with the post-social 'brend' world of individualized affections. Whether one views these essays as augurs of Reaganite privatization, negative statements on social breakdown, or both, it seems clear that they do not offer a step forward in remaking the relationship between art and society. Behind the anti-Stockhausen protests and the flyer



– which Piekut has described as ‘one of the most audacious documents on politics and the avant-garde to come out of the 1960s’ (2011: 91) – lay an art practice that, in crucial respects, was actually strongly *anti*-political.

Unpicking the relationship between *Originale* and Maciunas’s Fluxus requires more historical detail. Maciunas (born Jurgis Mačiūnas) was a Lithuanian émigré. His authoritarian father, Aleksandras Mačiūnas, had worked in Kaunas as chief electrical engineer for Siemens (which had supplied electrical parts to the Nazi death camps and profited from slave labour). When Soviet forces invaded in 1944, the family fled Lithuania for Frankfurt to escape his arrest as a Nazi collaborator (Kellein, 2007: 17). In 1948, Aleksandras found work with the American forces and then the family moved to New York, where Aleksandras found highly favourable employment. George had been emotionally estranged from his father since his early childhood. After Aleksandras died suddenly in 1954, George, aged 23, returned from studying architecture in Pittsburg to live with his mother, Leokadia, with whom he had an unusually intimate relationship, and they shared apartments for the next fourteen years. Leokadia found various forms of secretarial work as a Russophone, including for Russian justice minister Alexander Kerensky and Svetlana Stalin (*ibid*: 19). It is conceivable that George’s later adoption of Communist rhetoric (he referred to himself as Fluxus’s ‘Chairman’) and his attacks on European culture found a template of sorts in his very different relationships with his parents.

In late 1960, Maciunas became inspired by the performances in Yoko Ono’s loft, partly organized by La Monte Young and featuring a number of former students from Cage’s composition classes. He resolved to undertake an artistic publishing enterprise. In early 1961, he proposed establishing a ‘Fluxus’ journal to the Lithuanian Society his father had founded, but this was rejected due to the Communist leanings of some of the artists Maciunas intended to feature (*ibid*: 37). He then set up an art gallery in Madison Avenue with his friend Almus Salcius and invitation cards from March 1961 explained that this Fluxus journal was to be funded through income from performances at the gallery (*ibid*: 44). By the end of July, though, the gallery had closed and Maciunas had filed bankruptcy. There would be no Fluxus publication until 1963.

In November of 1961 (after the Cologne premiere of *Originale*), Maciunas and his mother relocated to Wiesbaden, where he found minimally paid work with the US Army and Air Force Exchange Service (*ibid*: 37). He made contact with Nam June Paik,

whose reputation for aggressive performance actions, including one in which he savagely cut up John Cage's neck tie and shirt (*Étude for Pianoforte*, performed 6 October 1960), had reached New York. Paik embraced the idea of a Fluxus aesthetic – though he seemed to think it should include just about everyone, including Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre (*ibid*: 58). Paik played a significant role in acquainting Maciunas with the Western European art music scene.

In December, Maciunas contacted the Director of the Städtisches Museum and proposed a series of over twenty concerts of avant-garde music as his first Fluxus Festival (*ibid*: 51). Eventually fourteen concerts were scheduled across four weekends in September 1962. This would be the first incarnation of Fluxus. Further concerts took place in Copenhagen and Paris. More were proposed in London, Florence and on the other side of the Iron Curtain, but cancelled. The Fluxus International concerts were a financial disaster and it was not until 1963, when Maciunas returned to New York, that he was able to obtain the funds necessary to begin his publishing enterprise (*ibid*: 67).

Paik, a close friend of Bauermeister – he had helped her through the breakdown of her violent first marriage (Bauermeister, 2011: 57) – had suggested Maciunas contact her shortly after his arrival in Wiesbaden. Bauermeister's atelier on the Lintgasse in Cologne was Germany's near equivalent to Yoko Ono's loft. She had been hosting experimental art performances there and what came to be known as a 'counter-festival' to the *Internationale Gesellschaft für Neue Musik* festival (*ibid*: 30). Allan Kaprow's Happenings were taken as a point of inspiration for these events and various figures who would later become associated with Fluxus, including La Monte Young and George Brecht, had work performed during them (*ibid*). However, Bauermeister was at the time preparing for a relatively major exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam and refused to host Maciunas's Fluxus International concerts (Kellein, 2007: 52). Maciunas's biographer, Thomas Kellein, has suggested that he took this as an affront (*ibid*).

Unsurprisingly, Paik, who had just participated in *Originale* and also worked with Stockhausen at the WDR electronic music studio, also insisted that the latter composer should be a key Fluxus figure and that their mutual interest in creative uses of technology should be foregrounded by Maciunas's publishing enterprise (*ibid*: 57-58). It is easy to guess why, professionally, Maciunas would not have wanted this. As Flynt's flyer highlighted, Stockhausen already had a publishing organ. More significantly, though, having the most celebrated representative of European musical

modernism on board would have washed out Maciunas's minoritarian anti-art posturing. Stockhausen's name *does* appear on the roster for the Wiesbaden *Fluxus Internationale Festspiele Neuester Musik* (Ex. 5.2). But the work listed is his *Klavierstück IV* (1952/53), which was a decade old and barely lasts two minutes. In a gesture of aesthetic differentiation that could hardly have been missed by the concert's audience, Ligeti's neo-dadaist aping of Cage's 4'33", his 1961 *Trois Bagatelles*, was presented immediately after it. Revealingly, the festival programme was organized by geographic area (US, Japan, Europe) and instrumentation types (piano, other instruments and voice, Happenings, tape or film music). The final concert did not, however, follow the festival pattern. Rather than showcasing tape music in Europe and having to either include a major work by Stockhausen or very conspicuously neglect him in front of a German audience, the programme lists an all French *musique concrète* concert instead.

Kellein has noted that an unenthusiastic press nevertheless deemed Maciunas's Wiesbaden Fluxus International Festival to have been following in the shadow of Paik, Bauermeister, Stockhausen and artist Wolf Vostell. While Owen Smith has argued that the more modest Festum Fluxorum Fluxus held at the Dusseldorf Art Academy in February the next year, co-organized with Joseph Beuys, presented a much more focussed and distinctive event-based aesthetic (in Friedman, ed., 1998: 5), it seems important to underscore why, in the first instance, that distinctiveness was seen to be lacking. Answers are to be found in Stockhausen's teaching and artistic dialogue, already in the late 1950s, with two of the most significant artists who would become associated with Fluxus: Paik and Young. As art historian Liz Kotz has revealed, they are also to be found in the notebooks of George Brecht, one of the students in Cage's New School composition class of 1958-59, whose detailed transcriptions show that Cage was teaching Stockhausen's serialist compositional technique (2001: 65-67). This class has been repeatedly cited as a crucial precursor to Fluxus; those attending included Al Hansen, Allan Kaprow, Dick Higgins and Jackson Mac Low (Smith in Friedman, ed., 1998: 5). Kotz has rightly observed that this rubs against the grain of the usual geo-cultural differentiation made between European strictly controlled serialism and American chance-generated experimentalism (2001: 64-65).<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Kotz (*ibid*) has additionally noted that various American visual artists, including Sol Le Witt and Dan Graham were independently reading *Die Reihe*.

This raises significant questions. If the happening was still an emergent form of art theatre – Kaprow’s main textual formulation of it, *Assemblages, Environments & Happenings*, would not appear in print until 1966 – why have cultural historians supposed it to have been already stale in Stockhausen’s hands in 1961? If Fluxus was nothing more than an unnamed vibe, shared by loosely associated artists in different parts of the world, how could Stockhausen have co-opted it? Historical analysis reveals a field of rich, intercontinental, intermedial, aesthetic miscegenation, in which Stockhausen’s work, writings and teaching was centrally imbricated. This radically contradicts the dominant historiographic characterization of the composer of *Originale* as a wannabe interloper.

And yet Stockhausen’s staging of himself as conductor, in *Originale*, equally gives a false impression of his place within this field of miscegenation. Read against the ordering-revealing polarity of technology outlined at the beginning of this chapter, *Originale* seems almost to exemplify both poles at once. At the same time as the theatrical gestures articulate and elucidate aspects of the musical form, at the same time as the photographic blitz marks Stockhausen’s music as a mediation of perception – as an interaction – Stockhausen presented himself as the grand mediator. The work’s elucidative gestures correspond not to an eradication of his distinction from his audience, but to a heightening of it.

Stockhausen engaged with a research paradigm of art, not in a way that relativized his artistic authority (as one researcher among others), but in one that served to elevate it. The object of this research was the Now, the pregnant moment. This Now was updated from the ‘point’, discussed in Chapter Four as a product of the emancipation of dissonance. But it was not a retrieval from the past, as Nono’s points can be understood to have been. It was a Now made anew, its timbre composed through painstaking technical processing and experimentation. It is clear that Stockhausen intended for art and life to meet in this production of the present. The enormous range of scenarios in which his music features in *Originale* suggests that such possibilities of contact might almost have been unlimited. Yet it seems equally clear that Stockhausen’s production of the new was a way of losing the past – the National Socialist past – of never having contact with it. Where Flynt and Maciunas claimed a desire to eradicate the profession of the artist and saw in Stockhausen a hangover from the old, problematic Europe, it seems that Stockhausen found legitimacy for his social distinction *as artist* in the task of

leading his listeners out of that Europe and to a new present – a task for which he saw technology offering undreamt of possibilities.

*Leading*, of course, brings up the spectre of the *Führer*. Yet we must at least acknowledge that for Stockhausen, this leading did not entail blatant affective manipulation. It did not serve to damage the ethical life of its listeners, as I have contended (in Chapter Three) that the National Socialist radio's biopolitical massaging did. On the contrary, Stockhausen's 'leadership' was clearly intended to promote an embrace of difference, of the unknown, and to thereby expand and sharpen ethical consciousness. All the same, his use of technology to lead listeners into uncharted aesthetic universes certainly conjures the colonial expedition. This hangover of imperial ambition, at a time when significant decolonization struggles were being waged across Africa and elsewhere, would take on an even more starkly problematic appearance when, later in the 1960s, Stockhausen began to 'borrow' from other world music cultures (see Heile, 2009b). It may have been the case that, through his amplification of his social distinction as an artist, Stockhausen, as per Cardew's charge, shielded the violence of global capitalism with manifestations of creative genius, to some unmeasurable degree, in a way comparable to how the 'best' of German classical music was supposed to affirm the racialist ideology of the Nazi Reich. Yet Nono's claim that it was specifically his use of technology that contributed to structuring hierarchies between the first and third world, rather than the complex of dissemination, distribution and historical legitimation mechanisms that served to position his work publicly, falls flat when one considers the relative simplicity of technological means employed in creating *Kontakte* and Stockhausen's efforts not to guard, but to publish and disseminate explanations of his use of it. That Stockhausen's aesthetic thought was so profoundly marked and transformed through his engagement with technology, as I have argued here with the respect to his development of 'moment form' and his use of the impulse generator, further weakens the suggestion that that engagement was essentially the enactment of a privileged relationship.

That problematic elements of Stockhausen's practice were so stridently challenged seems to confirm my thesis that a political problematization of sonic expression has charged key developments in postwar musical creativity. Yet the attacks tended to be too heated to properly meet their mark and are themselves often legible as efforts to master difference – to divide and conquer the field of artistic creativity, as I have argued was almost certainly the case with George Maciunas. The principal point of critique is

that, elucidatory gestures notwithstanding, Stockhausen staged his embrace of difference at a purely aesthetic level in a way seemed to disavow any need for a properly political confrontation with the forces structuring exploitation globally.

### **Kubisch: Emergency, technology, memory**

Christina Kubisch, another of the most significant German artists to have engaged conceptually with technology in her work, evidently did not share Stockhausen's sense of his vocation. Perhaps the most direct and unsettling musical invocation of the National Socialist past in the last sixty years occurred in one of her early performance actions. A performer – Kubisch – inserts the tube of her flute, headpiece removed, into a gas mask, in such a way that it provides her only passage for air. She breathes through it, fingers down in the position of the flute's low C, producing a light tone. Her breathing increases in speed, the sound becoming more congested, more desperate. She continues for around five minutes, until, hyperventilating and physically exhausted, she no longer can.

This performance action, ironically titled 'Week-End' (Ex. 5.3), clearly looked back to Fluxus events more than to Stockhausen. It belongs to a series, from 1975, of seven *Emergency Solos* for flute and various objects, for which Kubisch produced short text scores, each of around six lines, accompanied by images of her performing them (Kubisch, 1977: n.p.). It concerns, like many of her works at the time, forms of constriction and breakdown, in the situation of musical performance, which tend to emphasize the latter's technical aspects and social framing, as well as the thingliness of the musical instrument used. In these works, tools tend to serve to order and restrict. And unlike in Stockhausen's *Originale*, where technology was called upon to keep the past at bay, in 'Week-End', the gas mask forcefully invokes it.

Kubisch would later become a major proponent of 'sound art', creating installations with no conventional performance element and choreographing listening activities. These later works would, like *Originale*, highlight – though also problematize – technology's capacity to reveal and to participate in how we understand and construct our relationship to our environment (they are deeply political works in this sense). This part of the thesis will approach her sound art via her early performance work, focussing mainly on several of the *Emergency Solos*. The (relative) stabilization of 'sound art' into a genre or area of cultural practice has only happened in the last two decades.

Major survey exhibitions of sound art have mostly been a thing of this century.<sup>32</sup> Theorization and historiography have largely been pushed from the disciplinary region of art history (notably in Labelle, 2006; and Kim-Cohen, 2009), rather than musicology – though sonic art literature tends to be highly interdisciplinary.<sup>33</sup> On examining the conceptual elements of the *Solos*, it becomes clear, however, that the transformation of Kubisch’s creative practice concerned many issues that have their origins in, and remain germane to, the history and theory of music, and the broader project of remaking sonic expression politically in the aftermath of National Socialism.

Born in Bremen three years after the defeat of the Reich, Kubisch trained in both music and the visual arts. Her study included time at the Graz Jazz academy, with composer Franco Donatoni in Milan and in Zurich with artist Serge Stauffer, famous, in part, for his translations of Marcel Duchamp’s writings. As a highly accomplished flautist, she performed in various jazz, rock and improvisation groups in her early twenties. She also attended Kagel’s composition course at Darmstadt in 1974 and her work appeared in numerous concert and festival programmes during the mid-1970s, alongside major, established figures such as Kagel and Ligeti.<sup>34</sup> Almost invariably, she was the only female composer in these programmes; often she also performed. What occupied her listening, meanwhile, was mostly non-European musics, ‘[m]usic’, as she has described it, ‘that was made together, [involving] improvisation and learning by listening’ (2008: 68). Music, in other words, where she perceived the art-life separation railed against by Fluxus not to be an issue.

Her early work *Identikit*, from 1974 (published in Kubisch, 1977), signalled that something was amiss in the realm of contemporary art music performance. Five performers share a concert grand keyboard. Each listens through headphones to a recorded track of different speed metronome pulses. The performance begins in

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<sup>32</sup> Merely the titles of early surveys, such as *Sonic Boom* (Hayward Gallery, London, 2000) and *Bitstreams* (Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2001) track a changing attitude, relating to sound art’s institutionalization, when contrasted with the major survey, current at the time of writing, *Sound Art. Sound as a Medium of Art* (ZKM, Karlsruhe, 2012).

<sup>33</sup> German literature on sound art is somewhat different to Anglophone literature in this respect, with major authors, such as Helga de la Motte-Haber, writing from a more squarely musicological background.

<sup>34</sup> Viewed in Kubisch’s personal archive at her home in Hoppegarten (Berlin) in June, 2012.

temporal unison, with five rapid-fire lines of running quaver figures that repeat out of step with the metrical pulse (there is a clear debt to minimalism, though the sound is somewhat sinister and maniacal). As individual tempi change, this sound mass becomes increasingly chaotic. The gradually metamorphosing ostinati shrink, note by note; speeds drop – fifteen-fold in the case of the top voice; dynamics increase. Eventually performers are left mechanically pounding out repeated notes, dissonantly and out of time, until one by one they stop.

The *Emergency Solos* of the following year are much more conceptually pointed. Though still in her twenties (studying, at the time, in Milan with Donatoni), Kubisch performed the *Solos* widely in Italy, West Germany and elsewhere (including Baghdad), and several were recorded in conjunction with a Radio Bremen live broadcast performance. In keeping with the gas mask, a German rendering of *Emergency Solos* as ‘*Solos im Ausnahmezustand*’ (‘solos in the state of exception’)<sup>35</sup> conjures spectres from Germany’s fascist past. There may have been a nod, in this, to the state’s crackdown on political radicalism in response to the terrorist violence of the Red Army Faction. In the name of protecting the Constitution, the 1972 ‘*Berufsverbot*’ had barred people associated with political radicalism from public employment, specifically targeting Kubisch’s generation: students with professional aspirations – the teenagers of 1968.<sup>36</sup> But the use of the gas mask in ‘Week-End’ conjured other, specifically musical associations, pointing to a different set of political concerns.

One of the origin stories of music, handed down from Greek mythology, makes the flute a souvenir of the exquisite Syrinx. In her desperation to escape Pan’s lustful advances, Syrinx was said to have been transformed into a reed, only to be appropriated by Pan, in a queer twist to the archetypal heterosexual rape narrative, as a phallic, yet feminine sounding, musical pipe (Kubisch’s description of the dual symbolism of the flute in 2012a: 72).<sup>37</sup> The gas mask in ‘Week-End’ makes of Syrinx’s flight a matter of military combat. But the hyperventilating makes her desire to maintain her purity appear hopelessly under duress in the age of gas warfare – and in this, Syrinx may be less a

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<sup>35</sup> Found in the booklet accompanying the cd, *Musik in Deutschland 1950-2000: Instrumentales Laboratorium*, RCA Red Seal, 2004 (p. 9; text by Sabine Sanio).

<sup>36</sup> While researching at Kubisch’s archive, the *Berufsverbot* was mentioned by her partner, Dieter Scheyhing, as one of the most significant governmental interventions into the political culture of the time (author’s notes, 26/06/2012).

<sup>37</sup> Undoubtedly, the Pan-Syrinx affair also holds a deeper allegorical significance relating to time – transience and the struggle to capture it in aesthetic form – not sexuality *per se*.



metonym for woman than for Absolute Music, struggling to maintain for itself her expropriated ‘innocence’.<sup>38</sup>

In performance, it is not, however, the symbolism of the mask that commands attention. It is the physicality of the breathing. We saw in Chapter Four that Nono was contemporaneously thematizing breath musically in *Al gran sole*. His desire to make breath sensible as a force of potentiality would become even more pronounced in later works (such as *Das atmende Klarsein*, 1981). In a different way, Brian Ferneyhough’s contemporaneous *Unity Capsule* (1976) places such heavy demands on its flautist-performer that the living, breathing body’s presence is constantly felt. Perception is lured into the threshold zone between bodily exertion and transcending musical tone. Earlier, Kagel had concluded his work *Atem* for a wind-player (1970) instructing the performer to lie down, blow out the final, gurgling tone, and appear dead.

These works established breath as a crucial *positive* foundation of musical expression. ‘Week-End’ instead dwelt on constriction. In a contemporaneous performance action, *Ohne Titel (Mumie)* (‘Untitled [Mummy]’), Kubisch performed ‘a difficult classical piece as well as possible’ while being wrapped in bandages that would eventually cover her head and mouth, rendering her silent.<sup>39</sup> Key to the work’s interest is the ambiguity between the bandages rendering Kubisch silent and being symbolic of healing, after the arduous flute performance. Both flute and bandage constrict.

This action, closely replicated (though without flute) in the final scene of Heiner Müller’s famous citation-heavy Shakespeare rewrite *Die Hamletmaschine* three years later, was performed at one of the truly landmark art exhibitions of the decade: ‘Frauen – Kunst – Neue Tendenzen’ (‘Women – Art – New Tendencies’), held at Galerie Krinzinger in Innsbruck (Tittel, 2011: 67). The exhibition brought together major international figures associated with feminist art practice, including Marina Abramović, Rebecca Horn, Carolee Schneemann, Valie Export and Yvonne Rainer, among many others. This was one of numerous all-women shows Kubisch would contribute to in the early years of her career as her work was embraced by the feminist performance and

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<sup>38</sup> In her introduction to her translation of Vladimir Jankélévitch’s *Music and the Ineffable*, Carolyn Abbate expressed surprise at the philosopher’s claim that innocence was music’s condition of existence and the erotic essentially alien to it (Jankélévitch, 2003: 87). Yet his claim is as deeply instilled in Western culture as is the disavowal of the seductive in music that lies behind it.

<sup>39</sup> ‘Emergency Solos 1975’, word document containing German instructions for the performance, made available to the author by Kubisch.

body art movement. (Comparisons can be drawn between the *Emergency Solos* and a range of other contemporaneous works staging conflictive relations between bodies, social codings and technical objects, such as Martha Rosler's influential video work *Semiotics of the Kitchen*, also from 1975, in which the alphabet is spelled out with names of cooking utensils. Frequently aggressive accompanying gestures reveal a palpable unwillingness to abide by the regime of labour that traditionally bound women to this network of signifiers.) The contrast between these exhibitions and the rosters of men listed in the programmes for the 'Neue Musik' concerts Kubisch participated in at the time is striking.

Helmut Lachenmann, one of the West German composers whose fame was rising at the time, has written that composing means gathering up the concept of music inherited from the web of the past – 'tradition' – and re-presenting it anew (2012: 11).

Performance actions such as 'Week-End' and *Ohne Titel (Mumie)* suggest something less creatively enabling and more suffocating is at play. In 1979, Kubisch published an article entitled, 'The Expulsion of Woman from Music' ('*Die Vertreibung der Frau aus der Musik*'; 2011a), discussing the lack of female presences in Western music history and how this history of exclusion was being problematically reproduced through the prejudices of current-day, male cultural gate-keepers ('I have a whole collection of reviews of my pieces that begin by describing my clothing, hairstyle and bodily "merits"!'; *ibid*: 74). History – and the unconscious habits and prejudices it serves to reproduce – can also function as a tool of constriction.

A year earlier, Kubisch had created an unusual performance installation work called *A History of Soundcards* (Julian Pretto Gallery, New York, 1978; details of this performance are drawn from Tittel, 2012: 68). Working with the principle of a music-historical canon of influence, Kubisch researched and collected a history of music represented through a hundred composer portraits – all of men. She commissioned an elderly lady in Milan to make postcards, using these portraits, with small reeds inside them that squeaked when pressed (this was the woman's unusual line of work). The portraits were exhibited in a long, horizontal line across one gallery wall, recalling Gerhard Richter's celebrated 1972 Venice Biennale German Pavilion exhibition of *48 Portraits* of men from German history. A slide projector, the quintessential symbol of art history pedagogy, projected each portrait in turn, while Kubisch held up the corresponding 'soundcard' and said, 'This is the sound of...', then the name of the composer, then squeaked the card. Each squeak was recorded, played back with each

new squeak and re-recorded, generating an accumulated cacophony of squeaks out of the simulation of music-historical reproduction. The final image was of Kubisch's hand, squeaking (presumably) a card.<sup>40</sup> Kubisch's sound cards presented music history literally as a technical object. But appearing now as composer, she had full mastery over this object.

The dearth of women's names that grace the pages of music histories remains a significant issue. This is underscored by the fact that the prestigious Ernst von Siemens Music Prize has not once been awarded to a female composer in the four decades of its existence. But the historical canon, as a technology of exclusion, is far from the only issue of interest in Kubisch's performance works. In other performance actions in the *Emergency Solos* series, the 'tradition' of autonomous art music is scathingly mocked. This mocking, however, does not appear to relate directly to gender politics; rather, it suggests that, as an organ of social experience, that tradition now had little to offer. 'Private Piece' sees the performer holding the opening of the flute's headpiece to her ear, with mouth hole stopped as she listens to the vibrating air, as if to a seashell. A similar closed-circuit gesture is made in 'It's So Touchy' (Ex. 5.4), where metal thimbles on each of the fingers caress and scratch against the flute and each other. By the mid-1970s, extended instrumental techniques were far from novel in contemporary art music contexts. But there is something unique and strange about Kubisch's performance, an eroticism as the thimble fingers touch against each other, gently penetrate the tube of the flute and then, insect-like, engulf one another around its metallic body. This eroticism is more explicit elsewhere: in 'Stille Nacht', where silent night is played using fur mittens in a cold room ('nude if you want to') and 'Erotica', where a prophylactic is inflated through, and massaged against, the open end of the flute head joint (both works from the *Emergency Solos* series); or in *Vibrations* (1975), a string quartet in which bows are exchanged for dildos and a whole range of techniques are deployed to make different parts of the instrument bodies sing.

The auto-erotic immediacy of touch, in 'It's So Touchy', at first appears indifferent to the conventional musical sound producing body. It calls to mind Luce Irigaray's slightly later description of feminine sexual pleasure: 'As for woman, she touches

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<sup>40</sup> 'Variation on a Classical Theme', one of the *Emergency Solos*, also reveals Kubisch's fondness for the desublimating squeak. It calls for a squeaky toy sausage to be inserted into the end of the flute and for variations to be improvised on one of Schoenberg's tone rows, substituting the sausage squeak for the corresponding pitch.

herself in and of herself without any need for mediation' (Irigaray, 1985 [1977]: 24). The flute, souvenir of Syrinx and Pan's archetypically hetero-normative (non-)relation, is gradually drawn into the fold of the performance. But not in the usual way: through explorative scratching-touching, not the projection of resonant tone. There is more ambivalence here than in 'Week-End'. The critical gesture is matched – if not superseded – by the strange, insect-like probing and engulfing of the metallic organ. It is as if the body banned from history, the body silenced, the body reduced to an instrument for the play of Pan's breath could here, nevertheless, find new pleasures, given half a chance. The ambivalence is reinforced by the thimbles that temper haptic immediacy: the little caps designed to shield against the prick of the embroidery needle, to 'protect' woman in her labour – the banal technological correlate to the contemptuous gender-role writing of the Sleeping Beauty story. These too, it would seem, may form material for erotic *détournement*, to borrow a word from the Situationists: an experiential transformation of meaning and use. The tool here offers experiential meaning through its misuse; it makes music when rendered functionless.

From 1980, the element of performance would not so much be *détourné* as eradicated from Kubisch's work. A text by Kubisch published in the art periodical *Flash Art* in 1979, reflected on new work seen and heard during time spent in New York. Describing sound installations by Maryanne Amacher, Max Neuhaus, Rhys Chatham, Laurie Anderson and Annea Lockwood, Kubisch noted a 'withdrawal of the artist from the performance scene' (1979: 16). She referred to a prevalent desire to work with sound in space rather than time, describing this as 'politically' grounded; however, she added that this related to a returning 'nostalgia for more solid and lasting values' (*ibid*: 18), which suggests that what was meant by space was still in some way temporally conceived. A 'steady increase in tension' is invoked, corresponding, no doubt, to the mountainous demands heaped on the performer of contemporary art music, referred to in the *Ohne Titel (Mumie)* performance and ironized in *A History of Sound Cards*, where Kubisch *as composer* exerted no effort at all to draw sounds from her squeaking cards. Thus, Kubisch announced, 'the artist is running away from the field of action, leaving his work to stand on its own. It remains for the public to somehow place this work...in their own time' (*ibid*). Obviously this retreat from the conventional composer-performer-audience relationship was informed by concern with the power differentials that embed it. But other issues relating to the conceptual treatment of sound

and the defunctionalizing of technical objects that we have just seen would also seem to have been significant.

Having long had an interest in electronics, Kubisch undertook intensive study of electromagnetic induction. She noted in a text published in 1984 that ‘electronic music is almost as young as music in general by women’ – she cited Johanna M. Beyer’s *Music of the Spheres* (1938) – and has maintained in discussion that it is easier for artists to work when they are not overshadowed by long histories of precedent (2012b: 69; author’s notes, 26/06/2012). She started to develop installations using cables hooked up to audio players that would transform recorded sound into electromagnetic radiation. This allowed her to work spatially, using the cables to mark different features of her exhibition sites. Audiences, no longer *performed at*, were offered special mobile listening devices that allowed them to negotiate their spatial and temporal engagement with the work with relative autonomy.

One of Kubisch’s first such installations, *Il respiro del mare* (Capo d’Orlando, 1981), comprised two circular configurations of cables on alternate walls, one through which a recording of the sea outside could be heard, the other offering a recording of the artist’s breath (Ex. 5.5). If the technologized breath looked back to the performance actions of the *Emergency Solos*, while seeming to allegorize how the technical inevitably enters into expressive production,<sup>41</sup> the sea underscored the new spatial and environmental possibilities of Kubisch’s method. Later spatial configurations of the cables have been more intricate and have included works with cables suspended above visitors that have been likened to giant violin strings (Dickel, 1988: 50), as well as various labyrinths, mostly from the late 1980s (such as *Klanglabyrinth*, Ars Electronica, Linz, 1987). The peculiarity of the technological mediation of the listening is as much a part of these works as the recorded sounds heard. As Hubert Besacier has explained:

The artist leaves it to the care of the visitor to reactivate [the magnetic voices], as one reanimates the memory of a presence...She allows us to hear presence and absence simultaneously. Through the word’s paradoxical play – the voice that speaks destroys the silence just as it marks it – and through the capturing of vibrations imperceptible to the naked ear, she prompts us to hear all of these aspects of silence in their troubling *mise en abîme*.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> As per the third level of the model of expression outlined in Chapter Three.

<sup>42</sup> ‘L’artiste laisse au visiteur le soin de les [the magnetic voices] réactiver, comme on réanime le souvenir d’une présence...Elle nous donne à entendre simultanément présence et absence. Par le jeu paradoxal du mot – la voix qui énonce oblitère le silence tout en le désignant – et par le jeu de la captation de vibrations imperceptibles à l’oreille

The *Emergency Solos* were marked by a striking discrepancy between strongly defined symbolic elements – the gas mask, the thimbles, and, in other works in the series, a prophylactic, nudity, fur and boxing gloves – and the *strangeness of performance as it lingers in time*. Watching the performance documentation – or listening to sound recordings of these early works – the problem of balancing symbolic elements against what is ineffable in music (or in the sound of the breath, or the tapping of thimbles) marks them deeply and was not always treated satisfyingly. The later work using electromagnetic induction have engaged with this problem more successfully. As the above quotation from Besacier registers, Kubisch has often exploited a contrast between a ‘natural’ listening, which, unaided, hears nothing of the work, and a technologically mediated listening that discovers a hidden reality. Moreover, many works have used ‘natural’ sounds (such as the sea, in *Il respiro del mare*, or elsewhere the sounds of insects and birdsong) in highly artificial ways, creating uncanny juxtapositions that serve to raise questions about what kind of *knowledge* is being disclosed, ‘putting question marks around [the process]’ (Kubisch in Steiner, 1996: 7). Greatly extending and sharpening the elucidatory gesture we saw in Stockhausen’s *Originale*, the work is carefully designed to stimulate its visitors to fold their perception of it back onto perception itself and its artistic mediation. With this, an awareness of the environmental aspect of perception – its relational dimension, which links self to world – is encouraged.

Since the 2000s, Kubisch has choreographed a number of what she calls ‘magnetic walks’. Using specially developed electromagnetic induction headphones, participants are guided through an auditory engagement with the otherwise unperceived electromagnetic profile of different urban spaces. As with Kubisch’s earlier works with electromagnetic cables, participants find themselves already to be in a space of activity that had otherwise been imperceptible to them. However, they no longer listen to determinate objects, but rather engage with urban space at the level of its ambience. What participants make of this newly audible ambience, and the revelation of their own bodily proneness to it as radiation, is a matter for them. Edited recordings Kubisch has made using sound recorded through the induction headphones have a deliberately ambiguous epistemological status. ‘Homage with Minimal Disinformation’, an edited

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nue, elle nous donne à recevoir tous ces aspects du silence dans leur troublante mise en abîme’ (Besacier, 2011: 14).

recording made in New York and released on the 2007 album *Five Electrical Walks*, sounds initially like Kraftwerk, then closer to Steve Reich and other minimalists. Similarly, instructions and footage made for and of the walks at times underscore the musical possibilities they offer: ‘The walks enable the participant to “play” the architecture like an instrument’ (Khazam, 2010: 49). This play is not, as art theorist Seth Kim-Cohen (2009: 115) has claimed, done in an attempt to allow the newly audible magnetic radiation to be heard *as it is*. Rather, it reinforces the fact that these sounds do not bring with them a ready-made mode of understanding. The political shape of Kubisch’s work is strongly evident here: it prods participants to autonomously negotiate their relationship with their environment as their perception of it is rendered strange. And at the same time it prods them to consider fundamental questions about sonic expression, listening and their places – politically – in society.

Kubisch developed the walks after an increasing prevalence of ambient electromagnetic radiation began to interfere with her earlier installation practice. In this sense, they mark a history, tied to the computer age, that has passed below the radar of political consideration and determination. Sparked by this interference came another way of working that I will turn to now to conclude this chapter. Fleeing interference, remote sites and places buried underground became attractive for Kubisch and have been used for ambitious, large-scale sound and light installations since the late 1980s. The example I will discuss here is from 2002: an installation in the recently opened Bunkermuseum in Oberhausen, Germany (Ex. 5.6).<sup>43</sup> The space was built in 1942 as a security bunker and later lay abandoned for half a century. Fifteen rooms were painted with phosphorescent pigments – a common material in Kubisch’s work – in a way that highlighted particular surface textures and barely legible traces of life (marks from a bed post in the concrete floor, for instance). Visitor access was restricted to the corridor that ran between the rooms, but ultraviolet light made their adjoining floors glow ethereally, while different filterings of white noise radiated from them. Environment became body-like. The rooms took on the appearance of a series of strange, self-enclosed organisms, humming and glowing to themselves while observers passed outside. The hyperventilating body of ‘Week-End’ haunted this work, but in a different, quiescent guise.

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<sup>43</sup> Kubisch has made a number of different large scale installations in bunkers, including *40 kHz* (1992) in the Ehrenfelder Bunker in Körnerstraße, Cologne, and *Planetarium* (1987), her first such work, in Amsterdam’s air raid bunker network.

The work was called *Arkadien* – Arcadia – unspoiled paradise, reminder of the inescapability of death, but also the mythological home of Pan and thus music. This title conjoins the safe space of music's autonomy with Nazi-era security planning. In *Arcadia*, worldly reclusion appears bound up with the worst of history. As with 'Week-End', the significance of the link evoked between musical autonomy and the National Socialist past remained opaque. The coloured noise, the luminescent monochrome and the withdrawn space as body conjured the destitution without experience of the *Muselmann*, discussed in Chapter Four. The history traced by the site's illuminated surface scars also remained opaque and ineffable. The spaces hummed with implication, but visitors were left to negotiate their own relation to it through ethical and political reflection.

### **Conclusion**

The temporal did not disappear from Kubisch's art when she left the concert stage to create physically static installations. Nor did it simply become the possession of her work's visitors, as they mixed their own sound compositions, navigating her works. Rather, it became anchored to a provocation to think through the status and meaning of aesthetic perception. And since in her installations aesthetic perception generally folds into the perception of a space, environment or ambience – since when one listens to her induction cables one hears that one had not heard their sounds a moment earlier and thus hears differently what *had* just been heard – this thinking through also entails considering one's environmental relationships. In works such as *Arkadien*, where that environment carries the scars of time, the provocation is also a provocation for Kubisch's visitors to negotiate their relationship to history past and present. It is a profoundly political provocation that calls the historical (the temporal) toward experience, where it had fallen from perception. We have also seen, however, that Kubisch's earlier work approached history from the opposite direction: assaulting it where it had ossified into a tradition of exclusion. This, too, entailed a provocation to rethink history and its political status – the way it orders and excludes like a constrictive technology.

These provocations could not be further from the flight from the past of Stockhausen's ever new, ever full 'moments'. Both Stockhausen and Kubisch have staged 'contacts' and they have both employed technology in ways meant to elucidate and make palpable its ordering of sense. But whereas I have argued that this served, in



Stockhausen's case, to reinforce the composer's status as a necessary mediator of aesthetic experience for society, Kubisch's use of technology constantly highlights aporia, absences, the unperceived and the strange, in ways that call for autonomous response. She reinvents sonic expression in ways that shift emphasis from its agency to its alterity. In Kubisch's hands, aesthetic sound is no longer an affective tool of biopolitical manipulation, as the National Socialist radio framed it, nor is it a means through which immunizatory forms of containment or purification are enacted. It is transformed into a site of potential knowledge, where our social contract with technology might be opened for deliberation and renegotiation. Her answer to the avant-garde dilemma of reframing the relationship between art, life and knowledge has not been to do away with the artist, but to mark our environment and history – the buried histories of the bunkers, the absent history of female composers – with a poetry that might provoke us to remake our relationship to them.

## Chapter Six. Invocations/obligations: Kagel's Beethoven

A stony face stole the cover of *Der Spiegel*'s September 7, 1970, issue (Ex. 6.1). A slightly unearthly blue light, illuminating from one side the tough, leathery jowl, pronounced forehead and thick rippling hair, gently – perhaps humorously – clashed with the usual red, gold and black of the West German weekly's cover. A pithy title matched the stony face: *Beethoven: Abschied vom Mythos* ('Beethoven: Leaving the Myth behind'). As the main haul of celebrations for the bicentenary of Germany's most famous artist's birth began that week in the Bonn Beethovenhalle – including performances by Herbert von Karajan, Otto Klemperer, Karl Böhm, Friedrich Gulda and Nathan Milstein, among many others – *Der Spiegel* contributed to this affirmation of a proud past in the present by courting a touch of controversy.

The desire to problematize such an event of idolization in the wake of Germany's more recent history is easily comprehended, though the leading article was not itself especially challenging. It contrasted the excessive idealization and mythologization of Beethoven the man, promulgated in part by the composer himself, with unromantic details from his biography: details that evoke an image of Beethoven as meanly arrogant and possessive, lacking in human empathy and infatuated with the aristocracy (*Der Spiegel*, 1970b). By its account, the idea of Beethoven 'the "strong and pure", to whom all that is earthly is foreign, who "lives in the most intimate communion with the universe"' was a misnomer, not to be trusted (*ibid*: 182). Lest this be read as an assault on Beethoven's *work*, though, a citation from *The Genealogy of Morals* was offered on the artist's relation to the artwork:

He is, after all, only a condition of the work, the soil from which it grows, perhaps only the manure on that soil. Thus he is, in most cases, something that must be forgotten if one wants to enter into the full enjoyment of the work. (Nietzsche, 1956: 235; cited *Der Spiegel*, 1970b: 194)

The purity of the work was thus affirmed, rid of the haunting presence of its creator – who is reduced to excrement.

*Der Spiegel*'s gesture of purification was typical of the nineteenth-century discourse associated with so-called Absolute Music (we saw it invoked critically in Kubisch's work in the last chapter). And the gesture still finds echoes – for example, in Pamela Potter's recent call to distil and extract the musical produce of the Third Reich from the

record of its association with politics, and to judge it on its own terms *as music* (Potter, 2005: 443). It is not a neutral gesture. Spiritual value is ascribed to music on the condition that it is distanced from the material concerns of the world. In the process, the divine is brought down to earth, as religious sentiment is funnelled into aesthetic sensation (this was one of the arguments of Schmitt's *Political Romanticism* [2011]). The musical work's *power* is bought through the extraction of the expressive form from the lived temporality of its production. And this extraction allows its presence to command across historical time, in much the same way that Goebbels dreamed the time-document would cause to happen with Hitler's charismatic presence (as discussed at the end of Chapter Three).

What the *Spiegel* author failed to recognize is that it is in making the work supra-human that its creator becomes superhuman. The autonomous work and the mythic Genius (for whom an elusive relationship to reality was essential) were historical allies. Indeed, the work was a key technology in the construction of the Genius's complex relation to historical time and its capacity to mark and structure historical experience. It is this dimension of the expressive form as it bears on temporal orientation – a dimension underscored and made problematic by the National Socialist regime's efforts to stabilize its charismatic rule through its aestheticization of politics – that will feature as the main point of concern in this chapter.

What followed the lead article's disappointing disquisition was altogether more original: an enigmatic interview with Kagel that turned the paradoxical discourse of Absolute Music on its head (Kagel, 1970a). Kagel's principal contribution to the Beethoven bicentennial celebrations – the ninety minute film, *Ludwig van: ein Bericht* ('Ludwig van: A Report', 1969), which I will analyse at length in the following pages – had already been reviewed in *Der Spiegel* three months earlier, when it was broadcast on prime-time television (8:30pm, Monday, June 1, on WDR (III)), several days after its premiere at the annual Vienna Festival (*Der Spiegel*, 1970a). The reviewer had referred to it as an 'anti-art film' ('*Anti-Kulturfilm*'; *ibid*: 188) and the *Spiegel* interviewer now prompted Kagel to clarify his position toward Beethoven: 'your satirical film *Ludwig van* has mostly been misunderstood as an anti-Beethoven film' (Kagel, 1970a: 195).

Kagel evaded the prompt. Beethoven's work, he answered, 'means so much to me that I decided to shoot *Ludwig van* and deal with the misunderstandings'. In a strange play of dedication and deprecation that followed in this vein, he jolted the interview

from topic to topic, moving between highly specific historical analysis and lapidary sarcasms. Kagel exaggerated and warped the ideals of Absolute Music and *werktreue* (faithfulness to the work). To be done with the ‘literary flavouring’ (*literarische Beigeschmack*) of Beethoven’s music, he suggested that it be left unperformed for a generation, so that the next might hear it with uncontaminated freshness (‘this solution may hit against similar difficulties to family planning in India, but the result would be worth it’; *ibid*: 196). But then he said that merely the repetition – ‘so long and loud’ – of Schiller’s Ode in the Ninth Symphony is enough to ensure that listeners soon stop listening to the words and just hear music, as if the cleansing of *Beigeschmücke* were a quasi-automatic process. Kagel referred to Beethoven’s sketchbooks as a ‘*Heilmittel*’ (a ‘remedy’, but more literally a ‘*Heil-medium*’; *ibid*: 195). Yet he criticized the projection of moral value onto the composer as ‘neo-theological’ (*ibid*: 196). And like the author of the preceding text, Kagel stated that Beethoven the man and Beethoven the musician were ‘in no way’ the same (*ibid*: 198). Nevertheless, as if beholden to the great creator, he claimed that the ideal performance of Beethoven’s works – one he attempted in his film – would reproduce not just how Beethoven imagined them, but how the deaf composer *actually* heard them: badly! There is no easy departure from the myth, the hilarious string of contradictory positions seems to suggest, partly because the very notion of departing from the myth is already inscribed within the myth itself.

But there is also another, more complex reason Kagel did not embrace such a departure. Of concern in Kagel’s *Ludwig van* project, I will argue, was the agency of ghosts and their shape-shifting through different media. The ghosts conjured in Kagel’s work are not, however, illusions to be shattered; they do things. Absolute Music’s flight from worldly concern, the project suggests, has encouraged psychotic worldly ramifications (i.e., defined by the breakdown of the relationship between self and reality). And the remark from Kagel that would furnish the interview with its title – ‘Beethoven’s legacy is Moral Re-Armament’ (Beethoven’s Erbe ist die Moralische Aufrüstung; *ibid*: 196) – hints, albeit somewhat cryptically, that the ramifications he had in mind related specifically to Germany’s fascist past.

Though Kagel did not explain his remark, Moral Re-Armament was a major politico-religious proselytizing initiative that grew out of American missionary Frank Buchman’s evangelist Oxford Group movement in 1938 – a group that courted the rich and famous, hosting ‘International House Parties’. Preaching honesty, purity, love and unselfishness as its four (Beethovenian?) moral absolutes, the Oxford Group counted

amongst its exploits a botched effort to convert Hitler to its cause. Buchman, impressed by the Nazi propaganda apparatus, had fantasized that it could be used to bring about a supranational ‘God-controlled’ totalitarian state, likening God to a ‘perpetual broadcasting station’, the transmission of which needed to be extended to reach every individual and every situation on earth (Driberg, 1964: 68-69). Hitler did not share Buchman’s vision, at least not of which ‘spirit’ the regime’s charisma machine was to broadcast.

By contrast, in Kagel’s film the *Führer*, now a ‘*Fremdenführer*’ (tourist guide) at the Beethoven-Haus in contemporary Bonn – ‘a shock of light grey hair falls across the eyebrow...the tiny, rectangular moustache has become almost white’ (Kagel, 2007) – is much more accommodating when Beethoven arrives from the past to inspect his memorialization. Indeed, Kagel’s *Führer* is thoroughly servile; the power relationship completely inverts that of the dictator manipulating the work of Germany’s great talents. The problem for Kagel was not, as Beate Kutschke has claimed, that the Nazis ‘had successfully constructed a heroic and aggressive Beethoven image’, which had not yet been dismantled (2010: 578). The problem was that ghosts from the past are active – time-travelling – presences, not images that can simply be whisked away through acts of demythifying purification. They enter into and haunt expression, and their political implications, Kagel clearly recognized, warrant careful consideration as part of the process of composition.

The ghost’s agency can be understood in relation to two concepts, medium and influence, both of which have significant temporal dimensions. A medium relays sense. Nono’s suspension technique in the fourth movement of *Il canto sospeso* (see Chapter Four) acts like a medium. The score and gramophone (and its descendants) are likewise technologies of haunting. They archive and stockpile, transporting sense across time, perhaps indefinitely. Influence, meanwhile, calls forth some form of response. Its dynamic is that of *obliging*: a dual pushing and taking through which the ghost finds new hosts and shifts into new media. Influence moves somewhat in the manner that Heidegger described in his analysis of the disclosure of *ἀλήθεια* (‘truth’), as outlined in Chapter Three. But it is a more modest, terrestrial affair than the divinely mediated illumination of which Heidegger wrote. Indeed, influence is often treated by cultural historians as if it were purely a matter of subjective determination on the part of the one

‘influenced’, as if it concerned, primarily, the legitimation of careers with respect to a canon of masters (or a canon of exclusion, as Kubisch saw it, fleeing).

Kagel instead highlighted the element of provocation. The problem posed through the *Ludwig van* project, I will argue, is not that of ridding the world of ghosts, but of *constructing freedom amid all their provocations and obligations* – the ‘influence’ of the past (with its fantasies, promises, wounds and its wrongs) on the present. This, for all its simplicity, has been *the* essential political problem (very broadly construed) with which those living in National Socialism’s aftermath have had to grapple. Once more it seems telling that we find it articulated at an important juncture in Kagel’s oeuvre, as he began to turn increasingly to citational practices – which would soon become associated with the rise of postmodernism in music. Having spent the previous decade developing a new form of ‘*Musiktheater*’ that had worked to expose, and often render absurd, the situation of music making unfolding within its frame (furthering substantially the elucidatory gesture we saw in Stockhausen’s *Originale* in the last chapter and paving the way for the conceptual elements of Kubisch’s early practice), this change would bring a more substantial historical dimension to his work. Between (Stockhausenian) serialism’s studied amnesia and the remaking of ‘tradition’ that would come in Germany in the following decades (in the work of Wolfgang Rihm, Lachenmann and others), we find in Kagel’s *Ludwig van* project one of the conceptually sharpest, but also most humorous, framings in postwar music history of the impulse to politically problematize and recompose sonic expression in relation to National Socialism.

This chapter’s central theme – temporality – has made various appearances across the preceding chapters. Here, I do not approach it in terms of the ‘real time’ (for want of a better word) structuring of sound into musical sense, but rather focus on the temporality of the ‘work’ as a structure of obligation – as a structure, that is, which compels certain forms of engagement and response. I look, first, at Kagel’s film, *Ludwig van: ein Bericht*, drawing out its key themes. Though the film is one of Kagel’s better-known works, I examine it in detail. I feel that the work’s radical and brilliant meditation on mediality and the paradoxes of Absolute Music has largely been reduced and misinterpreted in academic literature on it to a statement of objection to the debasement of music by the commodity form – against which Kagel supposedly developed ‘distortion’ techniques in the hope of re-attaining a state of cultural freshness (see especially Kutschke, 2010: 568; this interpretation of Kagel’s work more broadly

was elaborated in Schnebel, 1970: 282-289). While Kagel certainly made statements to the effect that music had been debased by commodity culture – in the interview I have cited and elsewhere – they were always part performance, as Knut Holtsträter (2010: 7) has pointed out: part of his public staging of himself *as composer*. Insofar as they referred back to the dreams of purity associated with Absolute Music, their message would seem to conflict with what Kagel was trying to convey through this broader self-reflexive performance – which, like his *Musiktheater*, sought to highlight the material and social realities of musical activity.<sup>1</sup>

Subsequently, I consider the published score, *Ludwig van: Hommage von Beethoven* (1970b), which was produced after the film but clarifies a number of its themes. Drawing on Dahlhaus's roughly contemporaneous historical analyses of Absolute Music and Thrasybulos Georgiades' writings on the *nomos* (law) of musical form, I discuss how Kagel navigated between obliging the ghosts of the past and pitching his own to the future, and I explore the political potential of his gesture as it carefully marked itself in time.

### ***Ludwig van as film***

Kagel's film announces its principal theme right at the outset: the obligation of paying tribute. A man shaves, muttering: 'This Beethoven year-ery!' (*Diese Beethovenjahrerei*). 'Bumm bumm bumm', he adds and plays with the words, transforming them through a meaningless series that includes *Beethovenbummselei* ('Beethoven dawdling') and ends with *Beethovenrasulei* ('Beethoven razolry'). A final 'bumm-bumm-bumm *bumm*' coda is sung to the opening of the Fifth Symphony. Thus, creative play, frivolity and tedious ritual all mark the occasion. But what is interesting here is the equation of paying tribute with grooming and thus the presentation of the self.

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<sup>1</sup> A 1974 review of Kagel's films by Michael Chanan perfectly captures how they underscore the social artifice of the situation of musical performance. Discussing the surrealistic aspects of the films, Chanan describes them as dissolving 'Art' (i.e., the imaginary, though nevertheless real, 'autonomous' product of aesthetic philosophy), submerging it 'beneath the surface of everyday life and traditional values, to discover strange, forceful and often irresistible events stirring beneath the society we think we know' (Chanan, 1974: 46).

That the man shaving has no clear identity in the film's narrative underscores the ambiguity of paying tribute. Perhaps he is supposed to be Beethoven, preparing to celebrate his own anniversary. Perhaps just this once his face is revealed through the shaving mirror. Or perhaps the man has a professional function in the celebrations.<sup>2</sup> Is he simply a man – every man – a stand-in for humanity, or at least the film's viewers? As the figure composes himself to mark the historic event, the most banal, everyday action of shaving proves enigmatic. The scene muses on the preparatory form of the introduction and it hints at the film's later fixation on creaturely life, but it gives nothing away in narrative terms.

Roughly speaking, the film is in 'moment form'. It divulges its contents a little like a list. Each scene is seemingly complete, though meaning is always buoyed by the resonances that form between and across them. My presentation of the film here will largely mimic this list-like structure, drawing out the relations between the various 'moments', as I perceive them.

The film has two relatively distinct halves. The first is held together by the presence of a Beethoven figure. The second is much more episodic, but basically features a series of appropriations of Beethoven's 'spirit'. Two key topics recur throughout in various parodic guises: the notion that Beethoven's honour has been spoiled; and the notion that there is a biological immediacy to the way his music makes itself felt. Both suggest that the reference to National Socialism through the presence of the Hitler-esque *Fremdenführer* is intimately tied to the film's broader meditation on tribute and mediality.<sup>3</sup>

*Ludwig van* revels in the episodic aspect of the televisual format through which it was presented to the German public. In its second half, many sequences are framed by

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<sup>2</sup> The man was actually played by Stefan Wewerka, artist and architect and designer of an anamorphic dining room in the Beethoven-Haus, but Wewerka's identity is not given in the film and he does not reappear in connection with the Beethoven-Haus. Björn Heile has communicated to me that this sequence was Wewerka's original contribution to the film. This should not, I think, mean that it must be treated as unrelated to Kagel's broader intent for the film; certainly, doing so would be at odds with my own experience viewing of the work, as I perceived no discrepancy of authorship or disjunction between this and later material in the film.

<sup>3</sup> Werner Klüppelholz has interpreted the final scene, with its zoo animals accompanied by the sounds of a rehearsal of the final movement of the ninth symphony, as a particularly pointed representation of 'Beethoven after the Holocaust' (Klüppelholz, ed., 2001: 26; see also Klüppelholz, 1981: 17). I will argue for a somewhat more nuanced and precise interpretation of the film's multiple allusions to Nazism, its atrocities and their relationship to music culture.



short introductions, where elderly<sup>4</sup> (amateur) television presenters act as if they were not yet being filmed – are still grooming, like the man in the opening sequence – or are in some way confused by their material. Or else are truncated before they quite manage to introduce anything. That viewers will switch on and off at different times during the broadcast – far from the traditional concert-hall symphony experience, where beginnings and ends are binding – is reflected in the structure. But it is also toyed with, as if Kagel hoped viewers would randomly switch on to the framing sequences and sense they had stumbled on something not yet ready to be seen (similarly, the film's title appears after fourteen minutes of screen time). It is a technique that prompts reflection on the temporal disjunction between what has been filmed – and the process of constructing presence – and what is seen (the time of transmission).

Beginning with the man shaving and ending with a camel chewing, it is tempting to say that Kagel's 'report' follows a course of devolution. A tentative narrative arc begins to take shape early on around the idea of Beethoven travelling to his home town of Bonn (obviously for the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth). The camera assumes Beethoven's gaze; a felt gloved hand and white stockinged legs with breeches and buckled, shiny black shoes occasionally extend into the field of vision – to open a door or step over a threshold. The limb-gaze composite arrives at Bonn station in total silence. Initially the Op. 57 'Appassionata' sonata is heard, carried over from an introductory shot. Following cinematic convention, the noise of the train is muted against the strains of the piano; but when the music stops abruptly a moment before the vigorous arpeggios that open the development section would be heard, convention is put aside. Beethoven-as-camera disembarks and pushes through a small crowd past the ticket collector. In pointed mockery of aesthetic idealism, the artist, positioned by Kagel's scenario as our medium of perception, his vision made our vision, is stone deaf.

The camera-as-gaze set-up ensured that Beethoven's face – the marker of his prized subjectivity – was banished from the frame. Sharing his gaze (and deafness) means

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<sup>4</sup> The prevalence of the elderly in Ludwig van, often presented unflatteringly, could easily be read to indicate a diagnosis of a moribund, near senile cultural tradition, against which Kagel sought to rebel (as per the standard interpretation of the work). However, it is also worth recalling that sextagenarians in 1969 would have been in their twenties when Hitler came to power and passed one of the most vital phases of their adult life during his rule. Not only does their age thus link these presenters to the National Socialist past, repeatedly alluded to in the film; in appearing constantly baffled and out of place and time, it is as if they had never securely left that past behind.

being blind to his reflections. When the composer finally arrives at the Beethoven-Haus and ponders its collection of Beethoven coins, medals and other memorabilia, the movements of hand and gaze are empty ritual, unaccompanied by pride or disgust. At times, the figure's presence is reflected back through the surprised or bemused responses of others: ladies turning away, near Bonn station; children, playing in a park by the Rhine Promenade, intrigued and disquieted. But the film's viewers can only begin to imagine the camera-limb assemblage they see. Ideas are cut apart from appearances. Similarly, the 'function' of much of the film's music is highly ambiguous. The second movement of the Ninth Symphony begins the moment Beethoven leaves the station *en route* to his museum. It is performed by an unsteady chamber ensemble that gives the bass of the opening string fugal texture to a gurgling brass player. Whether this is supposed to be Beethoven's inner thinking, his version of the monologue voice-over, or background music of a more conventional kind, is impossible to ascertain. When the camera passes a busker who plucks along with it (and receives a coin for his efforts), the music is instead marked as an actual diegetic presence, as if it were a kind of aura that Beethoven shares with the world around him – albeit one with at best dysfunctional charismatic commanding powers.

On its way to the Beethoven-Haus, the Beethoven-camera visits a record store. A string of customers listen, immobile, to records through earpieces. The music takes on a muted quality, as if the customers' earpieces were not so much helping them to listen to the Beethoven records on display, but muffling the actual sound of Beethoven's auratic presence. A sequence follows that shows the stamping and cutting of records, and female workers listening – without emotion – as they control the production quality. Only a viewer adamant that music has no material existence would see this as a critique of musical commoditization. The scene highlights mediality, but not exploitation. Indeed, the scenes that show only machines and hands are closer to the *neue Sachlichkeit* aesthetics of the 1920s that fuelled the totalitarian imagination than to their socially critical counterparts.

Crossing a ditch in his incongruous buckled shoes, the composer arrives at the Beethoven-Haus. A play of hands indicate memorabilia, free of sentiment. A grimy wine cellar, piled high with junk, is visited. It is a trip into the unconscious, where the wire of battered birdcages forms visual associations with the strings of broken harps. As if to drown out the pain of a childhood of abuse, a title is selected from a jukebox (that conveniently inhabits this surreal site of memory); but the machine ticks to the

scurrying of a cockroach and its mechanical sounds, which start and stop abruptly, instead articulate the indicating, touching and kicking of the various objects strewn about –it offers no support for escape. With the sound of the coin dropping in the jukebox, the film cuts to the title image and the opening movement of the Ninth Symphony is now heard, as if to confirm the disordered sequencing. The image, a flaming street drain, eventually covered by a Dutch oven lid, evokes at once the restorative power of the earth and the crematoria of Auschwitz. This, like the wine cellar scene and the two sequences that follow, was the contribution of artist Joseph Beuys (Stavlas, 2012: 50-51), much of whose work was concerned with cultivating symbols and materials that he apparently hoped might generate curative energies for a society broken by the experience of National Socialism.<sup>5</sup>

Beuys's contribution was part of a series of artists' tributes paid to Beethoven in the Beethoven-Haus that are the focus of the next few scenes. These tributes included sculptures and installations by Dieter Roth, Ursula Burghardt, Robert Filiou, Wewerka and Kagel himself. Of particular interest are Roth's and Burghardt's. Roth, who often worked with biodegradable materials (especially chocolate), presented a bathtub filled with soaking, disintegrating busts of Beethoven made from chocolate, marzipan and lard, which the felt-gloved hands remove, one by one, and hold up to the camera, as a string quartet plays the theme and first variation of the final movement of the Op. 109 piano sonata. Nikolaos Stavlas has stated that these busts allude to the capitalization on culture that turns historical greats into culinary treats: 'Leibniz crackers, Schiller pasties, Mozart balls', Heinz-Klaus Metzger will say in a later segment of the film (2012: 73). But the scene is also a meditation on the relationship between form and temporality, reification and decay. Contrastingly, Burghardt (Kagel's wife, whose Jewish family had fled National Socialist Germany for Buenos Aires in 1936) showed the results of what appears to have been a failed attempt to wash Beethoven's scores clean. Pages dry on a web of outside clotheslines, amongst Beethoven's bed sheets and other clothes; others soak in a wash tub; others are simply abandoned on the grass. As the camera follows a group of visitors weaving between the labyrinth of sheets, the Op. 47 'Kreuzer' violin and piano sonata is heard (along with the sounds of running water),

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<sup>5</sup> In 1968, Beuys created a vitrine, titled *Auschwitz Demonstration 1956-1964*, containing a number of his earlier works and objects used in his art actions. This vitrine is held in the Hessisches Landesmuseum in Darmstadt. In 1970, it was incorporated into the museum's seven room 'Beuys Block'. On this and Beuys's more general artistic engagement with Germany's National Socialist past, see Ray, 2001; and Kramer, 1997.

muffled as if washed out or muted by the billowing fabric. Here, more than anywhere else in the film, the gesture of purification – the core gesture of Absolute Music – is explicitly associated with stains that refuse to be cleaned away.

Kagel's room was the music room.<sup>6</sup> Every wall, surface and object appears papered over with parts of copies of Beethoven scores. As the camera pans across the collaged masses of notes and staves, the sound track seems to follow its gaze. On the subsequently published 'score' version of *Ludwig van*, which consists of photographs showing different objects and surfaces from this collaged environment, Kagel explained that he used the video takes here as his musicians' score for the accompanying soundtrack (1970b: viii). The scenario appears irreverent in its association of Beethoven's work with wallpaper and candy wrappers. But as I will argue in more detail in the next section, it was also, unmistakably, a meditation on the concept of *Werktreue*.

Approximately 38 minutes into the film, following the Beethoven-Haus visit, another variation unfolds on the theme of Absolute Music's immateriality and worldly detachment. A game of hide-and-seek takes place on board a cruise ship. Musicians, playing parts of Beethoven's works, flee from the camera's gaze, allowing only their instruments to be seen. It is a smirk at the 'neo-theological' ideal of a Beethoven 'completely transported from the world' in the act of composition (as the film's final voice-over later puts it: '*Beethoven komponierte, er war der Erde völlig entrückt*'). The scene also alludes to the Wagnerian orchestral pit, which hides away from the operatic drama the musicians who labour to support its illusions. But the ship may be an allusion to modernity in a broader sense, too: a humorous take on the desire and capacity to leave behind one's roots and travel to different lands, of unrestrained exploration and the possibility of remaking the self – and of the violence of colonial imperialism.

The cruise scene ends with a ghostly rendition of the *Marcia funebre sulla morte d'un eroe* from the Op. 26 piano sonata. The silhouettes of musicians march slowly past the gaze of the camera, each in turn taking a note or two of the melody. The camera pans back and tilts upwards, capturing the musicians' shadows as they pass across the ceiling. It is as if Beethoven were lying down, perhaps, finally, to embrace his death.

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<sup>6</sup> The room was actually planned as a contribution from Czechoslovakian artist and author Jiří Kolář, but Kolář was not able to participate in the work's realization (he constantly fell foul of the Czechoslovakian Communist authorities), so Kagel constructed the room himself (Heile, 2006: 103; Holtsträter, 2010: 75).

But the tilt continues until his world appears fully inverted. The film is only half way through, but Beethoven as gaze-limb composite signs off here.

The second half of the film, as I have said, is episodic; but it also brings out more forcefully the theme of a charismatic musical agency, working across time: that Beethoven and his music, far from being removed from the world or lost to the past, are constantly inciting responses in the present – and often biological ones.

A segment from Werner Höfer's Sunday brunch television chat show, *Der Internationaler Frührschoppen*, features a panel discussion around the question 'Is Beethoven's music abused?' It begins with Höfer explaining to Kagel that the discussion cannot take the format he would like. What Kagel wants discussed cannot be covered in the minimal time Höfer is willing to ration to each of the five speakers ('40 seconds per nose'). Kagel protests: 'And what about my film?' Höfer mockingly responds that as an alternative they could hold a lively pantomime debate with a voice-over – and this is precisely what happens: image and sound momentarily part ways. The *Marcia funebre* had carried over from the previous scene, but ends now as the broadcast starts. Adorno pupil Heinz-Klaus Metzger dominates this now 'live' discussion with a lengthy, typically Adornian denunciation of the bourgeoisie's unrelenting massacre of its cultural heritage, which, Metzger claims, the culture industry contorts to fit its debased requirements, thereby destroying its 'negative essence'. Kagel dourly grinds his cigarette into an ashtray. Is this the scenario Höfer had sought to avoid? Eventually, Metzger is interrupted and the discussion moves to Beethoven's Germanness. Kagel speaks of Jewish-German émigrés in South America using Beethoven's music as a form of protest during the war. Nobody suggests that Beethoven has been abused to German nationalist ends. The critique of bourgeois society's infidelity to Beethoven's music fails to register the stains of political history, alluded to earlier in the film. Metzger's stage-stealing, moreover, inverts Kagel's earlier gesture of gregariousness in his inclusion of Beethoven tributes from other artists. The call for purification, made in Beethoven's name, takes the form of a silencing.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> What makes this scene particularly disturbing is that Höfer himself had held a prominent position in the Nazi Propaganda Ministry under Albert Speer. In 1943 he wrote a virulent article condoning the execution of the gifted young pianist Karlrobert Kreiten for expressing doubt about the Nazis' war efforts. East German politician Albert Norden had publicized this article in the early 1960s, but it was not until 1987 that it

This is highlighted when the next scene invokes race. In a barren field, an elderly man reports to a small group of journalists that he is the last descendent of Beethoven, holding up to his face one bust of the composer after another to demonstrate the resemblance (there is a formal echo here of the earlier bathtub scene). The pseudo-science of phrenology (comparative skull measurement), satirically invoked here, was, of course, intimately tied up with racial enslavement and genocide in the nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries, and was part of the recipe of Nazism. But, amusingly, the man claims a darkly coloured bust to be particularly revealing: Beethoven, he shouts, had ‘dark blood’ flowing in him ‘via mulattoes from the West Indies’. The entourage hurriedly abandons him, the camera panning away via horseback in such a way that the animal’s rump is kept in frame with the raving descendent.

A series of performances ensues, complementing the sculptural installations of the first half. Poet and conceptual artist Schuldt types a thesis proposal about the *Conversation Books* as involuntary literature. Subsequently, the rib cage of a puppet skeleton does a dance, expanding and contracting in fluid, musical movements (it is operated with what look like enormous piano keys). Other medical models follow the example: a shattered skull held together by moveable metal rods snaps its jaws horizontally as well as vertically; a dummy thrusts its head back then lolls forward, spitting out its false teeth; a model of the ear is dismantled, the cochlear removed. The emphasis on physiognomy and automatism in these performances will be explored in greater depth later in the film. Between Schuldt and the skeletons, a leather-gloved hand engages with various props, forming precise, but asemantic, gestures. Some of the objects resemble components of musical instruments: a tube, a box, a shard of speaker, bellows. Many of the gestures are pianistic. The idea that music is not a thing but an interaction is presented here in its barest form (another short sequence that follows it, showing cigarettes washed along in a trickle of water and then down a drain, suggests much the same thing, while alluding to the film’s recurrent motif of devolution and formally echoing the earlier cruise ship scene).

Following a superbly cheeky montage between the dancing skeletons, a German coat of arms (the *Bundesadler* or ‘Federal Eagle’) staking out imperial territory on the moon to a chirpy orchestration of the *Allegro* from the Op. 81 ‘Les Adieux’ piano sonata and a broadcast announcement that ‘The world has lost its innocence’, baritone

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came to broad public attention in West Germany and Höfer was forced into retirement from his television career (see Lambart, 1988).

Carlos Feller sings Beethoven's *Lied* setting of 'In questa tomba oscura' (WoO 133). The choice is fitting for a collective memorialization, since it was written as part of a commission for over sixty composers to set the same Giuseppe Carpani poem. It points back to the funeral march, but the montage also orients it in relation to the Nazi expansionist dream and its atrocities.

*Lascia che l'ombra ignude godansi pace almen,  
E non, e non bagnar mie ceneri d'inutile velen.* (Beethoven, 1990: 78-79)

At least let my humble shadow enjoy peace,  
And don't, don't bathe my ashes in useless poison.

As far as its medium is concerned, the song's sentiment is disingenuous. Written down on durable material, it was made to outlive its author – it was a gesture of self-memorialization. Kagel framed the performance to reveal this. Lighting changes mark the work's temporal form (classical ternary). With the word *oscura* (dark) in the first section, the background curtain is plunged into darkness (Feller remains lit). In the second section it is instead Feller who falls into obscurity, as he sings of his 'humble shadow'. Finally, with the modified return of the first section, which wildly modulates harmonically, Feller is initially filmed from behind. The gesture invokes Zimmermann's *Kugelgestalt* – the interchangeability of past, present and future in musical time – as it marks the repetition's stabilization and extraction of form from the continuous flux of time through the incongruous reversal of the camera's perspective. The peculiar harmonic modulations flatly contradict this stabilization of sense, but then a further (normal) repetition carries on after the performance has finished, haunting the next scene. Kagel's response to the song's call for peace in death was to point out that musicians write into being the ghosts that harass them.

The following scene, one of the film's great highlights, farcically measures that harassment. A pianist, wearing only underwear, performs the opening of the 'Tempest' sonata, Op. 31.2, then later the 'Coriolan' overture, Op. 62. He is hooked up to an apparatus of rubber pipes that registers his activity on moving graphs (it is abundantly clear that the apparatus does not actually function; the needles never match the graphs, many of which are not even linear and look more like indeterminate scores than scientific data). Over fifty categories are represented. Some are physiological, others relate to aesthetic quality, while others chart the pianist's psychical condition. With no apparent order, the gamut stretches from the stupidly empirical ('elbows', for instance), to meta-categories such as 'subjective surveyability' and the self-reflexive – though

nevertheless misspelled – meta-meta-category: ‘coherence of the categories being measured’ (*‘Zusammengehörigkeit der Eindruckkategorien’*). Other categories are still more baffling: ‘experimental presence time’, ‘symptom complex’, ‘spot check’, ‘devastating’. This is serialism running in reverse: the pianist’s labour is carved into an infinite number of parameters.<sup>8</sup> Aesthetic control, moreover, appears as biological regulation. At the end of the scene, animal paws, hooves and a chicken claw replace the pianist’s hands at the keyboard.

The final performance is given to a parodied Elly Ney,<sup>9</sup> a Beethoven devotee whom Michael Kater has singled out in his work on music in the Third Reich for her desperate – but fruitless – efforts to perform for Hitler. Ney plays the opening of the Op. 53 ‘Waldstein’ sonata, at one point apparently so lost in the music that she plays only on the lid of her Steinway, at others drowned out by Kagel’s ensemble as it performs the work with a rather different speed and temperament. Sometimes the camera focuses on Ney’s dramatic gestures, at others the lace of her clothing, at others skeletal X-rays. She never makes it past the exposition, eventually becoming stuck in an interminable repetition of the opening repeated note motif. Her white hair grows, covering her body and coiling up into the piano, tangling itself around the strings and dampers. Finally nothing is to be heard but her constant beating of the pedal. The camera turns to Ney. She is redressed in white, smokes a cigarette and sucks the straw of a packaged drink. Perhaps due to the cigarette, she seems to be smouldering. But she appears content with her eternal labour, her imbibing of Beethoven’s spirit.

The camera cuts immediately to the face of a baboon. The final scene comprises shots of zoo animals, including a defecating elephant. A musical figure of unevenly accented repeated notes, taken from Ney’s Waldstein, but sounding a little more like a buffoonish rewrite of ‘The Augurs of Spring’, is heard, bleated out by a small group of brass instruments. This accompanies a sound recording of a men’s choir’s rehearsal of part of the Ninth Symphony (which points back to the beginning of the work, but as preparation rather than completion – perhaps an allusion to the treatment of rehearsal in *Originale*). Between animal shots, several images of musicians are shown, one centring on their bellies and groins. The film concludes with a voice-over, noted earlier: ‘When

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<sup>8</sup> Kagel’s recurrent use and parody of serial techniques throughout his work is elucidated in Heile, 2006.

<sup>9</sup> Ney was played by Klaus Lindemann, the pianist in the bioregulation scene, though the performance is credited to his alter ego Linda Klaudius-Mann (Hildebrand, 1996: 196).



Beethoven composed, he was completely transported from the world'. But then the (German) statement is repeated and truncated, becoming its opposite: 'When Beethoven composed, he was of the earth'.

As noted in Chapter Four, Nono described Kagel as an aesthetic revolutionary: someone who believed art's revolutionary potential lay in its own domain, independent from that of class struggle (2001, v. I: 265). The presentation of *Ludwig van* I have just given throws light on the acuity of this judgement. The film's revolution concerns Absolute Music; but it was not an attempt to do away with Absolute Music, nor, I believe, an attack launched at Bourgeois society's debasement of its riches (Nono's association of Kagel with an Adornian position is misleading in this respect – though Nono's argument was really that both contributed to ghettoizing intellectual critique from political action). What the film shows, through one variation after another, is that the worldly disavowal associated with the *culture* of Absolute Music is very much a thing of the world, linked up with stains, repressions, disavowals – and genocide.

The scatology of *Ludwig van* is obviously at odds with the gestures of purification to which the film constantly refers. Kagel treated the stains and repressions of history as part of musical activity, but to mark them within the frame of his work, he relied on the resources of film, while building on his earlier innovations in *Musiktheater*. Due to this intermediality, coupled with the 'appropriation' of Beethoven's work as compositional material, Kagel's project (and oeuvre more broadly) has often been associated with postmodernism. Its penetrating self-reflexivity, by contrast, suggests a stronger affinity with modernist practices (cf. Heile, 2002: 291), while its attention to the stains of history indicates a different impulse again. Crucially, the project's conceptual precision and intermediality were not the products of a jettisoning of the aesthetic. *Ludwig van* laughs at music's uncanny, compulsive force and the rituals that ensue around it. But it also shows these to be products of the peculiar tension between idea and aesthetic material that, Kagel hinted, is music's basic condition of existence. As I will argue in the next section, Kagel's revolution consisted in opening this tension to experience, not in trying to eradicate it. The question of whether it also involved provoking people to change their actions is, meanwhile, key to capturing what is most radical in *Ludwig van*'s score.

### ***Ludwig van as score***

As noted above, Kagel's score version of *Ludwig van*, published in 1970 after his film had already been broadcast, consists mainly of photographic reproductions taken from the music-room collage shown in the Beethoven-Haus. It echoes Kagel's ensemble's performance of the projected footage of the room. However, compared to this innovative, mobile precedent, the photographs are disappointingly static (a quality not usually deemed objectionable in a printed score).

Playing to contemporary convention, Kagel provided eight numbered instructions for performing the material, several with subsidiary instructions (1970b: viii). They could nearly all be summed up by saying what is, in any case, usually assumed: all written instructions in the score are obligatory; what is not given should be determined by the performer(s) *ad libitum*. In addition to this, the final instruction suggests that fragments of other works by Beethoven could also be performed as part of the work, with instrumentation changed (i.e., an ensemble might perform from a piano reduction of a symphonic work) and possibly with parts combined from different works. There are also some notable oddities amongst the instructions. The orientation and address of the pages – who plays what on what instrument and when – is free. In other words, performers situate the score as physical object(s) in relation to themselves, not vice versa. Kagel stressed, moreover, that the score material need not compel performers temporally; parts could be performed and repeated at random and at whatever speeds the performers determine. Once again, this emphasizes the difference between the score's static form and the mobility of the projection used in to create the film's soundtrack.

It is in connection with this point that Kagel made his most specific and unusual instruction (3.1):

The interpretation should take into account the performer's awareness of visual detail, e.g. repeated glances. The acoustic rendition should be influenced both by the way the eyes dart across the page and by the fact that on closer inspection they tend to focus on particular elements. Here the performer attempts for once to let the intensity with which he reads govern the density of the whole as well as the speed given to the score matter covered by each glance. (*Ibid*)

The notion that music engenders an immediate, physiological response – a notion we saw in Chapter Three to have been central to Goebbels's approach to the radio as an instrument of biopolitical manipulation and that we have just seen satirized in many of the scenes of Kagel's film – is here projected onto the score-performer relationship

(rather than the sound-listener one). How the performance is to make noticeable this optical interaction with the text (which I assume is what Kagel had in mind when he wrote that the ‘interpretation should take [it] into account’) is something of a mystery. But subsequent instructions about the importance of the performance’s transparency – that the difference between legible and illegible text should be marked by changes in tone quality; that *tutti* passages should be limited; that dynamic progressions should be ‘unbalanced’ (presumably so that they are not conventionally affective) – suggest that this relates closely to what Kagel called *Ludwig van*’s ‘concept’.<sup>10</sup> (The instruction also humorously echoes Stockhausen’s performance instructions for his aleatoric *Klavierstück XI* (1956), where the performer is supposed to move between score fragments according to whatever his or her eyes happen to land on.)

The uniqueness of Kagel’s approach to the score becomes more readily apparent if one compares it to Cage’s use of indeterminate scores from the preceding two decades. The many similarities are obvious. Both treat the score as a text-object composite, as a manifestation of interpretable markings, rather than the encapsulation of a ‘work’ conceived as an ideal form. Both highlight chance and haphazardness in the process of ‘translating’ music between idea, text, sound and – in Kagel’s case more than Cage’s – response. Both circumscribe their powers to dictate key aspects of how their music should be performed and should sound. Both make use of ready-made forms. Both also engage with theatre, the performance environment and various media in complex and distinctive ways. And yet there is an unmistakable gulf between Cage’s endeavours to ‘let sounds be themselves’ (1961: 10) and Kagel’s focus on music as an *interaction*. Cage spoke of composition being a means of drawing ‘attention to the activity of sounds’ (*ibid*). *Ludwig van* is certainly in keeping with this, but the sonic activity it presents is always richly social, and involves complex, culturally malleable agencies. This contrasts strikingly with the much narrower, more naturalistic idea of sound Cage’s work tends to project.<sup>11</sup> Where Cage compartmentalizes, segregating

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<sup>10</sup> *Ludwig van*, Kagel wrote in the score, is ‘a concept rather than a composition completed or a work-in-progress’ (*ibid*: ix).

<sup>11</sup> A revealing example is Cage’s 1959 composition *Water Walk*, which calls for sounds to be made from a range of around thirty objects related to water. The objects also evoke domestic space: a bathtub and rubber duck, radios, a vase of flowers, steaming pots, a blender, a piano. Yet Cage’s sound production essentially de-domesticates them, estranging them from their social associations in favour of their ‘natural’ associations with water. For a more comprehensive examination of this aspect of Cage’s work, see Kahn, 1999.

composition from performance and sound from source, Kagel highlights mediality. His publication of photographs of scores as a score presents itself not so much as an object, but as a node in a potential transmission.<sup>12</sup>

The key issues Kagel was articulating were being addressed at the time, from a very different angle, by some of the major figures of German musicology, including Dahlhaus and Thrasybulos Georgiades. The opening pages of Dahlhaus's *Musikästhetik* (translated as *Aesthetics of Music*, 1981), first published in German in 1967, expertly – but also sensitively – illuminate a basic contradiction that Dahlhaus argued forms the root of the theory of Absolute Music. Insofar as it associates the musical work with the score, Absolute Music pitches musical meaning at a metaphysical or ideal level that transcends, and is indifferent to, sonic materiality. This is why works can be performed repeatedly and still be works: their essence is distinct from their sonic actualization. At the same time, the basic premise of Absolute Music is that meaning inheres in the relationships between sounding forms, not some other 'extra-musical' reality (1981: 5, 12). How does one make sense of this obvious discrepancy, directly invoked by Kagel's juxtaposition of the base materialism of a defecating elephant with a voice-over of the piously metaphysical inscription from the *Missa Solemnis* (Op. 123), 'From the heart – may it return to the heart'?<sup>13</sup>

Dahlhaus appealed to intentionality. Musical meaning, he acknowledged, cannot be associated with either score or sound alone. It is bound up with the organization of tone relations, which reifies intention into a structure able to be reiterated. And, he claimed, it 'exists only insofar as a listener grasps it' (*ibid*: 12). From a composer's perspective, Dahlhaus's recourse to the trope of intentionality puts a very positive spin on a highly complex expressive transaction that relies on a trained sensitivity to 'right' sounding sonic combination (i.e., able to provoke the Kantian 'that's beautiful!' response discussed in Chapter Two) and on how to use it to mark aesthetic decision making (i.e., to show intelligence in the combination of consonances with surprising dissonances).

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<sup>12</sup> That he did this a full decade before Sherrie Levine's acclaimed exhibition of photographs of photographs, 'After Walker Evans' (New York, Metro Pictures Gallery, 1980), makes the work seem all the more remarkable.

<sup>13</sup> For a discussion of invocations of an 'imaginary music' in Kagel's oeuvre more broadly, see Heile, 2004. In closing (p. 95), Heile clarified that he believed such invocations to have been made in deliberate tension with processes that mark the sonic/material and worldly aspects of musical sound.

*Ludwig van* hints that intentionality is the wrong word for such a fraught intermedial exchange. The cost of musical meaning surviving its performance (and it really is a matter of survival in some of the *Ludwig van* film's performances) is the complete dispersal of the musical 'genius' into the play of aesthetic sense. In the language of Chapter Three: the ground of expression negates itself in the alterity of the expressive form. In Kagel's film, Beethoven is everywhere only on the condition that he is nowhere.<sup>14</sup>

A short text by Georgiades on 'Music and *Nomos*' from 1969 (1977: 167-176), the year *Ludwig van* was broadcast, sheds light on another of the work's key themes: the compelling, obliging aspect of musical sense. Whereas Dahlhaus's writings carefully historicized the emergence of the modern work-concept at the same time as they probed its philosophical consistency, Georgiades, a much more conservative thinker whose work drew profitably from the current of Heideggerian phenomenology (his posthumous *magnum opus*, *Nennen und Erklängen* [1985], even has an introduction by Hans-Georg Gadamer, one of the most famous of Heidegger's students), turned without hesitation right back to pre-Platonic thought and the 'origins' of the West.<sup>15</sup>

Georgiades noted that the Greek word for law, *νόμος* (*nomos*), was once also used in reference to music. He related how the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE Spartan poet Alcman referred to the *νόμος* of the birds to indicate their manner of singing, identifiable irrespective of the idiosyncrasies of any particular birdsong (1977: 167-168). Georgiades also recounted the myth of how Athena, on hearing Medusa's sisters mourning her decapitation (which Athena had facilitated), established an *aulos* contest for humans to perform the '*Polyképhalos Nomos*' ('many-headed melody') whose model she derived from the Gorgon sisters' glorious, admonishing lament (*ibid*: 169-170). A fragment (178) from Pindar's 12th Olympian Ode describes the contest: 'they heard the god-

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<sup>14</sup> Kagel's score notes, moreover, that the 'principle of collage [he employs] would eventually bring about the abolition of intellectual ownership', adding that the 'intrinsic liveliness of the collage may well be due to the fluid distinction [it makes manifest] between past and present, here and elsewhere, private and public awareness: an effortless continuum' (1970: viii).

<sup>15</sup> Georgiades' phenomenological theorisation of music is largely unknown to Anglophone musicology. Likely due to the extraordinary conservatism of many of Georgiades' views on the course of music's history after Viennese Classicism, his work was not taken up by the 'new musicological' turn in the 1980s-1990s and a body of phenomenological literature on music has subsequently developed that makes almost no reference to his extraordinarily rich – and in many respects unsurpassed – contributions to the subject.

given *nomoi* ring out’ (‘νόμων ἀκούστες θεόδματον κέλαδον’). Here, Georgiades noted, *nomoi* refers both to Athena’s melodic construction and the gods’ imposition of law and order in the human world. The point Georgiades developed from these ancient references is that music’s existence is *universally* defined by the polarity between this *way of doing*, dictated by the *nomos*, and the *actual doing*, the idiosyncratic performance.

Nomos is something engaged in a process of asserting itself, which is to say that it is something eternal, but it is also something that only attains full reality through its momentary application. It is not something that is visible, or ready-at-hand, but rather something that sets out an instruction, shows an orientation, indicates to man what is to be done: what he is supposed to do, allowed to do – or also, what it is his duty to do.<sup>16</sup>

Georgiades called this the ‘*Soll-Tun*’ structure of music – roughly: ‘obliging-performing’. ‘Nomos and musical doing need each other’, he wrote; ‘they relate to each other complementarily. Music only exists as their interplay’ (*ibid*: 175).

The crucial difference here between Georgiades and Dahlhaus is that where Dahlhaus invoked intentionality, Georgiades wrote of law and obligation. The ordering of musical sense *compels* the activity that brings it into momentary presence. And Georgiades even argued that this compulsion comes from ‘the nature of the thing’, its *phyá* (*ibid*: 176); unlike political laws, he suggested, music’s *nomoi* spring from an alterity beyond the human world – a point that aligns with my modelling of the technological aspect of sonic expression in Chapter Three.

It is this obligation to perform that Kagel dissected anew in every scene of *Ludwig van*. Little of the film and score makes sense if they are reduced to simple anti-authoritarian gestures of spitting at a society’s kowtowing to the ‘great men’ of history (though some of *Ludwig van* certainly does this). Kagel’s engagement with the concept of musical fidelity – and with the power of music’s charms – was more specific. The uncanniness and humour of the work depends, moreover, on the alterity of the source of musical obligation: Beethoven as a ‘knowable’ subject is never ‘there’,<sup>17</sup> and the surreal

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<sup>16</sup> ‘Nomos ist etwas Geltendes und insofern gleichsam Immerwährendes, das aber nur in der jeweiligen Anwendung volle Realität erlangt. Er ist nichts Sichtbares, Vorhandenes, sondern etwas das eine Weisung setzt, eine Richtung weist, dem Menschen anzeigt, was zu tun ist: was er tun soll, tun darf – oder auch, was man zu tun pflegt’ (1977: 168).

<sup>17</sup> Christiane Hillebrand’s claim that the equation of the camera’s view with Beethoven’s gaze is meant to facilitate the viewer’s identification with him thoroughly misconstrues this uncanny play with the appropriation of alterity (1996: 194; repeated in Stavlas, 2012: 48).

responses his music engenders are never explicable. Georgiades wrote that *nomos* always implies an active appropriation by the one who performs – unlike *moira*, fate, which is suffered passively (*ibid*: 168).

When it happens immediately and without reflection, this appropriation is comparable to the moment of (mis)recognition that is key to Althusser's account of ideological interpellation. It matches the kind of response those operating the Third Reich's propaganda apparatus had hoped for in their effort to stabilize the regime's charismatic rule. When it happens that way – like a cigarette butt following a trickle of water down a drain; like an eye darting across the screen-like surface of a score – the *nomos* obligation becomes indistinguishable from blind *moira* and politics collapses into the theocratism of the Oxford Group. But it need not happen that way. Though it was greeted with roars of blasphemy from critics (roars perhaps charged by a vested interest in maintaining the authority of some form of musical canon),<sup>18</sup> Kagel's film is much more adequately represented as an attempt to prise open the question of music-historical fidelity and to reframe the *Soll-Tun* polarity as a *creative* relation. Far from equating freedom with infidelity, *Ludwig van* underscores the inseparability of our autonomy from our dialogues with ghosts. It is unfaithful only to a particular conception of faith: a thoroughly servile one. That Kagel left behind a score of *Ludwig van* implicated him in the movement of the *Soll-Tun* structure with its endless proliferation of ghosts. And thus he signed off the score's introduction: 'This foreword is meant to be an invitation: musicians can go on from here' (1970: ix).

## Conclusion

One of the many Beethovens conjured by Kagel in the *Spiegel* interview was a composer of works whose 'musical language' negates its own drive to signification ('*Zu-Ende-sprechen-Wollen*'), becoming manifest as bare form, an end in itself (Kagel mentioned the C# minor string quartet, Op. 131).<sup>19</sup> This Beethoven is familiar from Adorno's writings: the composer of the 'empty phrase', the 'naked note', who 'no longer draws together the landscape, now deserted and alienated, into an image' (1998:

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<sup>18</sup> A concise account of the music press's response is given in Stavlas, 2012: 87-88.

<sup>19</sup> 'Hier zeigt sich eine musikalische Sprache, die zugleich die Negation eines Zu-Ende-sprechen-Wollens ist (aber existentiell ein solches darstellt) und eine musikalische Form, welche bereits das Ende ihrer selbst ankündigt' (1970a: 196).

126). Unlike Adorno's dispersed landscape metaphor, however, Kagel's phrase, *Zu-Ende-sprechen-Wollen* (perhaps best approximated in English as 'will-to-expressive-finality'; literally: 'will-to-speak-to-the-end'), draws attention to temporality. The 'empty phrase' is without consequence: it does not command a determinate response. The metaphor of the shard, broken irreparably from an atemporal whole, cannot comprehend this finitude. Though Kagel said this language manifests itself as its own end, it does so, like the strange, pianistic hand-object gestures in his film, as a means without end.

Kagel's score collages amplify this discrepancy between means and ends. Through them, the discrepancy comes to encompass not just music's 'language', but its writing and the objecthood of the media through which it is transmitted. *Ludwig van* cracks open music's *Soll-Tun* structure. It does not destroy it; rather, it introduces ambivalence and indeterminacy between the obliging that impinges on the present from the past (the *Soll*) and the obliging that answers it in the present, or potential future (the *Tun*). In the shadow of a regime that had envisioned a future frozen in submission to its charismatic voice – a voice made eternal through technological capture – Kagel worked to remake musical composition in ways that would instead mark the *Soll*'s finitude and dependency: its mediality.

*Ludwig van* recapitulates – or renegotiates – many of the issues explored in Chapters Four and Five. Zimmermann's *Kugelgestalt* time is invoked (notably in Feller's *Tomba oscura* performance), but shown to be a technical construction, the product of writing and recording. The musical 'end' that conjoins past, present and future, thus transcending temporal contingency, is reframed as a specific object bustling amongst others in and across time. Though I have said that the structuring of Kagel's film is comparable to Stockhausenian 'moment form', on a conceptual level Kagel was closer to Nono with his suspensions and ghostings. The collage fragments appear as nodes within a cross-temporal interaction, not as self-enclosed, pregnant Nows. Their alienation – or emancipation – from their usual functional context (and from the 'law-giving authority' of the genius's 'formal instinct'; Dahlhaus, 1987: 127), which is really an alienation from an alienation (analogous to the film's scatological cleansing of Beethoven and his music from their social 'purification'), retemporalizes them.

Meanwhile, the concern, in both film and score, with bodies and their instrumentalization points to Kubisch's work – particularly her *Emergency Solos* – which has shared aspects of Kagel's humour and conceptual precision, as well as his



insistence on aesthetic sound's peculiar alterity. Here, there is an obvious difference, though. While Kagel and Kubisch agree that 'insisting on "tradition" [can often be] just a pretence to reject all innovation' (Kagel in Klüppelholz, 2001: 26), Kubisch, in the 1980s, perhaps not unlike Stockhausen in the 1950s (though the political stakes were completely different), found creative possibility in turning away from what she considered to be a reified, exclusionary history. *Ludwig van* had tried to engage that history in a way that would soften (without destroying) its sovereign force as an impinging, obligating *Soll*-structure, opening scope for autonomy to be negotiated in the *Tun* that would respond to it. Kubisch's verdict, a decade later, was clearly that the effort had failed. Later still, though, her own work would increasingly engage with the very same problem of facilitating autonomous – political – engagements with the ambivalent claims of history.

It has been argued that postmodernism, as a species of philosophical thought, had its origin in the compulsion, provoked by Auschwitz, to reconsider the significance of history (as a conceptual category) and the form of our political relationship to it.<sup>20</sup> Kagel's film was framed similarly: as both a response to, and a provocation to respond to, this same compulsion – and in this it can be seen to have belonged to a larger set of endeavours to recompose sonic expression in National Socialism's wake (albeit a set of endeavours that it would be difficult to assimilate to existing formulations of postmodernism as a musical practice). It is a film about charisma that reveals the absurdity of mistaking music's persuasive 'charm' for absolute, sovereign force. Kagel, once an aspiring scholar of Spinoza, clearly agreed that a ruler's power 'can never prevent men from forming judgments according to their intellect or being influenced by any given emotion' (Spinoza, 2004: 258). It is insofar as we, too, recognize this that we laugh along with him.<sup>21</sup> And yet it is precisely because this issue is not, as Nono maintained of Kagel's work to the contrary, a matter for the autonomous domain of art alone, but concerns directly the actuality of Germany's totalitarian past, that the laughter comes spliced with unease.

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<sup>20</sup> See especially Eaglestone, 2004, which associated postmodernism with the philosophical work of Derrida and Levinas. The use of the label 'postmodern' with respect to Derrida and Levinas is highly contentious, however it is inessential to Eaglestone's argument that their thought has represented a paradigm shift, marked and provoked by Auschwitz.

<sup>21</sup> For a discussion of humour in Kagel's oeuvre more broadly, see Attinello, 2002.

## Conclusion to Part II. Re-temporalizing history

The atrocities of National Socialism have cast a long shadow that has cut across time and place. As I have discussed in this part of the thesis, that shadow has had a particularly consequential effect on the music of postwar (West) Germany. Yet many examples of non-German musical responses to the atrocities of Nazism can also be found: from French provocateur Serge Gainsbourg's black humoured *Rock around the Bunker* (1975) to New Yorker John Zorn's poetic, at times acoustically abrasive *Kristallnacht* (1993); and from Slovenian dissident art group Laibach's deafening totalitarian spectacles during the 1980s to the relentless vocal virtuosity of Turkish rapper Ceza's 'Holocaust' (*Rapstar*, 2004). These invocations have concerned historical memory and the trauma of what Agamben has called the 'destruction of experience' (1993). But they have also been concerned with a politics of the voice and its technological mediatization, often articulating a kind of barely concealed sadism, inherent in the seductiveness of song and the banality of the media culture that buoys it.

I argued in Part I of this thesis that sonic expression was uniquely implicated in the charismatic command structure of Hitler's Reich. I argued that to understand its political significance, it is necessary to examine the form sonic expression was given – especially in terms of the particularities of the Nazi media situation and its politico-legal framing – rather than to focus solely on the 'content' projected through it. My claim in this second part of the thesis has been that the post-1945 sonic arts practices examined in it, although they have engaged with different aspects of sonic expression and done so in ways that have been neither unified nor cumulative, together reveal the parameters of an ongoing project to creatively recompose the voice in the Reich's aftermath and to rethink how it works politically.

My analyses have foregrounded different elements of what makes sonic expression inherently political: the testimonial, or how it speaks to history, in Chapter Four; its technological dimension in Chapter Five; its capacity to project temporal relations in Chapter Six. Yet the works examined also cohere as a single project, sharing a concern with the political implications of *how* music 'communicates' – with how it frames the relationship between sounding and hearing bodies; how it orders, propositionally, the exchange it offers. Together, albeit in different ways, they have been concerned with the

kind of authority expression takes from history, with reformatting the artist-listener relationship and how it mediates social processes of experiencing and understanding, or obliges response. Common also, we have seen, has been a concern for the particular political significance of the *time* of communication – how it projects permanence and transience, the implicative and the inconsequential – moreso than for the particular ‘contents’ that aesthetic sound animates.

Despite the significance of the various episodes of music history that I have examined, each in some way shaped in response to the experience of National Socialism, the achievements of the project of recomposing the voice have been fragile. As mentioned in Chapter Five, in the late 1970s Christina Kubisch noted a transformation in sonic arts practices from a concern with sound’s temporal orientation to a concern with its spatiality. Historian and theorist of sound art Alan Licht (2007: 16) has argued that a spatially conceived approach to sound is one of the defining features of the practice and differentiates it relatively clearly from (time-based) music. Yet the tendency during the late twentieth century for the spatial to dominate over the temporal in sonic expression, a tendency opposed to the critical project outlined here, has been much broader than this.

A spatial conception of sound has been particularly notable in literature on electronic dance music. Simon Reynolds, writing on rave culture in the 1990s, described the resonant space of the dance club as a ‘womb-space’, ‘where time is abolished, where the self evanesces through merging with an anonymous multitude and drowning in a bliss-blitz of light and noise’ (1998: 18). Disturbing, with respect to this description, is Düsseldorf electropop group Kraftwerk’s 1975 album *Radio-Activity*. Spatially reverberant, musically static songs, with lyrics about radio transmission blurring the identity of its listeners, are packed into a dust jacket showing a Nazi radio (a *Deutscher Kleinempfänger*). The group was a major influence on much of the electronic dance music of the 1980s-1990s. Yet Kraftwerk explicitly identified its musical play with the theme of congress between man and electronic pulse as fascist parody (Flür, 2003: 182), hinting obliquely that danger lies where musical time becomes space.

In Chapter Five I also alluded to another process that began around the mid-1970s and has concerned music as a spatial phenomenon: the re-affirmation of a geographically parochial ‘tradition’ of concert-hall modernism. Helmut Lachenmann,

one of the stars of this ‘remodernism’ (art historian Terry Smith’s phrase; 2009), propagated a conception of culture in which the claim to authority and legitimacy was to be found in continually rejuvenating the Western musical tradition through a supposedly dialectical process of negation and re-affirming extension.<sup>1</sup> Recent texts by composer Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf have remodelled these ideas into a theory of ‘second modernity’ composition, that claims to have dialectically sublated postmodernism, to follow a trajectory of progress and to be committed to ‘the guiding principle of truth’ (2009: 7). Tellingly, Mahnkopf’s theory dismisses the avant-garde project of remaking the relationship between art and life as a failure and re-affirms the autonomous (though ‘resistant’ and ‘dissonant’; *ibid*: 8; 2008: 10) work as the only game in town. ‘The works of second modernity are as they must be’, Mahnkopf has resolutely declared (2009: 7). The forebears he has advocated are all men and nearly all Western European.<sup>2</sup> The time of Mahnkopf’s modernity is not the time of open possibility, but increasingly spatial (bounded, regional, grounded in the authority of particular histories).

Against these movements from the temporal to the spatial are to be found various gestures of re-temporalization. We have seen one of these in Chapter Five in the work of Kubisch. Another might be found in the ‘site-specific’ performances by industrial group Einstürzende Neubauten, which have been staged in various significant locations relating to German political history – including the former German Democratic Republic’s seat of parliament, the Berlin *Palast der Republik* (2004), and the *Reichsparteitagsgelände* in Nuremberg (1986), the main Nazi party rally grounds. These performances have sought in various ways, through active, sometimes destructive musical engagement with the architecture of the sites in which they have been held, to breach, or otherwise mark, the limits of music’s parochial, resonant spaces and reveal the limits of power, encrusted through history, of the sites in which it is heard (Dax & Defcon, 2006: 133). Such breachings unsettle the *how* of musical communication. They respond to the transformation of musical time into space by revealing the finiteness and technical constructedness of musical experience, thus drawing it back into time as a

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<sup>1</sup> On this, see for example, Lachenmann’s (1997) dispute with Henze over the issue of ‘retrieving’ forms from tradition. A more direct statement on irritating tradition *as* tradition can be found in Lachenmann, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Including Lachenmann, Brian Ferneyhough, Iannis Xenakis, Gérard Grisey, György Kurtág, Cage, Boulez, Stockhausen, Nono and Giacinto Scelsi (Mahnkopf, 2009: 4; 2008: 12).

contingent exchange that could have been otherwise. Such breachings need not be heard as *anti*-musical gestures. Behind them lies an awareness that the possibilities of musical sound are unfixed – even if, as an historical phenomenon, music is always undergoing processes of fixing.

Such efforts to (re-)temporalize musical space would find echoes at the periphery of the West German history debates of the mid-to-late 1980s. In 1985, Martin Broszat, one of Germany's most respected historians of the Third Reich period, published a 'Plea for an Historicizing of National Socialism' (reprinted in Broszat, 1986). He wrote of a 'wholesale moral blockade' concerning National Socialism that had distorted historical scholarship of the Reich and the period more generally (cited Markovits, 1988: 82). Broszat's plea 'for an epistemological and methodological emancipation' (*ibid*) from this situation was quickly reiterated (and distorted) by conservative historian Ernst Nolte, who wrote in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* that German historical consciousness was being harassed by an unshakeable 'terroristic image' of the National Socialist past. The morally 'black and white' image of that past needed to be relativized, he argued, against both the greater horrors wrought by Soviet communism (which Hitler had come to power promising to defend Germany against) and more positive aspects of German history (Nolte, 1986).

The debate that ensued over the 'singularity' of German fascism and its atrocities, and the 'cancelling out of damages' (Habermas, 1986), does not need to be revisited here (the key dossier is Augstein *et al*, 1993). In its aftermath, a further exchange took place between US-Israeli historian Saul Friedländer and Broszat that returned to the latter's original argument (Broszat & Friedländer, 1988). Friedländer agreed that a more richly differentiated historiography of the National Socialist period was warranted that would involve strongly comparative analysis attentive to the continuities and convergences between the Reich, its predecessor states and contemporaneous polities, and to the contradictions and commonplaces of life within it. Yet, he argued – and restated his argument in subsequent years – that when faced with the systematic murder of millions of Jews, 'it seems impossible to situate [National Socialism's] historical place' (2000: 12). 'Nazism', he wrote,

has become the central metaphor of evil of *our* time. In our age of genocide and mass criminality, apart from its specific historical context, the extermination of the Jews of Europe is now perceived by many as the ultimate standard of evil against which all degrees of evil are measured. (*Ibid*: 9; ital. mine.)

Impulsive moral judgments should never be allowed to get in the way of the professional historian's analysis, he argued. But insofar as it provokes society to measure its actions against it, Auschwitz is also contemporary; it shatters the continuum of history.

It is this contemporaneity of Auschwitz, as an ethical and political spur, and of the problem of recomposing the voice after National Socialism implicated it in its command structure, that Part II of this thesis has attempted to trace through the music of the past sixty years. Insofar as my analyses have sought to obtain a more differentiated understanding of how that cultural activity has been shaped in response to one of the most significant phenomena of modernity, they can be read to perform relatively conventional historicizing labour. However, my emphasis on the *contemporaneity* of the problem to which that activity has responded cannot.

Breaking from conventional historiographic method, I have approached post-1945 music culture with questions meant in part to crack open how its relation to historical time is perceived. I argued in Part I that the nihilist erasure of traditional authority and social bonds, and the decisionist reassertion of Law it provoked, framed the peculiar modernity of the Nazi Dual State. We have seen that that pair has similarly polarized subsequent musical activity. It has done so in ways that have made the efforts to rethink sonic expression analysed here seem less linear and developmental than reiterative and haphazard, perhaps even anachronic.

I have sought to find, in this musical activity, treatments of the expressive relation – or at least of its framing, its opening – that would serve emancipation (by which I mean the kind of freedom that is exercised in the autonomous construction of worldly relationships wherein wealth and dependency are shared). Such treatment falls neither on the side of modernism nor postmodernism, as they have conventionally been thematized. This should come as no surprise. The articulation of the emancipatory project in the eighteenth century preceded them both and in many respects its promises have not yet been realized. The drift, noted here, of musical time toward the spatial, whether this means the reassertion of parochial, place-based 'traditions' of cultural authority or affective, bodily resonance with the pulsating grids of dance music, may augur badly for a project that has the autonomous negotiation of change – and thus time – at its heart. Perhaps, though, one should be optimistic that this drift to the spatial may encourage a more richly environmental experience of sonic expression that might shed

its parochiality and come to bear more closely on the dense mesh of interdependency that defines contemporary globality.

But political sound will always require engagement with temporality. Friedländer, at the conclusion of the text cited above, described a deportation scene in Wittlich (the Mosel region) following *Kristallnacht*.

The synagogue has been set on fire, the Jewish shops have been destroyed. Herr Marx, the butcher, as most Jewish men, has been shoved into a truck about to leave for a concentration camp. On the street, in front of the ruined shop, among jeering SA men, Frau Marx stands wailing: ‘Why do you do this to us? What did we ever do to you?’ And, on both sides of the street, the Marxs’ life-long German neighbors stand at their windows, watching her – in silence.

Was it fear, was it hatred, was it just plain human indifference to the despair of today’s outcasts who had been yesterday’s friends? The most elementary human ties had disappeared... (Friedländer, 2000: 15)

Those vanished ties belong to the anthropology of modernity. No page of history has been turned on them. They jut out of time and are immediately recognizable. The great political challenge of music since 1945 has been, and remains, to mark them as contemporary *and* to make them otherwise.

## **Appendix. Images and musical examples**

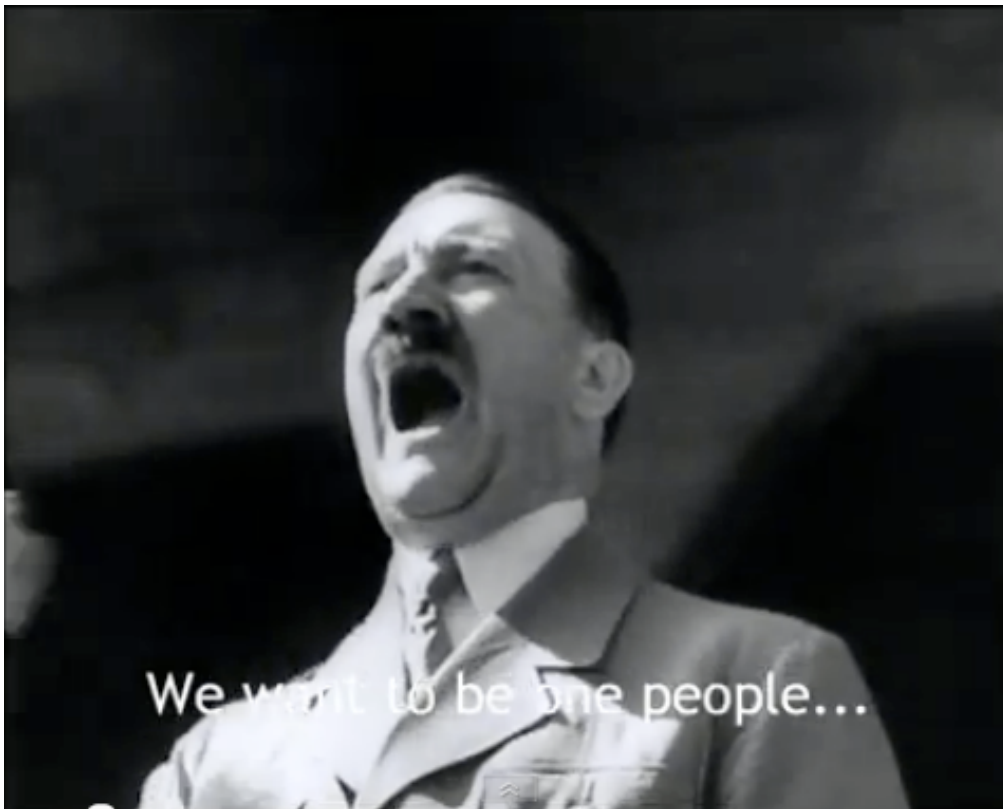
### **Chapter One: Orientations: vocalizing politics**

Ex. 1.1 NSDAP election publicity with photos of the heads of Paul von Hindenburg and Adolf Hitler, February 1933. Text: ‘ “The Reich will never be destroyed if you are united and faithful” 1 National Socialists’. Bundesarchiv, Bild 002-042-153 / design: Karl Bauer.

*Permission to reproduce image for the electronic version of the thesis not obtained.*



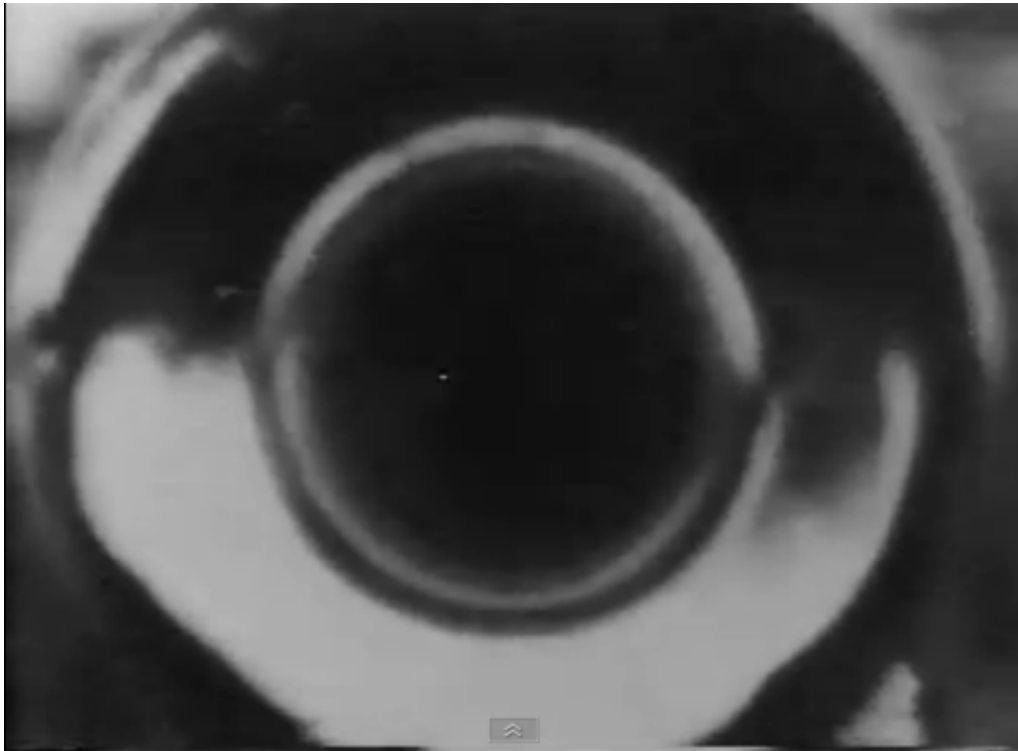
Ex. 1.2 Adolf Hitler's speech to the Hitler Youth. Leni Riefenstahl, *Triumph des Willens* ('Triumph of the Will'), 1935.



Ex. 1.3 Hitler Youth, listening intently, consummating the passage of the voice. Riefenstahl, *Triumph des Willens*, 1935.



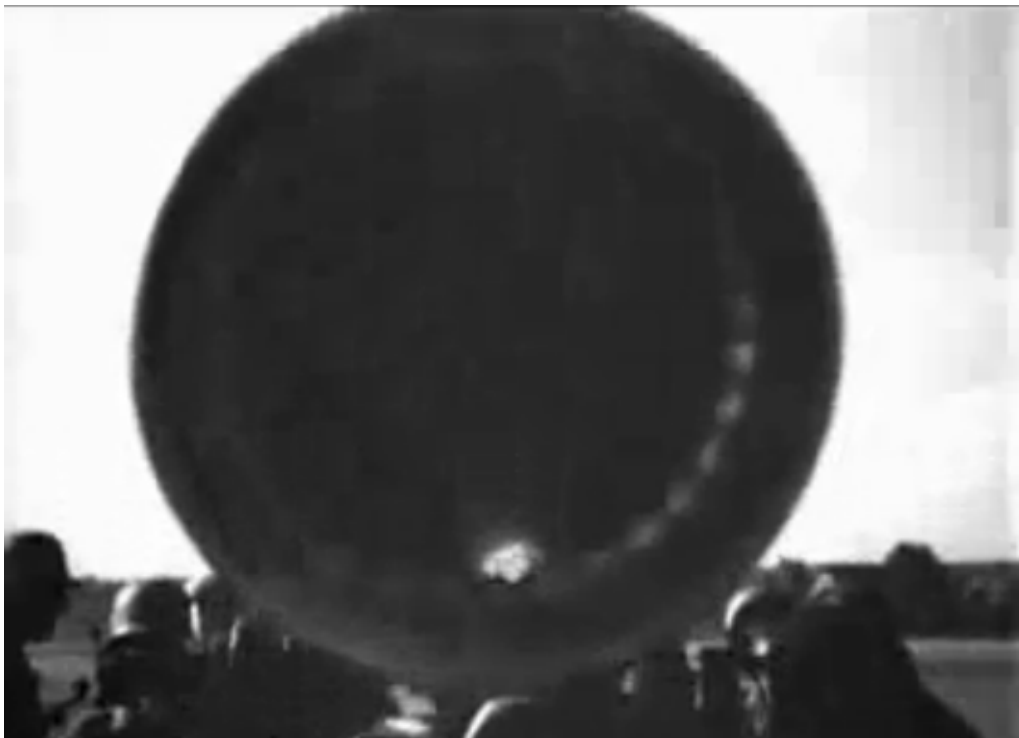
Ex. 1.4 A military trumpet, heralding the *Führer's* speech to the Hitler Youth. Riefenstahl, *Triumph des Willens*, 1935.



Ex. 1.5 Fade between trumpet and the *Parteiadler* with Swastika. Leni Riefenstahl, *Tag der Freiheit: Unsere Wehrmacht* ('Day of Freedom: Our Armed Forces'), 1935.



Ex. 1.6 Opening shot of the final sequence: the camera looks down the barrel of a cannon as it is being raised up into the air. Riefenstahl, *Tag der Freiheit*, 1935.



Ex. 1.7 Final montage overlaying marching troops, Swastika and clouds as visual accompaniment to the singing of the Horst Wessel Song. Riefenstahl, *Triumph des Willens*, 1935.



### **Chapter Three: The sovereign voice**

Ex. 3.1 Photograph included in the photo-book *Die Veränderte Welt: Eine Bilderfibel unserer Zeit* ('The Transformed World: A Picture Primer for Our Time'), ed. Edmund Schultz, with an introduction by Ernst Jünger (Breslau: Wilh. Bottl. Korn Verlag, 1933), p. 33. The caption reads: 'The growth of optical and acoustic media opens out undreamed of possibilities for the political will'. Photographer: unknown.

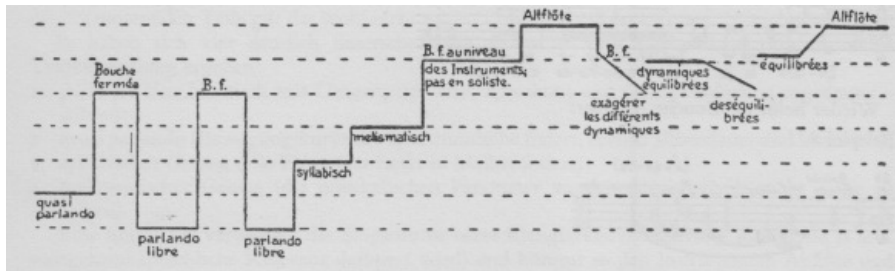
*Permission to reproduce image for the electronic version of the thesis not obtained.*

Ex. 3.2 Ve 301 advertising poster, designed in connection with the 1936 Berlin Radio Exhibition. Text: 'The whole of Germany hears the *Führer* with the *Volksempfänger*'. Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz (bpk), Bild 00006799.

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## Chapter Four: Speaking to history: Nono, Zimmermann

Ex. 4.1 Stockhausen's diagram of the voice's trajectory across the final (ninth) movement of Boulez's *Le marteau sans maître* (1953-55) as it passes across the five styles of enunciation – *parlando-libre*, *quasi parlando*, syllabic song, melismatic song, and closed mouth (*bouche fermée*) – and then interchanges with instrumental sound. Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Texte zu eigenen Werken; zur Kunst Anderer; Aktuelles. Band 2* (Cologne: Verlag M. DuMont Schauberg, 1964), p. 154.



Ex. 4.2 Excerpt from the final (ninth) movement of Luigi Nono, *Il canto sospeso* (London: Eulenberg, 1995 [1956]), p. 86; bars 567-573. The word *condannato* ('condemned') is spread in a four-voice cluster (alto 2, tenor 1, soprano 2, alto 1; bars 572-573), its articulation blurred by multiple *vados* ('I am going').

Ex. 4.3 Concluding polyphony of 'alleluias' (five asynchronous but simultaneous statements) from Giovanni Gabrieli, *O Magnum Mysterium* for eight voices (part of the 1587 collection of *Concerti* by Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli). Transcribed from Ray Robinson, ed., *Choral Music: A Norton Historical Anthology* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1978), p. 124.

The image shows a musical score for eight voices, arranged in two groups of four. The top group consists of Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The bottom group also consists of Alto, Tenor, Tenor, and Bass. Each voice part has its own staff with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: "ja, al - le - lu - ja, al - le - lu - ja." The music is in a single system with a common time signature and a key signature of one flat. The Soprano part starts with a half note, followed by quarter notes. The Alto part starts with a half note, followed by quarter notes. The Tenor part starts with a half note, followed by quarter notes. The Bass part starts with a half note, followed by quarter notes. The lyrics are: "ja, al - le - lu - ja, al - le - lu - ja." The music is in a single system with a common time signature and a key signature of one flat. The Soprano part starts with a half note, followed by quarter notes. The Alto part starts with a half note, followed by quarter notes. The Tenor part starts with a half note, followed by quarter notes. The Bass part starts with a half note, followed by quarter notes.

Ex. 4.4 Excerpt from the final movement of Nono, *Il canto sospeso* (pp. 87-88; bars 574 to end), showing the four repetitions of the interwoven words *vita* and *migliore* ('better life', from Elli Voigt's text, 'I am going in the belief of a better life for you'; bars 581-592).

The image shows a complex musical score for a large ensemble. It includes vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and instrumental parts (Timp.). The score is divided into two systems. The first system is marked "poco più mosso" and the second system is marked "rallentando molto". The vocal parts are highly polyphonic, with multiple voices singing the words "vita" and "migliore" in a complex, interwoven manner. The instrumental parts provide a rhythmic and harmonic accompaniment. The score is in a single system with a common time signature and a key signature of one flat. The Soprano part starts with a half note, followed by quarter notes. The Alto part starts with a half note, followed by quarter notes. The Tenor part starts with a half note, followed by quarter notes. The Bass part starts with a half note, followed by quarter notes. The lyrics are: "ja, al - le - lu - ja, al - le - lu - ja." The music is in a single system with a common time signature and a key signature of one flat. The Soprano part starts with a half note, followed by quarter notes. The Alto part starts with a half note, followed by quarter notes. The Tenor part starts with a half note, followed by quarter notes. The Bass part starts with a half note, followed by quarter notes.

Ex. 4.5 The opening of the fourth movement of Nono, *Il canto sospeso* (p. 34; bars 240-246). The strings double the notes sounded by the rest of the orchestra, but sustain each pitch until the end of its next recurrence

Ex. 4.6 A line emerges from the points in the fourth movement of Nono, *Il canto sospeso* (pp. 38-39; bars 267-270). A simple harmonic progression is outlined, with stepwise voice leading from the G-C# tritone to a strongly articulated F minor seventh chord and then an implied D major.



Ex. 4.7 An example of vocal mimicry from Act I, scene i of Bernd Alois Zimmermann, *Die Soldaten* (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1966), pp. 83-84. Marie reproduces her sister Charlotte's broken, declamatory lyricism, singing relatively simple rhythms of quavers and longer notes that are rarely melismatic or ornamented.

The musical score for Ex. 4.7 shows the vocal lines for Charlotte and Marie, and the piano accompaniment. The piano part includes dynamic markings such as *f*, *sfz*, *p*, *mf*, and *f*. The vocal lines are characterized by simple rhythms of quavers and longer notes. The score includes tempo markings like "a tempo" and "Più tranquillo".

Ex. 4.8 Now Marie appropriates the more rapid, complex rhythmic and melodic style of Desportes, a nobleman in the French services. Her voice mirrors the social rank to which she aspires. Zimmermann, *Die Soldaten* I.iii (pp. 98-99).

The musical score for Ex. 4.8 shows the vocal lines for Marie and Desportes, and the piano accompaniment. The piano part includes dynamic markings such as *mf*, *f*, *sfz*, and *p*. The vocal lines are characterized by more rapid and complex rhythms and melodic lines. The score includes tempo markings like "poco cresc." and "rappresentativo".



Ex. 4.9 Throughout the opera, titles – ‘Herr Baron’, ‘Mademoiselle’, etc. – are exaggerated musically, often with widely leaping melodic arabesques, grace notes or complex rhythmic articulation. Here, courting is reduced to the singing of titles. Marie immediately acknowledges the superficiality of the exchange (‘I know those are just compliments...look how false you are!’; see Ex. 4.8 above). Zimmermann, *Die Soldaten* I.iii (p. 97).

The image displays a musical score for three systems, each featuring a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The first system shows Marie singing 'O,' and Despina singing 'Meine göt - - - li-che Ma - - (de)-moi - selle,'. The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings such as *pp*, *cresc.*, *mf*, and *p*. The second system features Marie singing 'Herr Ba - ron!' with a circled 'A' above the first note. The piano accompaniment includes markings like *f*, *pp*, *mf*, *p*, *mf*, *cresc.*, and *f*. A performance instruction '(springt auf, Despina bedeutet ihr sitzenbleiben, Erik heran.)' is written above the piano part. The third system shows Marie singing 'O, Herr Baron!' and Despina singing 'Meine göt - - - li-che Mademoi - - selle,'. The piano accompaniment includes markings like *mf*, *cresc.*, *f*, *dim.*, *mf*, *pp*, *mf*, *mp*, and *mf*. The score is written in a key signature of one flat and a 3/8 time signature.

Ex. 4.10 Two excerpts from Zimmermann, *Die Soldaten*, showing the use of monotone vocal delivery to mark moral strain: Pirzel (II.i; pp. 195-197) uses a ridiculous theological argument to defend the debased activities of the soldiers – ‘My dear comrades, you are honourable creations of God, thus can I only respect and elevate you’; Desportes responds to Marie’s accusation of falsehood in Ex. 4.8 above (I.iii: p. 100).

Più vivo  $\text{♩}$  ca 92 Sostenuito  $\text{♩}$  = 52-56

du mit uns? Redst du mit uns? Redst du mit uns? Redst du mit uns?  
Redst du mit uns? Redst du mit uns? Redst du mit uns? Redst du mit uns?  
Redst du mit uns? Redst du mit uns? Redst du mit uns? Redst du mit uns?

(breitet beide Arme weit)  
Mei-ne lieben  
-fel! Redst du mit uns? Redst du mit uns?

Più vivo  $\text{♩}$  ca 92 Sostenuito  $\text{♩}$  = 52-56

aus, kehrt sich ernsthaft zu ihnen.)  
Ka-me-ra-den, Ihr seid ver-eh-rungs-wür-di-ge

Glocken, Vibr.  
Hefe, Str.  
Vibr. Glocken  
Vibr. Glocken  
Klav. Git  
Ped. Ped.

(Die 3 jungen Führer (Tänzer) haben sich mittlerweile erhoben, flarieren herum und sekundieren Pirzel pantomimisch, ohne daß er's merkt.)

lococo  
Hefe, Hefe  
Str. G  
Vibr. 3  
Glocken mp  
(verklingen lassen)  
Vibr. Glocken  
Str. Flag  
Vibr. 3  
Git  
Vibr. 3  
Ped. Ped.

Geschöpfe Gottes, al-so kann ich euch nicht anders als re-spek-

Quasi alla marcia  $\text{♩}$  = 92-104  
(1. Tanz, ausgelassen ein paar Stufen herunter)  
Spritze - Hacke  
ganzer Fuß  
Hauptleute  
(ernsthaft)  
sehr, akzentuiert  
Das wollen wir dir auch ge-ra-ten haben!  
-Heren und hoch-adlen.

Quasi alla marcia  $\text{♩}$  = 92-104

Ped. Ped.

Sostenuito  $\text{♩}$  = 52-56  
ordinario

Ich bin auch ein Geschöpf Gottes,  
al-so müßt ihr mich gleich-falls in Eh-ren

Glocken, Vibr.  
Vibr.  
Vcl. Kb.  
Vibr. Glocken  
Hefe, Str. Flag  
Vibr. Glocken  
Git  
Vibr. Glocken  
Vibr. Glocken  
Hefe  
Klav. Git  
Ped. Ped.

(Er fällt ihm an die Hand)  
hal-ten. Ver-ge-bung, Herr Pfarrer!  
Nun, ich bin...

Vibr. Glocken, Hefe  
Vibr. Glocken  
Git  
Ped. Ped.

quasi parlando, prestissimo possibile  
*p cresc.*  
 wenn ich mich vom Re-gi-ment weg-stelle und jetzt ris-kie-re, daß man mich,  
*colla parte*  
 man mich in Pri-son wirft, wenn ich zurück-komme?  
 Ist das falsch, nur um das Glück zu ha-ben, Sie zu se-hen?  
*Vcl. Comb. Hfc. Ctt.*

Tranquillo molto Ritenuto a tempo Tempo I (Arioso)  
*(parlando più serrato ed)*  
 (mit großem Pathos)  
 voll kommenst! Al-le Schmer-zen, die—

Tranquillo molto Ritenuto a tempo Tempo I (Arioso)  
*Tub. Org. Str. Hfc. Ctt. Vcl. Solo*

Ex. 4.11 Countess de la Roche (Gräfin), the character with the highest social rank in the opera, speaks with her manservant (alter Bedienter). He responds to her panicky display of vocal prowess with an expressively barren speech style that is measured, sedate and affirms his servility. This is language that marks positions. Zimmermann, *Die Soldaten* III.iv (pp. 370-371).

*p*  
 Gebt mir den Haupt-schlüssel und legt Euch schlafen.  
*mf*  
 Frau, er ist noch nicht zu-rück;  
 ich werde dem Jun-gen Herrn Jungfer Ka-thrin-then hat den  
 sel-ber auf-ma-chen. Was macht  
 A-bend gro-ße,  
 Nein, gnä-di-ge

*mf*  
 (rhythmisch genau gesprochen)

Ex. 4.12 At key points in Zimmermann, *Die Soldaten*, tensile cacophonies of layered vocal lines ensue in place of dramatic dialogue. Characters sing at one another simultaneously, without pausing to listen, as if knowing in advance the content of the others' speech. Here (Act III, scene iv; pp. 407-409), the Countess sings against her son: 'Be quiet! I believe what you're saying more than you're capable of actually saying it'.

The image displays a musical score for Act III, scene iv of Zimmermann's *Die Soldaten*. The score is arranged in three systems, each with multiple staves. The top two staves in each system are for the vocal parts: the Countess (Gräfin) and her son (Jg Graf). The bottom two staves are for the instrumental accompaniment, including Violins (Viol I, Viol II), Viola (Viola), Cello (Cello), and Double Bass (Hfe, Git). The score is marked with a tempo of  $\text{♩} = 60$  and dynamics such as *f sempre, espr. molto*. The lyrics are in German, with the Countess singing 'Be quiet! I believe what you're saying more than you're capable of actually saying it' and the son responding. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings like *cresc.* and *ff*. A note at the bottom right of the third system reads: 'Die Szene wird langsam abgedunkelt.' (The scene is slowly dimmed).

Gräfin: *f sempre, espr. molto*  
 Be - ru -

Jg Graf: *f sempre, espr. molto*  
 Ma - mal

Gräfin: *f sempre, espr. molto*  
 - hi - ge - dich nun -

Jg Graf: *f sempre, espr. molto*  
 Es ist ein un -

Gräfin: *f sempre, espr. molto*  
 es sa - - - - gen kannst.

Jg Graf: *f sempre, espr. molto*  
 das ist ge - wil.

Die Szene wird langsam abgedunkelt.

Ex. 4.13 The example shows the ‘*macchina repressiva*’ chord being built up (and dismantled) from alternating perfect fourths and tritones across the range of the orchestra at the beginning of scene iv of the second part of Luigi Nono’s *Al gran sole carico d’amore*. *Azione scenica in due tempi* (Nuova versione. Milan: Ricordi, 1977), p. 213; bars 268-274. The score is marked: ‘a) alignment of the repressive apparatus’.

flute  
 oboe 1, clarinet 1+2  
 oboe 2+3, clarinet 3  
 trumpet 1+2, violin I

*p* *mf* *f* *fff* *f* *mf* *p*  
 trumpet 3+4, violin I  
 oboe 4, bassoon 1, trombone 1, violin I  
 clarinet 4, bassoon 2, horn 1+2, violin II

bassoon 3, trombone 2, violin II  
 horn 3+4, viola, 'cello  
 trombone 3, 'cello

bassoon 4, 'cello  
 trombone 4, double bass

Ex. 4.14 Excerpt shows the opening ‘breaths’ of Deola’s melody, as its repeated, temporally flexible, three-note rising and falling figure is gently punctuated by bells. With the word *spiraglio*, the line reaches up a fifth to suggest an imperfect cadence. Nono, *Al gran sole carico d’amore* II.iv (p. 234; bars 371-374).

Deola  
*ppp* *pp* *p* *ppp*  
 U - O - Lo spi - ra - - glio

Campane  
*pp*

Ex. 4.15 The line ‘non più servi nè padrone’ – ‘no more slaves nor masters’ – from the *Internazionale* (the French version gives ‘du passé faisons table rase’, ‘let’s make a blank slate of the past’, which would have been completely out of place in the work) is sung by a baritone solo accompanied by a men’s choir at the conclusion of part II, scene iii. Deola’s ‘Lo spiraglio’ in the next scene uses the same pitch class set {0, 2, 3, 7}, though given in inversion, and mirrors/repeats the melodic contour. The example shows Nono, *Al gran sole carico d’amore* II.iii (section c: ‘for the dead workers in Turin’ – p. 211; bars 256-261), followed by a comparative presentation of the two phrases and their pitch make up (the rhythm of ‘Lo spiraglio’ is simplified and the B $\flat$  rewritten as A $\sharp$  for clarity).

The image shows a musical score for the phrase 'Non più servi né padroni'. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system (bars 256-261) features a Baritone solo and a men's choir. The Baritone solo part is marked *pp* and has a vocal line with the vowel 'U'. The choir parts (Tenor and Bass) are marked *pp sempre* and *sempre su vocale: U*. The second system (bar 257) shows the Baritone solo and choir parts with the lyrics 'Non più ser-vi né padro-ni' and dynamic markings *p* and *mf*. The third system (bar 260) shows the Baritone solo and choir parts with a *pp* dynamic marking.

This block shows a comparative presentation of the two phrases. The first phrase is 'Non più servi né padroni' and the second is 'Lo spira - glio'. The notes are written on a single staff in treble clef, showing the pitch contour of each phrase. The first phrase starts on a middle G and ends on a higher G. The second phrase starts on a middle G and ends on a higher G, mirroring the contour of the first phrase.

This block shows a simplified pitch make-up for the phrase 'Lo spiraglio'. The notes are written on a single staff in treble clef, showing the pitch contour of the phrase. The notes are simplified to show the pitch classes, with the B $\flat$  rewritten as A $\sharp$  for clarity.

Ex. 4.16 The second part of Deola's lyrical melody (*Al gran sole* II.iv: pp. 234-235; bars 382-398) outlines a twelve note 'row'. Below the excerpt, the melody's pitch sequence is given (up to bar 393). This is then reduced to three pitch class sets of four notes each (the 'row'). The derivation of the first, {0, 2, 3, 7}, from the *Internazionale* is shown in Ex. 4.15. Similarly, the third, {0, 2, 4, 7}, recalls the opening phrase of the Russian worker song *Dubinushka*, heard earlier in the scene (p. 229; bars 351-353), which is transcribed in the fourth staff alongside a segment from Deola's melody that uses the same pitches. These sets (and their inversions) give a major or minor triad with added fourth or second. The second pitch class set, {0, 1, 2, 6}, affords more conventionally dissonant possibilities and contains within it the building blocks of the *macchina repressiva* chord (see Ex. 4.13 above). As the second part of the example shows, the 'row' is not stated outright and has additional occurrences of {0, 2, 4, 7} and {0, 1, 2, 6} folded into it.

The image displays a musical score for the second part of Deola's lyrical melody. It consists of three staves of music with lyrics underneath. The tempo markings are  $\text{♩} = 54$ ,  $\text{♩} = 60$ , *rall.*,  $\text{♩} = 92$ , *rall.*,  $\text{♩} = 72$ , *accel.*,  $\text{♩} = 92$ , *rall.*, and  $\text{♩} = 60$ . The dynamics are *ppp*, *pp*, *ppp*, *p*, *mf*, *pppp*, *f*, *p*, *pp*, and *pppp*. The lyrics are: U - A - U - Lu - ce gri - - gia i tuoi o - - cchi do - lci go - cce dell'a - lba su - lle co - lli - ne scu - re.

Below the score, the pitch sequence is analyzed into three pitch class sets of four notes each:

- {0, 2, 3, 7}
- {0, 1, 2, 6}
- {0, 2, 4, 7}

Further analysis shows:

- Segment of the *macchina repressiva* chord (see Ex. 4.13) with pitch class sets {0, 1, 2, 6} and {0, 1, 2, 6}.
- Opening phrase of *Dubinushka* features same {0, 2, 4, 7} pitch class set.

Ex. 4.17 During the 'come prelude' and elsewhere in *Al gran sole*, sound clusters fan open and closed as if to reveal their harmonic make up – that they are, after all, merely composed material. Here (*come prelude*, pp. 10-11; bars 44-54), the strings play all notes of the clusters, while the wind texture pans across from trombone to clarinet, with each new instrument joining the upwardly expanding cluster from the bottom and ascending chromatically.

The musical score for 'come prelude' (bars 44-54) is presented in two systems. The first system (bars 44-49) features five staves: Clarinets (1-4), Bassoons (1-4), Horns (1+2, 3+4), Trombones (1-4), and Strings (Violins II, Violas, Cellos). The tempo is marked as 92ca for the first two bars and 60ca for the remaining three. The strings play a chromatically ascending cluster of notes, starting with a *p* dynamic and reaching *fff* by bar 46. The Trombones enter in bar 45 with a *ff* dynamic, and the Horns enter in bar 49 with a *p* dynamic. The second system (bars 50-54) features five staves: Clarinet, Bassoon, Horn, Trombone, and Strings. The dynamics for the wind instruments and strings are marked as *p*, *pp*, and *ppp*, indicating a gradual decrease in volume as the cluster expands and then contracts.



## **Chapter Five: Concerning technology: Stockhausen, Kubisch**

Ex. 5.1 Flyer, 'Action against Cultural Imperialism, "Picket Stockhausen Concert!"' Text by Henry Flynt; designed by George Maciunas. Reproduced from Hannah Higgins, *Fluxus Experience* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2002), p. 73.

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Ex. 5.2 George Maciunas's poster for the *Fluxus Internationale Festspiele Neuester Musik*, Städtisches Museum Wiesbaden, September 1962. Reproduced from Thomas Kellein, *The Dream of Fluxus: George Maciunas: An Artist's Biography* (London: Edition Hansjörg Mayer, 2007), p. 64.

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Ex 5.3 Christina Kubisch, 'Week-End', from *Emergency Solos* (1975). Performance still.

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Ex. 5.4 Christina Kubisch, 'It's so Touchy', from *Emergency Solos* (1975). Performance stills.

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Ex. 5.5 Christina Kubisch, *Il respiro del mare* (1981), Capo d'Orlando, Sicily.

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Ex. 5.6 Christina Kubisch, *Arkadien* (2002-2003), Bunkermuseum, Oberhausen. Photos: Rolf Giegold.

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**Chapter Six: Invocations/obligations: Kagel's Beethoven**

Ex. 6.1 Title page of *Der Spiegel*, issue 37 (September 7, 1970).

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