THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE VOICE UNDER ERASURE:
SINGING, MELODY AND EXPRESSION IN LATE MODERNIST MUSIC

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE HUMANITIES

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

BY

MARCELLE COULTER PIERSON

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

DECEMBER 2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Examples

List of Figures

List of Tables

Acknowledgments

Writing a dissertation was at times thrilling and wearying, gratifying and frustrating, leisurely and pressurized, straightforward and hopelessly convoluted. I am so grateful to have been supported by several amazing communities that both inspired the questions I asked in this document and helped me contend with the challenges involved in trying to answer them.

To Sharon and Neil Pierson: I strive every day to emulate your love of learning and each other, as well as your kindness and ability to put things in perspective. I'm glad to have grown up in a house with so much music in it, even if some of it was Metallica. You've been extraordinarily supportive of two children pursuing wacky interests; speaking of which, I'm inspired by Max Pierson, who sees lights the way that I hear music.

To Emily Clark, Emily Feingold, and Sarah Heady, sisters of my heart: your many and varied creative pursuits throughout the last twelve years make me continuously proud to know you. I feel so lucky to have found us.

To my friends at Bowers: thank you for feeding me and letting me cook for you, playing music with me on your porch, and most importantly, ensuring that I spoke to real human beings about things other than this document at least once per day. Thanks too to Georgie Schaefer, who was supportive of this dissertation in countless ways both direct and indirect.

To the faculty at the University of Chicago: when I leave this place, I will seek to do justice to your example of stalwart dedication to both your students and learning itself. Thanks especially to Seth Brodsky, who loves this music as much as I do and has dedicated countless hours to helping me try to do it justice; to Larry Zbikowski, for his steady cheer, wise counsel, and willingness to take on an inferior squash opponent; to Martha Feldman, Berthold Hoeckner, and Steve Rings for being such thoughtful readers and teachers and for devoting time and energy far and above the call of duty; and finally, to Shulamit Ran, Gusty Thomas, and Anthony Cheung for providing many valuable opportunities to pursue composition as the necessary counterpart to my academic studies.

To my fellow students at the University of Chicago: your willingness to engage so closely and generously with my work never ceased to amaze me, and I have richly benefitted from the wealth and diversity of interests represented in the department. Thanks especially to the eleven other members of my incoming cohort who made me feel at home right away (Cesar Favila, Will Faber, Andrea Harris Jordan, Miriam Tripaldi, Claudio Vellutini, Meredith Moretz, Iddo Aharony, Francisco Castillo Trigueros, Patrick Kaufmann, Adrienne Alton-Gust, Danny Gough); to Jonah Bloch-Johnson, Nadia Chana, Abigail Fine, and Pete Smucker for keeping me company during long hours at the Regenstein and sometimes even longer lunches; to George Adams, Chelsea Burns, Mary Caldwell, Jonathan De Souza, Patrick Fitzgibbon, Ted Gordon, Sarah Iker, Trent Leipert, Jess Peritz, August Sheehy, and Martha Sprigge, for providing feedback to countless iterations of countless papers and chapters with a winning combination of generosity, saint-like patience, and sharp insight. And to Dan Wang, for being my person.

Abstract

This dissertation contends with the simple observation that modernist composers display a collective and rather sudden aversion to melody after World War II; I examine why this might be so while showing how melody continues to haunt this repertory in drastically reimagined forms. Edward Cone and other critics bemoan this anti-melodic turn and raise its political and ethical stakes by invoking what I call the "vocal imaginary," which links melody, voice, and human subjectivity in a distinctly Rousseauian line of argumentation. In reality, Cone's fears that the musical subject might disappear altogether in modernist music have not come to pass: the work and thought of postwar musical modernism remains flooded with "voices," but voices of a different kind. The pages of this dissertation are filled with voices that don't sing; instruments that do; singing that comes from a speaking voice and melody that comes from a mass texture; singing, melody, and voice that are obstructed in a stunning variety of ways. Using as my examples compositions by Salvatore Sciarrino, Steve Reich, Iannis Xenakis, and Helmut Lachenmann, I explore how a rejection of the "phenomenal" or standardized practices of voice is enacted such that the voice is reborn as "noumenal:" uncategorizable, unparseable, uniquely alive. The turn away from traditional modes of voice and melody can be understood as a melancholic response to modernity, and specifically its conditions of mass production and scientism.

Chapter 1 - The Voice under Erasure in Darmstadt and Beyond

"It is particularly in a work like *Il canto sospeso*
that one can see the beginnings of the gap—now
a gulf—between composers like Stockhausen
and Nono."
-Helmut Lachenmann[1]

In 1952, Luigi Nono and Karlheinz Stockhausen became close friends. Over the next several years they took classes together, presented one another's work in lectures, and even vacationed together. In 1957, Nuria Nono became the godmother of Stockhausen's son Markus;[2] in 1958, Nono coined the term "Darmstadt School" to refer to himself, Stockhausen, Pierre Boulez, and Bruno Maderna.[3] By 1959, however, this friendship had dissolved into a personal and professional rancor that was on public display to the composers' fellow attendees at the Darmstadt Ferienkurse. Helmut Lachenmann describes a definitive quarrel between Nono and Stockhausen that occurred upon his appearance at a breakfast for lecturers on Nono's invitation:

> When there was no table setting for me, the unannounced intruder, Nono scoffed at the inflexible "German organization," incapable of improvisation, whereupon Stockhausen replied, "What does German organization mean here? With you the tones stand at attention after all!," whereupon Nono, boisterous rather than angry, retorted: "And yours move like a scarecrow." That was definitely the last aesthetic discussion between the two.[4]

---

[1] Helmut Lachenmann, "Touched by Nono," in *Contemporary Music Review* 18/1 (1999), 20.

[2] Rainer Nonnenmann, *Der Gang durch die Klippen: Helmut Lachenmanns Begegnung mit Luigi Nono anhand ihres Briefwechsels und anderer Quellen 1957-1990* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf et Härtel, 2013), 29–30. See also Karl H. Wörner, *Stockhausen: Life and Work*, trans. Bill Hopkins (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 235.

[3] Scholars have questioned the Darmstadt School as a cohesive movement. See Christopher Fox, "Music after Zero Hour," *Contemporary Music Review* 26, no. 1 (February 2007): 13; Martin Iddon, "Darmstadt Schools: Darmstadt as a Plural Phenomenon," *Tempo* 65, no. 256 (04/01/2011 2011): 2–8. Nonetheless, Nono's moniker demonstrates his perceived affinity with Stockhausen at the time.

[4] Nonnenmann, *Der Gang durch die Klippen*, 133. "Als es dort für mich, den unangemeldeten Eindringling, kein Gedeck gab, spottete Nono über die improvisationsunfähige, unbewegliche "deutsche Organisation", worauf Stockhausen entgegnete: "Was heißt hier deutsche Organisation? Bei Dir stehen doch die Töne stramm!", worauf Nono eher übermütig als verärgert zurückgab: "Und bei Dir machen sie Bewegungen wie Vogalscheuche..." Das war wohl definitiv die letzte ästhetische Diskussion zwischen den beiden." Translations in this dissertation are my own unless otherwise noted.

As Lachenmann hints in the epigraph above, this moment precipitated a falling-out between Nono and Stockhausen that spanned decades. But how did they go from sharing a high mutual regard to name-calling in the lunchroom? The underlying issues are not so petty as this confrontation might suggest. In fact, the stakes of Nono and Stockhausen's polemics during this time were such that many Darmstadt participants followed them closely and even found themselves jumping into the fray; hard lines were drawn, and feelings were hurt.[5] Lachenmann's claim is that these polemics constitute a moment of crisis not only between Nono and Stockhausen, but also between composers *like* them—thus, the repercussions of the differences between these pieces radiate outward, and Stockhausen and Nono become symbolic of a burgeoning crisis in the cosmopolitan new music scene. The fact that Lachenmann himself felt the need to choose sides reinforces the notion of a schism between two different compositional lineages. But what does Lachenmann mean when he refers to composers "like" Nono and "like" Stockhausen?

A few years before that infamous breakfast scene, Stockhausen and Nono's dispute was already concretized in two compositions that offer a number of parallels: Stockhausen's *Gesang der Jünglinge* (1955-56) and Nono's *Il canto sospeso* (1955-56) were both composed using serial means, in the same years, using liturgical forms, and maintain today as much of a canonical status as is possible for any high modernist work; oceans of ink have been spilled on behalf of both. Furthermore, Nono and Stockhausen both enjoyed a reciprocal relationship with the Darmstadt music festival, where *Gesang* and *Canto* were widely discussed.[6] The debate played

[5] For more on the other participants in these polemics, see M.J. Grant, *Serial Music, Serial Aesthetics: Compositional Theory in Post-War Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001). See especially Chapter 7, "Music and Language," pp. 193-221.

[6] According to Christopher Fox, *Il canto sospeso* was also commissioned by Darmstadt although premiered elsewhere. Christopher Fox, "Luigi Nono and the Darmstadt School: Form and Meaning in the Early Works (1950-1959)," *Contemporary Music Review* 18, no. 2 (1999): 112.

out during speeches there as well as publications in its mouthpiece *Die Reihe*, and these works' staying power in turn feeds into the continuing prestige of the festival. These similarities invited all manner of comparison, even at the time, which led almost inevitably to conflict.

In *Il canto sospeso*, Nono sets excerpts from the final letters of condemned political prisoners of the World War II resistance. Both text and music are emotionally charged; as has been well documented, Nono uses serial means to expressive ends, employing at times an aurally comprehensible all-interval row that wedges outward chromatically.[7] The text of *Il canto sospeso* is always set in its original order, but it is often layered over itself, and the metrical placement of words does not necessarily correspond to the natural rhythms of speech; these features make semantic understanding of the source text difficult and often impossible.

Stockhausen took the text of *Gesang der Jünglinge* from a section of the Apocrypha where three young Jews sing from Nebuchadnezzar's furnace. The composer had attended Werner Meyer-Eppler's Darmstadt classes in phonetics between 1954 and 1956, where he learned about the relationship between formants and vowel sounds. With this knowledge, he was able to create electronic sounds that resemble the human voice, resulting in an aural soundscape that remains eerie and futuristic today even as the bleeps and bloops available to him have become somewhat dated.[8] *Gesang*'s successful fusion of the realms of *concrete* and synthesized sound was unprecedented—it was in the words of one commenter, "an opus, in the most

[7] For a nuts and bolts analysis of the serial operations of *Il canto sospeso* see Kathryn Bailey, "'Work in Progress': Analysing Nono's *Il canto sospeso*." *Music Analysis,* 11/2-3 (1992). 279-334; for an analytical attempt to link serial means to expressive ends see Carola Nielinger, "'The Song Unsung': Luigi Nono's *Il canto sospeso."Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 131/1 (2006). 83-150.

[8] In the early 1950s, Stockhausen also became interested in ordering the transformations of sound systematically, not just the sounds themselves as fixed objects. This kind of interplay is at work in the timbral blending of *Gesang der Jünglinge*. For more on the technical and aesthetic bases for the work, see Pascal Decroupet, Elena Ungeheuer, and Jerome Kohl, "Through the Sensory Looking-Glass: The Aesthetic and Serial Foundations of Gesang Der Jünglinge," *Perspectives of New Music* 36, no. 1 (1998): 97–142.

emphatic sense of the term"[9]—and it expanded the realm of compositional possibilities in the electronic music studio. In addition to his experimentation with synthesized vocal timbres, Stockhausen derives all vocal sounds from a single source, the 12-year old boy soprano Josef Protschka, and splits, duplicates, and layers this voice into an intricate tapestry.

In a 1957 Darmstadt lecture, Stockhausen attempted to bring these two works into dialogue along with Boulez's *Le marteau sans maître* (1953-5)[10] with the intention of representing the different standpoints of the "atheist, the idealistic communist, and the metaphysic" as evinced by their vocal writing.[11] In a lecture and subsequent publication, he discussed the use of text in the three pieces, seeming to be genuinely flummoxed by Nono's choices. He acknowledged that Nono was "deeply moved" by the texts. And yet, he mused:

> The texts are not delivered, but rather concealed in such a regardlessly strict and dense musical form that they are hardly comprehensible when performed. Why, then, texts at all, and why these texts?...Should he not have chosen texts so rich in meaning in the first place, but rather sounds?[12]

In the first place, Stockhausen's criticisms exude a whiff of hypocrisy. His decision to use a text featuring Jewish children singing from a furnace just a decade after the end of World War II would certainly have been read politically, although it operates on the level of allegory rather than direct quotation. And his experimentation with vowel sounds required him to fragment this charged text far beyond the point of recognition. Stockhausen anticipates this

---

[9] Ibid., 97.

[10] This lecture was subsequently published as an article first in the *Darmstädter Beiträge zur Neuen Musik* (1958) and then in *Die Reihe* (1960). Karlheinz Stockhausen, "Musik und Sprache," *Darmstädter Beiträge Zur Neuen Musik* 1 (1958): 65–74; Karlheinz Stockhausen, "Musik und Sprache," *Die Reihe* 6 (1960): 36–58.

[11] Nonnenmann, *Der Gang durch die Klippen*, 30.

[12] Karlheinz Stockhausen, "Text and Music." Trans. Ruth Koenig. Die Reihe *VI* (Bryn Mawr: Theodor Presser Co., 1964), 48-49. These quotes are perhaps a bit out of context, since Stockhausen seems to be engaged in a sincere attempt to defend Nono against accusations of an inappropriate use of this politically and emotionally charged text, even as these accusations come from Stockhausen himself. As I mentioned, he points out the profound impact of these texts upon Nono, and he also defends Nono's decisions later in the essay: "It is not for nothing that a few fragmentary syllables flash out of the heaving sounds here and there in II. The listener feels he has understood them without, however, their having resulted in larger coherent passages." (Ibid., 49) M.J. Grant concisely rebuts Stockhausen's criticism of Nono's text setting, claiming that Stockhausen fails to take into account that "the music itself is utterly sad" (pg. 203).

criticism, claiming that his Bible excerpt was already so well-known that he could afford to take liberties:

> The words are memorised, and here we are primarily concerned with the fact *that* and *how* they are memorised, and the details of the content are of secondary importance; the concentration is directed upon the sacredness; speech becomes ritual.[13]

Nono didn't react well to his friend's seemingly mild censure, and expressed his outrage in a 1960 Darmstadt lecture entitled "Text – Musik – Gesang."[14] He pointed out that the text of *Il canto sospeso* is never fragmented beyond the level of the word, and that he was careful to present these words in order. As M.J. Grant notes, Nono's response contains more than a trace of bitterness. For instance, in an indirect answer to Stockhausen's query above, he replies: "The question why I chose exactly this text and no other for a composition is no more intelligent than asking why, in order to say the word '*stupid*,' of all letters one has to use *s-t-u-p-i-d*."[15] 1960 was the last year that Nono appeared at Darmstadt, and this speech could be said to mark the final dissolution of the "Darmstadt School."[16]

Allegedly, the conflict between Nono and Stockhausen arose as a shop-talk dispute about techniques of text setting. Stockhausen criticized Nono's technique as ineffective; Nono retaliated. But the bitter antagonism ought not mask a rather simple but essential fact: both Nono's *Canto* and Stockhausen's *Gesang* are, titularly speaking, *songs.* The debate between the composers articulates their different positions regarding the status of song and singing in the late 1950s. Nono's intention was to use serial techniques to enhance the semantic meaning of the text rather than to obstruct it, to support the words' power by giving them voice in song. His

---

[13] Ibid., 58

[14] Co-authored, incidentally, by his pupil Helmut Lachenmann, who will take center stage in the final chapter of this dissertation.

[15] Luigi Nono, "Text – Musik – Gesang." Translated in M.J. Grant, *Serial Music, Serial Aesthetics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Pg. 203.

[16] According to Christopher Fox, this speech "ruptured his close friendship with Stockhausen." Fox, "Luigi Nono and the Darmstadt School," 112.

purported purpose in composing *Il canto sospeso* was "to give voice to the legacy of these letters,"[17] to combine them into what Christopher Fox calls "a litany of suffering,"[18] and to set them to music that mirrors and intensifies their anguish. For Stockhausen, on the other hand, the speech of *Gesang der Jünglinge* is implacable ritual rather than urgent utterance; he probably saw Nono's attempt at direct expression as embarrassingly old-fashioned. In his *Die Reihe* essay he rather condescendingly tries to give his friend the benefit of the doubt by hypothesizing a serial system of text setting based on the smallest phonetic components of Nono's letters. Even if Stockhausen's analysis was well-intentioned, though, it misses the point entirely by assuming that Nono would use serial organization to occlude the text, and the voices that present it.

The exchange that opens this chapter shows the traces of this conflict, and also hints at its larger implications. Stockhausen thinks that Nono's attempt to meld politics and aesthetics results in a confused and confusing situation where tones are made to "stand at attention" at the same time they are supposed to promote the cause of freedom. Nono thinks that Stockhausen's music, with its emphasis on structure and ritual rather than utterance, constitutes a "scarecrow," a corpse, something with human form that lacks actual humanity. In addition to being a disagreement about musical aesthetics, this is a disagreement about the status and means of the voice in music, which is in turn a disagreement about the status and means of expression, of subjectivity, of music's very humanity.

To draw the issue in stark black and white, one might say that Nono is in favor of an emotional music of direct expression and communication, while Stockhausen's aesthetic relies upon abstraction and technical innovation. This dichotomy would be supported by the

[17] Luigi Nono, "Text – Musik – Gesang." Cited and translated in Christopher Fox, "Luigi Nono and the Darmstadt School: Form and Meaning in the Early Works (1950-1959)." *Contemporary Music Review*18/2, 1999. 111-130.
[18] Ibid., 127

structuralist rhetoric promulgated especially by Stockhausen and Pierre Boulez—before their falling out, Nono and Stockhausen engaged in many conversations where Stockhausen argued

> that it's really *essential* to choose *one* idea, *one* total conception of all material dimensions…that the writing has only the function of the performing, the service, and becomes fully un-Promethean, un-Faustian, impersonal—if you will: inhuman, so, music becomes less and less human, more and more pure.[19]

Nono, on the other hand, had far less patience for abstraction. He insisted that musical should be politically engaged and exude the "warmth of life."[20]

But in reality, both composers constantly negotiated and renegotiated the relationship between expression and technique. Later in his essay, Lachenmann points to the at times uncomfortable dialectic with which Nono lived: "Nono the structuralist constantly forced Nono the expressively-orientated visionary to forge his way ahead. This is a central aspect of Nono's music."[21] And the reception of Nono's music is sometimes hard to reconcile with his position against Stockhausen, as in one review of his *Variazioni canoniche sulla serie dell'op. 41 di Arnold Schoenberg* (1950) that called it "incomprehensible" due to "its disruption and ripping to shreds of the melody,"[22] and another that called it the "corpse of a compositional figure" and accused Nono of "sin[ning] against all that is human in music."[23] Conversely, for all Stockhausen's structuralist rhetoric, his highly rationalized compositional strategies repeatedly suggest some kind of expressive and communicative end. Certainly, subject matter and affective

---

[19] Gianmario Borio and Hermann Danuser, eds., *Im Zenit Der Moderne: Die Internationalen Ferienkurse Für Neue Musik Darmstadt 1946-1966* (Freiburg: Rombach, 1997), 28. Cited in Nonnenmann, *Der Gang durch die Klippen*, 31. "… daß wirklich eine Idee, eine totale Vorstellung alle Materialdimensionen notwendig auswählt[…]—daß der Schreibende nur noch die Funktion des Ausführens, des Dienens hat und vollkommen unprometheisch, unfaustisch, unpersönlich wird—wenn Du willst: unmenschlich, so, wie seine Musik immer unmenschlicher, immer reiner wird."
[20] Luigi Nono, *Luigi Nono: Texte, Studien zu seiner Musik*, ed. Jürg Stenzl (Zürich: Atlantis, 1975), 120. Cited in Nonnenmann, *Der Gang durch die Klippen*, 120. "die Wärme des Lebens"
[21] Ibid., 21.
[22] Hans Heine Stuckenschmidt, "Spielerei, Pathos und Verinnerlichung: Abschluß der Darmstädter Konzertreihe," *Neue Zeitung*, August 30, 1950. Cited and translated in Martin Iddon, *New Music at Darmstadt: Nono, Stockhausen, Cage, and Boulez* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 38.
[23] "Protest Nach Zwei Seiten: 'Musik der Jungen Generation' in Darmstadt," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, August 30, 1950. Cited and translated in Iddon, *New Music at Darmstadt*, 38.

intensity were an essential part of the conception—and effect—of *Gesang der Jünglinge*. As David Metzer argues forcefully, the historical image of *Gesang* as a perfectly organized machine—pure, impersonal, calculated, inhuman—hardly matches up with the work's contemporary reality, or even with what is so clearly presented in the aural experience itself.[24] Both Nono's and Stockhausen's works of this period are emblems of a tension between a written practice strongly inspired by contemporary structuralist discourse, and a musical experience still very much concerned with what structuralism tended to suppress—the subject, and the subject's voice.

Voice and its (vocal) discontents

These tensions were not at all limited to Stockhausen and Nono; they are, as I suggest above, themselves expressive of a larger antagonism energizing their milieu, one centered around voice. M.J. Grant has shown particularly well how hotly contested the status of the voice was for many participants of the Darmstadt courses in the 1950s; her account includes contributions from composers H.H. Stuckenschmidt, Herbert Eimert, and Henri Pousseur, critic Ludwig Wismeyer, and linguist Nicolas Ruwet.[25] But we have also seen—and heard—these antagonisms about voice before, far beyond the elect purview of Darmstadt. Roughly two centuries earlier, in what would eventually be coined the *Querelle des bouffons*, Jean-Philippe Rameau and Jean-Jacques Rousseau carried out polemics under strikingly similar terms. In both the earlier and later cases, two of the most theoretically ambitious musicians—or musically ambitious theorists—of their day developed a bitter animosity in a public and lettered dispute over music's relationship with

[24] David Metzer, "The Paths from and to Abstraction in Stockhausen's Gesang Der Jünglinge," *Modernism/Modernity* 11, no. 4 (November 2004): 695–721.
[25] M.J. Grant, *Serial Music, Serial Aesthetics: Compositional Theory in Post-War Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001). See especially Chapter 7, "Music and Language," pp. 193-221.

the vocal. A comparison of both moments reveals a tension between system and utterance that seems to recur when disagreements about the voice in music arise.

In 1752, Italian comic opera exploded onto the French scene with tremendously popular performances of Pergolesi's comic intermezzo *La serva padrona*, given at the Aristocratic Opéra.[26] Fervor quickly gave way to worry and then defensiveness, as some saw the emergent Italian genre as a threat to the French national style of *tragédie lyrique.* In response to *La serva padrona*, Jean-Philippe Rameau emerged as the defender of French opera and Jean-Jacques Rousseau as the advocate for the new style the Italian intermezzo represented. The ensuing polemics revolved around the superiority of French versus Italian music, and these national musics were quickly reduced to a set of stereotypes meant to capture the compositional (and cultural) priorities of each. According to François (Abbé) Raguenet and Jean-Laurent Lecerf de la Viéville, the authors of two pamphlets that articulated the terms of the *Querelle* avant la lettre at the turn of the eighteenth century, Italian opera sang freely and intuitively, while French opera served the text and minimized the risk of base seduction.[27] Later, Rameau would bolster the defense of French music by claiming that it embodied the natural laws of harmony, setting up a binary opposition between Italian excellence at melody and French mastery of harmony. This put French music in positive terms, and served as a more convincing vindication than the early

[26] Although the opera was actually premiered as an intermezzo in 1733, it did not achieve widespread notice until its 1952 run at the Théâtre des Arts. David Charlton describes how the theater extended its run again and again due to its growing popularity. See David Charlton, *Opera in the Age of Rousseau: Music, Confrontation, Realism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 251.

[27] In his *Paralèle des Italiens et des Français, en ce qui regarde la musique et les opéras* (1702), Abbé Raguenet claimed that Italian opera was a site of unencumbered expression, while French opera was overly complicated, enslaved to the text, and generally monotonous. When Lecerf de la Viéville responded in his *Comparaison de la musique italienne et de la musique française* (1704), he praised French opera for its service to the text, dismissed Italian opera as corrupt, and identified music as a dangerous source of power to be contained and used sparingly. For more on the origins of the *querelle* in the beginning of the eighteenth century, see the introduction of Enrico Fubini, *Music and Culture in Eighteenth-Century Europe: A Source Book*, ed. Bonnie J. Blackburn (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

polemicists' somewhat fanatical concern that the uninhibitedness of Italian music would lure the listener into sin.

The musical (and superficially apolitical) distinction between melody and harmony was conceptually rich and served well as an anchor for the higher-stakes question of how music relates to the human. Rameau, a Cartesian and a rationalist at heart, thought of this relationship dualistically: the order of music reflected the order of the world. For him, "music is natural in that its underlying harmony precisely reflects a physical law that is natural because it is eternal and immutable."[28] The elegant principles of harmony are universal, given in nature, and can be accessed either by reason or through instinct; reason serves to confirm what one already knows intuitively—i.e., what nature already "put there". The role of the human, then, is in large part an investigatory one, an agency of analysis and divination, revealing these natural laws and reveling in the pleasure they afford—a pleasure not distinct from that of beholding nature itself. Successful music draws a listener's ear toward these principles, and pleases that ear through their confirmation in harmonic progressions. The listener appreciates this organization aesthetically because it shows how she exists in synchrony with the natural laws of the universe, and the best composers adhere to these laws, even if sometimes by instinct alone:

> Who is the philosopher or man who would not recognize with a little common sense that the agreeable feeling which he experiences in hearing certain relationships between sounds, is due to nature and pure instinct? And, in that case, who wouldn't benefit from what he could learn from this mother of the sciences and the arts and behave accordingly?[29]

For Rameau, human artistry—and perhaps humanity itself—is an act of civilization; what separates good art from bad art, and humans from animals, is adherence to a *system*. Stockhausen seems to feel a similar way about the role of the human in music—essentially, that it should exist

[28] Ibid., 13.
[29] Rameau, *Observations*. Translated by Cynthia Verba in *Music and the French Enlightenment: Reconstruction of a Dialogue, 1750-1764* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 121.

outside of the music itself and instead be located in the act of listening to it. Humans are uniquely capable of appreciating orderliness and systematicity, and to do so is to be human. Examples abound: a great many of Stockhausen's discussions about his own compositions are rigorously technical. Robin Maconie, Stockhausen's biographer and advocate, describes how in the planning and execution of *Gesang der Jünglinge*, Stockhausen recognized

> that the ultimate, logical, and appealing alternative to an arbitrary system would be one founded on scientific principles. Such a system, just as rigorous, drawing its strength from the world of everyday human experience, would be more likely as a matter of course to connect with the perceptions of the "ordinary listener."[30]

Notice how Stockhausen's conception of musical logic conforms to the valorization of system and structure so important in Rameau's thought. Both composers are fascinated by the juncture between music and the natural and mathematical sciences, and for both, logically imposed principles give a piece cohesion and this cohesion is what generates musical value. For Stockhausen and Rameau, one might even say that expression arises out of a *consonant* relation to a rational system; no matter how dramatic or cacophonous the musical moment may be, it emerges in harmony with the fundamental ground or overarching plan, their own conception of Music-with-capital-M. The work sounds within this harmony.

Rousseau, on the other hand, saw music as disruptive of the very systematicity that Rameau and Stockhausen celebrate. Cartesian dualism like that found in Rameau's conception of music is scarcely to be found in Rousseau's musical thought; rather, he is deeply informed by sensationalists such as John Locke. For Rousseau, musical affect originates in the communicative power of the human voice—singing is the closest that we come to the original state of human expression, whence both language and music came. The earliest human

[30] Robin Maconie, *Other Planets: The Music of Karlheinz Stockhausen* (Lantham: Scarecrow Press, 2005), 59.

utterances arose out of passion rather than need and took the form of accented but wordless vocalizations. As civilization crept in, however, this original cry was lost:

> In proportion as needs increase, as affairs become entangled, as enlightenment extends, language changes character; it becomes more precise and less passionate, it substitutes ideas for feelings, it no longer speaks to the heart but to reason.[31]

When music is overthought and over-civilized, it becomes artificial. Rousseau pits system and expression against one another—where one exists, the other cannot. True artistic expression comes from succumbing as much as possible to one's animal nature, from breaking through pre-given structures.

Rousseau and Nono think of music more as a vocal act or utterance: impassioned, unsystematic, and fundamentally irrational. There is, however, a marked difference in how Nono and Rousseau see externally imposed organization. For Rousseau, imposing the system of harmony on melody makes it artificial, further from the authentic co-origin of language and music. Nono, on the other hand, demonstrated a great deal of respect for systematic musical organization—for example, he uses serial constructions throughout *Il canto sospeso* and other pieces from this time period. But he also uses the voice to disrupt these systems, as in the poignant soprano solo in the seventh movement (I discuss this movement and its reception in some detail in Chapter 5). The difference between Nono and Stockhausen (or Nono and Rameau) lies in a deliberate hierarchization of voice and system, irrational and rational; the rational and systemic is present only insofar as it can provide a background for the voice, or even a structure that it is meant to undermine.

The historical and cultural gulf that separates the participants of the *Querelle* and Darmstadt-goers of the 1950s is vast; the stakes of the two situations were different in important

[31] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Essay on the Origin of Languages and Writings Related to Music*, ed. John T. Scott, vol. 7, The Collected Writings of Rousseau (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1998), 296.

ways. And yet, opening this chapter with the paired figures of Rousseau/Rameau and Nono/Stockhausen does provide an introduction to both these important figures and some perennial issues that surround the voice. Rousseau and Nono will continue to appear in the pages of this dissertation as composers and critics who bequeathed a legacy of thinking about the nexus of voice, humanity, melodiousness, and rationality in music, and these conflicts give bodily form and specific articulation to a negotiation between two aspects of the voice that are always present, and yet, seem to exist uneasily alongside one another. One the one hand, a voice is enmeshed in a number of systems, including that of language but also conventional vocal practice in music. On the other, it is utterly unique to a given body, and thus irreducible and destabilizing to the very systems it participates in. Rameau, Rousseau, Nono and Stockhausen all must find a way to negotiate this structural antagonism, and alongside it a compositional ethics of melody and voice.

One of the most important contributions to identifying and theorizing this negotiation is Edward Cone's 1974 monograph *The Composer's Voice*. Its first page assumes a Rousseauian co-origination of music and language: "if music is a language," Cone asks, "then who is speaking?"[32] Also like Rousseau, he sees music as somehow able to take on human characteristics through an act of mimesis: "all music, like all literature, is dramatic…every composition is an utterance depending on an act of impersonation."[33] In some ways, Cone's ideas are a direct adaptation of Rousseau's, so why did he feel the need to rearticulate them? Although he never mentions Darmstadt or its composers by name, I believe that *The Composer's Voice* responds to them; that his work constitutes, among other things, an aesthetic and ethical call to the vocal in music from what he sees as a beleaguered position. Beginning around 1950,

[32] Edward T. Cone, *The Composer's Voice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 1.
[33] Ibid., 5.

the output of composers as diverse as Lachenmann, Salvatore Sciarrino, Steve Reich, and Iannis Xenakis demonstrate an unprecedented exploration of non-melodic textures. This period saw a sea change in the *sound* of modernist music: an emphasis on timbre that came at the direct expense of melodic textures.[34] This is equally true in compositions that involve the voice and those that don't. A central implication of Cone's argument is that music lacking in melody also lacks a subject, indeed lacks humanity itself. *The Composer's Voice* serves as a critique, however veiled, of contemporary practices of the voice. And yet, Cone's fears that the musical subject might disappear altogether in modernist music have not come to pass; the work and thought of postwar musical modernism remains flooded with "voices"—but voices of a different kind. The following section will further explore the connection between voice, melody and subjectivity.

The Vocal Imaginary

> Singing trumpets, compared to the kind that are simply blown, are now truly dominant.
> -Ernst Bloch[35]

Disillusioned with the deterministic nature of Marxism, philosopher Cornelius Castoriadis looked for a way to account for the agentive role of imagination in the formation of a society. Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar summarizes the project of Castoriadis' *The Imaginary Institution of Society*[36] as defining a social imaginary as "an enabling but not fully explicable

[34] Although a few scholars have made note of this change in passing, they contend only with pieces that actually involve the voice and leave the issue of root causes unaddressed. See Istvan Anhalt, *Alternative Voices: Essays on Contemporary Vocal and Choral Composition* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984); James Wishart, "'Breaking Up is Hard to Do': Issues of Coherence and Fragmentation in Post-1950 Vocal Music," in *Words and Music*, ed. John Williamson, 2005.
[35] Ernst Bloch, "Magic Rattle, Human Harp," in *Essays on the Philosophy of Music*, trans. Peter Palmer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 295.
[36] Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987).

symbolic matrix within which a people imagine and act as world-making collective agents."[37] For Castoriadis, imaginaries structure meaning and thus structure a political environment. These social imaginaries can take many forms; one important example is nationhood, which creates sense of 'we' that itself constructs meaning. According to Gaonkar, for Castoriadis "each society derives its unity and identity by representing itself in symbols, myths, legends, and other collectively shared significations."[38] In what follows, I would like to suggest that a shared notion of how 'voice' operates in music has become one such imaginary, a construction that lends meaning to musical form.

In Western thought and language, "voice" is often used as a synecdoche for the existence of a subject. Following Derrida, Amanda Weidman identifies a common assumption that the voice is a "guarantor of truth and self-presence, from which springs the familiar idea that the voice expresses self and identity and that agency consists in having a voice."[39] Discussion of the voice in the long discourse of Western music is especially intriguing because of how deeply intertwined, and sometimes inseparable, the various metaphorical and literal uses of the term are. Cone attempts to disentangle some of these uses in *The Composer's Voice*: the actual singing voice, the "voice" of a character in texted music, the narrative "voice" of instrumental accompaniment, the authorial (and titular) "composer's voice," and the "virtual persona" that emerges when an instrumental melody stands in for a singing voice.

It is with the "virtual persona" that Cone makes his most exciting and most problematic interpretive leaps; he ties a song-like musical texture, be it vocal or instrumental, to the presence

[37] Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, "Toward New Imaginaries: An Introduction," *Public Culture* 14, no. 1 (December 21, 2002): 1.
[38] Ibid., 7.
[39] Amanda Weidman, "Anthropology and Voice," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 43, no. 1 (2014): 38. This is not universally true: there is no term equivalent to "voice" in the Chinese language, for instance. Self-presence is a term with a long philosophical lineage—its relation to voice and sound are explored in Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976); Jean-Luc Nancy, *Listening*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007).

of a subject. Cone sees melodic gesture as a product of a voice and thus synecdochical of a human subject—where a melody exists, so must a voice; where a voice exists, so must a subject. Thus singing, voice, melody, and subjectivity are bound into a tight and mutually dependent network of concepts—the presence of one brings forth the others. The intermediary term of singing becomes a necessary link: a *melody* is something that one *sings* with one's *voice*.

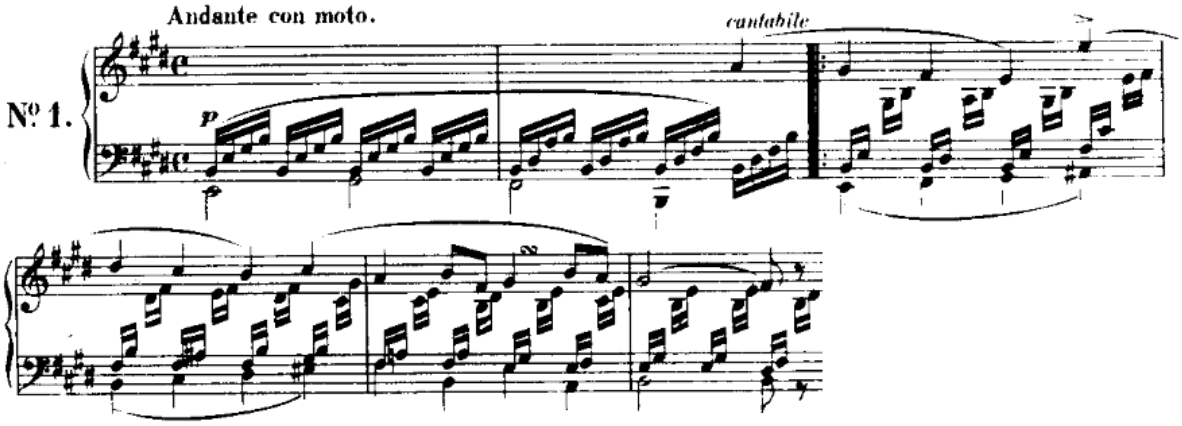
As I mentioned above, Cone's work rehearses one of classical music's enduring origin myths, that of Rousseau's 'passional song'. For Rousseau, music, poetry and speech all share an origin in the voice.[40] Both musical and vocal utterance arose from the passions, and it is this imitation of the passional voice that distinguishes music as a fine art and not a natural science.[41] As in Cone's formulation, Rousseau sees melody as evoking both voice and human subject. More recent theorists of melody also often make mention of melody's vocal basis.[42]

Some definitions are in order: what, exactly, is a melody? And what do I mean by subjectivity? The former term remains under-theorized in Cone's work, and in any case, any definition of melody is necessarily heuristic and incomplete. There are, however, certain qualities that a melody reliably possesses within Western music, which allow it to be defined and located within a musical work: a relatively pure tone, a gradually changing contour devoid of leaps much larger than an octave, a range limited to typical vocal range (roughly centered within the bass and treble clefs), phrases that last less than the length of a breath, gradually changing

---

[40] Rousseau, *Essay on the Origin of Languages and Writings Related to Music*, 7:318.
[41] Ibid., 7:321.
[42] Harold Powers claims that "Insofar as melody is concerned with coherent successions of pitch, it is ultimately vocal—directly or in indirect instrumental extension;" Gino Stafani, that "What everybody sings or whistles is, without doubt, melody;" Philip Tagg, that melody is "easy to recognize, appropriate and to reproduce vocally." Harold S. Powers, "Melody [fr. Lat. Melodia, Fr. Gr. Meloidia, Fr. M... - Credo Reference," *Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), http://search.credoreference.com.proxy.uchicago.edu/content/entry/harvdictmusic/melody_fr_lat_melodia_fr_gr_meloidia_fr_melos/0?searchId=7c6c20d5-7900-11e5-b548-0e37d1c87205&result=1; Gino Stefani, "Melody: A Popular Perspective," *Popular Music* 6 (1987): 23; Philip Tagg, *Everyday Tonality: Towards a Tonal Theory of What Most People Hear* (New York: Mass Media Scholars' Press, 2009), 57.

rather than terraced dynamics, varied rhythms slow enough for a voice to capture, and generally smooth articulation.[43] These markers allow us to recognize the melody—and the song—in Mendelssohn's *Songs without Words* (1829-1845), which are also songs without voices. **Example 1-1** shows the short introduction and first phrase of Op. 19, No. 1:



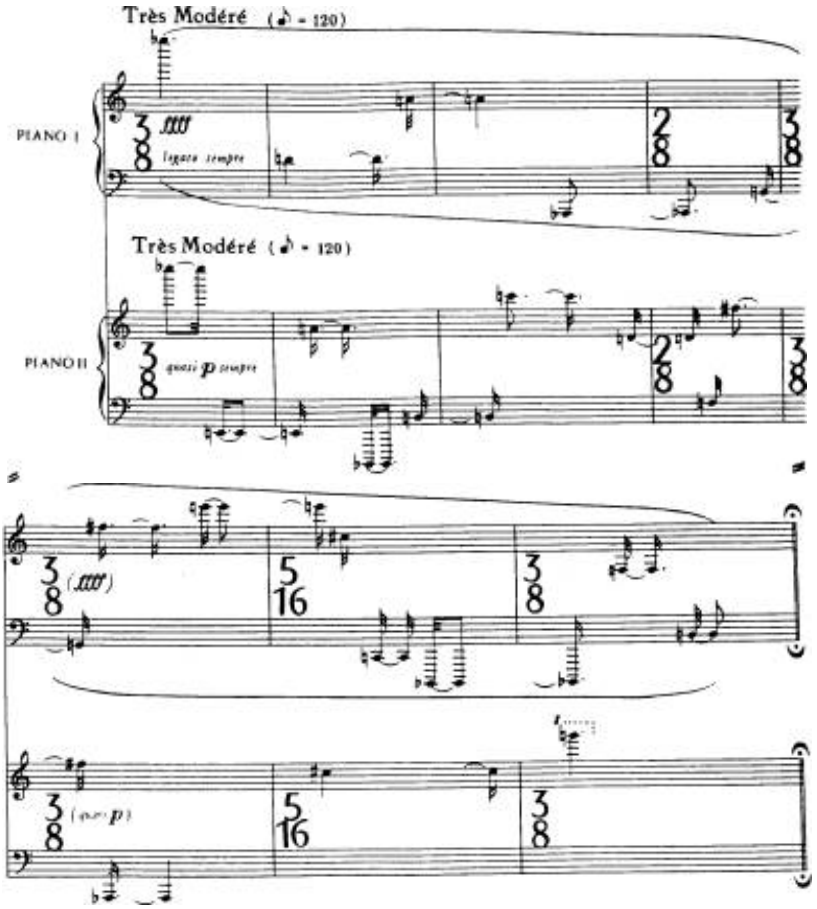
Example 1-1: Felix Mendelssohn, *Lieder ohne Worte*, Op. 19, No. 1

The melody in this excerpt is difficult to mistake—all of the markers listed above serve to distinguish it from its accompaniment: the *cantabile* marking over the melody asks the performer to articulate smoothly and clearly (literally to sing); the contour enacts a gradual fall/sudden leap pattern several times; the range is well within a soprano register; the phrase can be comfortably sung in a breath; "walking" quarter notes are interspersed with occasional longer and shorter rhythms with the accented fourth beats also adding rhythmic interest; and finally, Mendelssohn doesn't write in dynamics, but there are phrase markings over the sub-phrases that suggest them—in nineteenth-century practice, the dynamic swells implied by the melodic line were too self-evident to bother notating.

[43] These guidelines are consistent with those of two authors who have attempted to define melody as a stable entity: see Tagg, *Everyday Tonality: Towards a Tonal Theory of What Most People Hear*, 57–58; Stefani, "Melody: A Popular Perspective," 24–28.

For the sake of comparison, I turn to an example from the heyday of serialism. Pierre Boulez's *Structures,* Book 1a (1951-52), is a piece (in)famous for its "total serial" structure—David Metzer calls it the "bogeyman of 1950s serialism."[44] What is so radical about the piece, and what probably contributed more than any other feature to its infamy, is how it actively discourages the kind of melodic hearing and performance that is so foundational to *Lieder ohne Worte*. It does so in a discursive as well as auditory way: even its title echoes the emphasis on structure, rather than utterance, found in the thought of Rameau and Stockhausen. In **Example 1-2**, a cantabile marking is nowhere to be found, and the contour, rhythm and dynamics are all so jagged that they obliterate any traditional sense of phrasing or continuity and furthermore make it impossible to distinguish melody from accompaniment. This is a piece made for fingers, not for vocal cords either real or imagined; it's as difficult to imagine a voice or voices performing any part of this piece as it is easy to imagine a voice singing Mendelssohn's melody.

[44] David Metzer, *Musical Modernism at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 19. Catherine Losada shows how some of Boulez's most complex and abstract-seeming techniques are in the service of practical musical control and large-scale form in C. Catherine Losada, "Complex Multiplication, Structure, and Process: Harmony and Form in Boulez's Structures II," *Music Theory Spectrum* 36, no. 1 (June 2014): 86. Ben Parsons shows that the early reception of *Structures 1A* was based more on the catastrophic sound of the piece than its formalist design(s) in Ben Parsons, "Sets and the City: Serial Analysis, Parisian Reception, and Pierre Boulez's Structures 1a," *Current Musicology*, Fall 2003, 53–79.



Example 1-2: Boulez, *Structures 1A*, opening

These examples are deliberately unambiguous; the works we will encounter in the following pages are far less so. In fact, in the next section I suggest that modernist composers actively reject traditional modes of representing vocality, even as vocality itself remains essential to their aesthetics. This dissertation explores voices that don't sing; instruments that do; singing that comes from a speaking voice; melody that comes from a mass texture; singing, melody, and voice that are obstructed in a stunning variety of ways. One interesting corollary of the discussion that ensues is the idea that Boulez's *Structures 1A* has as much to do with voice as does the Mendelssohn, although here voice acts as a silent partner, a negative factor. In any case, it will be helpful to keep in mind that in the Western aesthetic tradition, both a melody (even in altered form) and a literal voice can serve the same function of signaling the presence of a

musical subject. As we tour through these different manifestations of voice and the different meanings they bear, it will also be useful at times to keep Mendelssohn's simple phrase as a point of orientation for the former.

Jacqueline Waeber shows how for Rousseau, the characteristics that define melody embody an idea of cohesive solidity that is essential to his connection between melody and subjectivity. Rousseau championed *unité de mélodie*—"a simple musical principle, that the melody should be one and that it should have primacy over all other musical parameters."[45] His insistence on the dominance of melody has everything to do with how he thinks of subjectivity:

> For a Music to become interesting, for it to convey to the soul the feelings it is intended to excite, all the parts must concur to fortify the expression of the subject; the harmony must serve only to make it more energetic; the accompaniment must embellish it without covering or disfiguring it; the bass must, by a uniform and simple progression, somehow guide the person who sings and the one who listens, without either of them perceiving it.[46]

This particular passage refers to vocal music, but it holds true for instrumental music as well: as Waeber points out, "for Rousseau, even instrumental melody—as a melody—conveys the remnant of its linguistic sub-stratum."[47] In both vocal and instrumental writing, a single and coherent melody is the only way to express a single and coherent subject. Rameau would be the first to point out melody is not in and of itself unified, and that listening for melody thus involves an act of simplification. After all, the wonder of the *corps sonore* is that the entire harmonic series is contained in a single tone! But it's an important simplification, and one that most Western listeners enact automatically.

---

[45] Jacqueline Waeber, "Jean-Jacques Rousseau's 'Unité de Mélodie,'" *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 62, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 81.
[46] Rousseau, *Essay on the Origin of Languages and Writings Related to Music*, 7:154–55. Cited and translated in Waeber, "Jean-Jacques Rousseau's 'Unité de Mélodie,'" 82.
[47] Waeber, "Jean-Jacques Rousseau's 'Unité de Mélodie,'" 109.

In his discussion of different conceptualizations of human subjectivity, Nick Mansfield describes a particularly Rousseauian subject, one that is "autonomous and free…authentic and naturally occurring…the thinking, feeling, agent making its way through the world, giving expression to its emotions and fulfillment to its talents and energies."[48] This is the subjectivity evoked by melody and voice for Rousseau, but for the composers in this dissertation, subjectivity is often less straightforward. Rather than carrying a Rousseauian model of subjectivity forward into an era when it has been undermined by competing models proffered by Freud, Lacan, Foucault, Deleuze, and others, it will be more helpful to turn to recent theory of voice to understand how human musical presence is figured differently for each of these composers.

A number of philosophers of voice have explored the possibilities and problems that accompany the close relationship between voice and body. Perhaps the best-known is Roland Barthes, who defined the "grain" of the voice as "the body in the singing voice, in the writing hand, in the performing limb;"[49] Barthes' association between a voice and body is untroubled by a Derridean critique of the relationship between voice and presence. Other authors examine situations where the relationship between voice and body is less straightforward. Brian Kane, following Michel Chion, looks at the phenomena of acousmatic voices and argues that concealing the source and cause of a sound reifies it into a sonic object.[50] Perhaps the most explicit theorization of the relationship between voice and body comes from Steven Connor in his playful history of the broadly conceived act of ventriloquism. In *Dumbstruck*, Connor

[48] Nick Mansfield, *Subjectivity: Theories of the Self from Freud to Haraway* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 51.
[49] Roland Barthes, "The Grain of the Voice," in *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 276.
[50] Brian Kane, *Sound Unseen: Acousmatic Sound in Theory and Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); Brian Kane, "Eight Theses on Sound and Transcendence," *Non-Cochlear Sound*, 2010, http://noncochlearsound.com/?page_id=202; Michel Chion, *The Voice in Cinema*, trans. Claudia Gorbman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

describes how when a voice is present, one automatically looks for its source. But Connor also turns the causal relationship around with the notion of a vocalic body:

> The principle of the vocalic body is simple. Voices are produced by bodies: but can also themselves produce bodies. The vocalic body is the idea—which can take the form of dream, fantasy, ideal, theological doctrine, or hallucination—of a surrogate or secondary body, a projection of a new way of having or being a body, formed and sustained out of the autonomous operations of the voice.[51]

Connor's vocalic body is not necessarily the housing for a stable Rousseauian subjectivity; it is rather "a body-in-invention, an impossible, imaginary body in the course of being found and formed."[52] As a product of the imagination, vocalic bodies can be super- or subhuman, earthy or ethereal, powerful or inert, enchanting or grotesque. Carolyn Abbate prefigures Connor in her discussion of different kinds of musical voices, including those that are ephemeral and even those that lie: she challenges what is generally "taken as the moral authority of the musical voice"—another idea inherited from Rousseau.[53] Vocalic bodies can also be highly underdetermined, mimetic presences devoid of specific features but nonetheless indisputably human. Connor's first example of a vocalic body lies in how a ventriloquist's voice seems to animate the inanimate object of his dummy. The dummy's body in this case is visual and tangible. But the kinds of bodies made through music, by both singers and melodies, are far less concrete. They are ephemeral and in some sense ethereal, and they animate music, which was never quite inanimate to begin with.

To combine the parts of Rousseau's theories that still hold and the parts of Connor's that shed light on Rameau, then, is to say that melody is as capable of forming a vocalic body as is

---

[51] Steven Connor, *Dumbstruck: A Cultural History of Ventriloquism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 35.
[52] Ibid., 36. In her dissertation, Jelena Novak uses Connor's idea of a vocalic body in order to shed light on recent operatic practices that seem to dissociate singer and body. See Jelena Novak, "Singing Corporeality: Reinventing the Vocalic Body in Postopera" (University of Amsterdam, 2012).
[53] Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 19.

the voice itself. It does so by presenting certain aspects of the voice, above all its perceived unity and cohesiveness. Again and again in the following pages, composers, critics, and performers alike link voice, melody, and singing to the presence of a subject—a vocalic body—sometimes in passing, sometimes in the service of a critical project, sometimes in a careful and rigorous way. And as we shall see, the bodies each composer presents are vastly different. Nonetheless, it is this connection, the ability for melody to stand in for voice, and the ability of voice to stand in for a human 'body,' that I would like to call the **vocal imaginary** of Western classical music.

It's important to note that the vocalic bodies produced by melody, voice, and singing in this dissertation do not bear a direct relationship with the bodies of the composers. They are rather bodies that composers have invented: imaginary, fantastical bodies that fulfill some kind of desire. But what kind of desire? Another way of asking this question is, what is the relationship between the composing subjects in this dissertation and the musical subjects they produce? Edward Cone struggled with the relationship between a composer and her musical subjectivities in the *Composer's Voice* and afterward,[54] at times theorizing them as fairly distinct and at times collapsing them into a monolithic and all-encompassing "composer's voice."[55] Although in many ways Abbate's *Unsung Voices* is a direct descendant of Cone's, she dismisses the idea of a unifying composerly subjectivity outright: "what I mean by 'voices' are potentially multiple musical voices that inhabit a work—not the creative efforts of the historical author, or even the utterance of a virtual author."[56]

---

[54] Cone uses male pronouns in *The Composer's Voice* whenever he describes the act of composition, and although this was standard grammatical practice at the time, his gendered view of composition certainly affects his analysis in ways both subtle and overt. This is fodder for a separate project on gendering composition, but for now, I've simply chosen not to follow suit.

[55] A collection of responses to Cone published more than a decade later show that the relationship between composer and musical subject is by no means resolved for even Cone's most sympathetic readers. See Fred Everett Maus et al., "Edward T. Cone's 'The Composer's Voice': Elaborations and Departures," *College Music Symposium* 29 (1989): 1–80.

[56] Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, x.

Abbate is more in alignment with the composers in this dissertation, who all claim a human presence behind their music but also make no move to link that presence to their own subjectivity. Composition itself, then, is not a vocal act—the composers do not speak through their music, and their music does not 'envoice' the vocalic body of the composers in any direct way. The vocalic bodies in their music are, rather, brought about through an act of mimeticism. The status and definition of mimesis has been highly contested since at least the classical era; Plato articulates a new conception of art as representational, or imitative, which raises important questions about the value of art. In book ten of *The Republic*, he famously describes three kinds of couches: the first is the idea of a couch and made by a god, the second is a material version of the god's couch and made by a craftsman, and the third is an imitation of the craftsman's couch painted by an artist. Art is thus a poor echo, "twice removed" from the god's couch, similar only in appearance.[57] Unlike Plato, Aristotle believes that art operates independently from reality. This distance is what allows people to learn and achieve catharsis from drama, for instance. As Matthew Potolsky summarizes, "the fictional distance inherent in mimesis allows a glimpse into the universal qualities of human life that are revealed by particular actions and characteristics…the material form for mimesis is part of what makes it both enjoyable and potentially educational."[58] I suggest that the kind of mimesis to which these composers aspire is more Aristotelian: they see their music as evoking a human subjectivity that is universal rather than particular. Sciarrino articulates this separation between himself and his musical subjects perhaps the most clearly:

> In Western culture, artistic language is supposed to express the artist's subjectivity. He says: 'This is what I feel, and I pass these feelings on to you.' But I see it differently. I do not say: 'These are my sounds,' but rather: 'These are

[57] For a brief and accessible introduction to Plato's notion of mimesis, see Matthew Potolsky, *Mimesis*, The New Critical Idiom (New York: Routledge, 2006), 15–31.
[58] Ibid., 37.

> sounds I find exciting. And you, what happens with you?' My sounds are not simply sounds but rather signals. They are signals of communication between people; they refer to the environment, to human activity, to day and even more to night—to reality in general.[59]

Sciarrino's sounds are *signals* of communication rather than the communication itself. The feelings are not "passed on" from composing subject to listening subject; rather, the listening subject bears witness to the fact that feelings are present. In this sense his sounds are deictic, pointing gestures that communicate a *that* rather than a *what*—we know *that* a subject vocalizes, but not *what* it says. An illuminating parallel arises between this model of musical communication and what Mladen Dolar describes as the relationship between voice and meaning:

> What singles out the voice against the vast ocean of sounds and noises, what defines the voice as special among the infinite array of acoustic phenomena is its inner relationship with meaning. The voice is something which points toward meaning, there is like an arrow in it which raises the expectation of meaning, the voice is an opening towards meaning. No doubt one can ascribe meaning to all kinds of sounds, yet they seem to be deprived of it "in themselves," while the voice has an intimate connection with meaning, it is a sound which seems endowed in itself with the will to "say something," with an inner intentionality.[60]

For Dolar, voice points to meaning, and further to a "will" behind this meaning. For Sciarrino, his own music similarly points to "human activity." Sciarrino's sounds point to communication without necessarily communicating, and according to Dolar, the presence of voice can play the same deictic role. This characteristic is what makes it possible to distinguish sound from noise, meaning from insignificance, human from inhuman, and it also allows these composers to think of their music as containing subjectivity that is not their own.

[59] Neue Vocalsolisten Stuttgart, *12 madrigali*. Liner notes, pg. 22.

[60] Mladen Dolar, "Six Lessons on Voice and Meaning," in *Voice & Void*, ed. Thomas Trummer (Ridgefield, Conn.: Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, 2008), 31. Michel Chion makes a similar argument for "voco-centrism" in Chion, *The Voice in Cinema*, 5–6.

Jacqueline Waeber points out that to Rousseau, "to be deprived of any melodic quality is…assimilated to death."[61] Rousseau wears his aesthetic politics on his sleeve; Cone less so. But for both of them, the vocality of music is what lends it its fundamentally mimetic nature. Melody and its vehicle, the voice, are what transform music from a cold and calculated science to a warm and breathing art. And this judgment resonates with the Darmstadt polemics at the time as well as contemporary works of criticism like Henry Pleasant's *The Agony of Modern Music* (1955). Pleasants sees little hope for classical music in the twentieth century. Beginning from the premise that "modern music is not modern and is rarely music,"[62] he rehearses the terms of Rousseau and Rameau's polemics in his claim that "[the serious composer today] is the melodically anemic heir of generations of composers whose melodic invention was inhibited by the implicit primacy of harmonic considerations."[63] He describes Wagner's melodic predilection, on the other hand, as "an effort to get back to human beings, to the naked drama of human life, and in the concert hall as an effort to get back to a more musical music, uninflated by descriptive and philosophical implications."[64] The book is poorly argued[65] and unpleasant in tone, at turns melancholic and shrill, but it is an example of how a conservative musical critic can deploy the vocal imaginary to make ethical arguments about the aesthetic decision of whether to write a melody and/or use a voice.

When I began this project, I expected to find that modernist composers ascribed to the structuralist call for autonomous music as exemplified by Boulez and Stockhausen in the 1950s; I expected them to say that being human was no longer a concern. But as I excavated statement

[61] Waeber, "Jean-Jacques Rousseau's 'Unité de Mélodie,'" 114.
[62] Henry Pleasants, *The Agony of Modern Music* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1955). It is in response to this work that the title of Arved Ashby's *The Pleasure of Modernist Music* was chosen.
[63] Ibid., 111.
[64] Ibid., 115.
[65] For instance, Pleasants argues that jazz practices are more relevant than classical because they don't focus on harmony—it's difficult to justify an argument that rests on the premise that jazz practice as a whole is not deeply shaped by harmonic concerns.

after statement that affirmed the importance of human presence in music, I began to see that it is not that these composers try to disengage from the voice; their discussion of music is flooded with voice and melody, as their music itself, after a fashion. It is more that they are experiencing a crisis of voice and vocality. They all seek the human through voice and/or melody, although they also all reject its traditional musical form of Mendelssohn-like melodies (either sung or performed instrumentally). They worry about voice and melody constantly: how to use it, when, where, in what form? One way to talk about this fraught relationship with the voice is to talk about modernism, and specifically a modernist reception of the vocal imaginary.

Post-serial modernism

> Since its birth, music is connected to a need to express a certain subjectivity by an insurmountable convention. It stands in the way of the external world's raw sonority just as a sensitive soul stands in the way of the universe's insensitivity.
> -Milan Kundera[66]

In *Metaphysical Song*, Gary Tomlinson borrows terms from Kant in order to articulate a modernist crisis around the voice. Kant posited that there are *a priori* aspects to a soul that help it make sense of sensory experience: notions such as time and space that fundamentally frame and condition our understanding of the world around us. He called these categories *phenomena*. Phenomena are what enable us to approach *noumena*, or objects in the world as they exist outside of our subjective understanding. Noumena thus exist only as an outer limit, something that we seek but can access only partially and imperfectly through phenomena. In Chapter 2, I will elaborate on the historical relationship between music, voice and noumenon. For now,

[66] Milan Kundera, "Postface: Total Rejection of Inheritance Or, Who Is Iannis Xenakis?," in *Performing Xenakis*, ed. Sharon E. Kanach, vol. 2, Iannis Xenakis Series (Hillsdale, New York: Pendragon Press, 2010), 373.

suffice to say that since the time of Kant, music—and especially voice and melody—has been lauded for its supposed ability to reach beyond the phenomenal and toward the noumenal. This is captured in Mendelssohn's famous remark that

> People often complain that music is too ambiguous…with me it is exactly the reverse…the thoughts which are expressed to me by music that I love are not too indefinite to be put into words, but on the contrary, too definite…if you ask me what I was thinking of when I wrote [the *Songs without Words*], I would have to say: Just the song as it stands…only the song can say the same thing, can arouse the same feelings in one person as in another, a feeling which is not expressed, however, by the same words.[67]

This association between voice and noumenon is especially evident in Lacanian approaches to the voice; Tomlinson accounts for the Lacanian designation of voice as *objet a*, an impossible object of desire, as simply "another figuration of Kant's noumenon."[68] Michel Poizat's *The Angel's Cry* is a passionate instantiation of this tendency to associate the voice with the seductively "beyond." For Poizat it is precisely in the moment when the singing voice "destroys" speech, where language is "superseded by the cry,"[69] when the voice effects *jouissance* through the devastation of the symbolic order and the resulting glimpse of something beyond it—something noumenal. Mladen Dolar's *A Voice and Nothing More* is the most comprehensive attempt to expand and articulate a Lacanian notion of the voice to date. In this monograph as well as his close reading of Kafka's short story "The Burrow,"[70] Dolar develops what he calls a "third level" of voice that operates independently from "the voice as the vehicle of meaning [and] the voice as the source of aesthetic admiration:" "an object voice which does not go up in smoke in the conveyance of meaning, and does not solidify in an object of fetish

[67] Cited and translated in R. Larry Todd, *Nineteenth-Century Piano Music* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 193.
[68] Gary Tomlinson, *Metaphysical Song: An Essay on Opera* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), 85. For a lucid and concise summary of the voice in Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalytic traditions, see Alice Lagaay, "Between Sound and Silence: Voice in the History of Psychoanalysis," *Episteme* 1, no. 1 (2008): 53–62.
[69] Michel Poizat, *The Angel's Cry: Beyond the Pleasure Principle in Opera*, trans. Arthur Denner (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 37.
[70] Mladen Dolar, "The Burrow of Sound," *Differences* 22, no. 2–3 (January 1, 2011): 112–39.

reverence, but an object which functions as a blind spot in the call and as a disturbance of aesthetic appreciation."[71] The operatic voice, he says, highlights this third level by reversing the hierarchy to "let the voice take the upper hand, let the voice be the bearer of what cannot be expressed by words," while still needing language it order to "reveal its beyond."[72]

As Tomlinson sees it, the problem modernist composers face is that this reach for the noumenon through the voice has been captured in a representational system—that one evokes the idea of the noumenon only through the phenomenon. In other words, the practices by which composers illustrate the reach for the noumenal have themselves been brought into a phenomenal system of representation. Tomlinson argues that modernist composers seem "unable to materialize noumenal magic without relying on forces that, all told, falsify material presence."[73] This contributes to the "taint of bad faith that surrounds the conservative Puccini": his music still trades on "climactic, overwhelming moments of vocal force…[that] harken back to an era when the noumenal cry seemed plausible."[74] Tomlinson's conclusion is gloomy: "for the first time in long epochs of operatic song, doubt arises whether the voice can sustain metaphysics anymore at all."[75] But the composers in this dissertation don't share this pessimism, this doubt that music can no longer reach for the noumenal through the voice. On the contrary, they see it as perhaps the best vehicle to do so—but only when approached in the correct way.

Much of the recent voice scholarship productively elucidates the very contingency mourned by Tomlinson's modernists. In her 2014 review on literature surrounding the voice, Weidman advocates the analytical category of "ideologies of voice," where the voice is thought of as a culturally constructed category that dictates

[71] Mladen Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2006), 4.
[72] Ibid., 30.
[73] Tomlinson, *Metaphysical Song*, 147.
[74] Ibid., 149.
[75] Ibid., 156.

> theories of the relationship between vocal quality and character, gender, or other social categories; where the voice comes from; its status in relation to writing and recorded sound; the relationship between the voice and the body; what constitutes a "natural" voice; and who should be allowed to speak and how.[76]

In contrast to the psychoanalytic approach to voice, which tends to generate timeless absolutes, a large and growing number of authors, including Tomlinson, have sought to deconstruct the idea of the voice as natural and show its historicity. Jacqueline Waeber, for instance, situates Rousseau's "*unité de mélodie*" within pervasive "notions of unity and simplicity in music that were well established in eighteenth-century France";[77] Lydia Goehr follows Rousseau's ideas through their nineteenth-century reception and revival by Wagner in particular and shows how this plays out in the context of debates about musical autonomy;[78] Nina Eidsheim directly challenges the Rousseauian assumption "that vocal timbre is an unmediated reality of the body"[79] and shows how voice is performed and received as gendered and racialized. The foregoing are all concerned with Western notions of voice, and especially illuminating are recent anthropological approaches to non-Western ideologies of voice, including Tomlinson's *The Singing of the New World*,[80] Nicholas Harkness' *Songs of Seoul*,[81] and many others that are gathered in Weidman's impressive bibliography.[82]

I have no stake in a claim that the voice can act as a vehicle of the noumenon in any objective or non-historical sense. But I think the composers in this dissertation do have such a stake, and make such claims, and I take them seriously as a means of understanding their music.

---

[76] Weidman, "Anthropology and Voice," 45.
[77] Waeber, "Jean-Jacques Rousseau's 'Unité de Mélodie,'" 89.
[78] Lydia Goehr, "The Quest for Voice," in *The Quest for Voice: On Music, Politics, and the Limits of Philosophy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 88–131.
[79] Nina Sun Eidsheim, "Voice as a Technology of Selfhood: Towards an Analysis of Racialized Timbre and Vocal Performance" (Doctor of Philosophy in Music, University of California, San Diego, 2008), 1.
[80] Gary Tomlinson, *The Singing of the New World: Indigenous Voice in the Era of European Contact*, New Perspectives in Music History and Criticism (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
[81] Nicholas Harkness, *Songs of Seoul: An Ethnography of Voice and Voicing in Christian South Korea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014).
[82] Weidman, "Anthropology and Voice," 47–51.

Indeed, I would argue that understanding the "vocal imaginary" outlined above and its ability to engender presence and a noumenal reach greatly enriches an understanding of modernist music. In so doing, I take a stance that Steven Connor calls "abjured avowal," which acknowledges the power of commonplace musical conceptions of the voice while also remaining fundamentally skeptical about their claims to truth and reality.[83] All of the composers in this dissertation are dealing with the paradox of the vocal noumenon, or a conviction that it is inadequate to signal a reach for the unknown through gestures that are at best part of an established contract with their listeners and at worst hackneyed and deceptive. They all take on the voice *qua* noumenon as a problem in which they have a strong ethical stake, and see vocality as foundational to their compositional aesthetics. Their belief in the vocal imaginary, or music's ability to become in some way human through voice and melody, is thus complicated by the conviction that in order to be truly human, music must reject the vocal imaginary as it currently sounds and signifies in classical music. To this point, I have been referring to all of these composers as modernists. It is now that I would like to consider the work that designation can do in illuminating a set of shared vocal ethics that nonetheless manifest in a remarkable variety of ways. There are two definitions of modernism that help determine the scope of this dissertation: the first speculative and abstract, the second historical and largely heuristic.

Defining modernism (1)

In this definition, I'd like to focus on modernism's ethical mandates: what, and wherefore? Many theoreticians of musical modernism, most notably Daniel Albright and Richard Taruskin, identify it by technical and stylistic innovation; Albright summarizes it as "*a testing of*

[83] Steven Connor, *Beyond Words: Sobs, Hums, Stutters and Other Vocalizations* (London: Reaktion Books, 2014), 14. Castoriadis identifies two kinds of societies: in a heteronomous society, imaginaries are fixed, whereas in an autonomous society, they are open to change and reappropriation. See Gaonkar, "Toward New Imaginaries," 8–9.

the limits of aesthetic construction,"[84] and Taruskin, less generously, accuses early modernists of "representing art as divorced from the social world, subject only to internally motivated stylistic change."[85] In this account, often found in textbooks, modernism is defined by its methods: most often a break with tonality and pulse.[86] First of all, this description fails to account for the break with melody with which this dissertation is concerned. Second, it gives a rather pallid view of the ethics driving modernist composition, even as it might describe well the result of those ethics. A few scholars working from a techno-centric definition of modernism have attempted narratives of the voice in new music that focus on novel compositional techniques (often these accounts begin with Schoenberg's *Sprechstimme*). Istvan Anhalt, for instance, gives a kind of taxonomy of extended vocal techniques, including marginal sounds such as coughing, strange text-setting, and the blending of voice and electronics.[87] James Wishart creates another technocentric account, pursuing text-setting in particular.[88]

While these narratives certainly capture important aspects of modernist music, Anhalt and Wishart leave the question of "wherefore" largely unanswered. In Ben Earle's clever formulation, "surely modernism amounts to more than keeping up with the latest technical developments. Better: technical developments amount to more than novelty."[89] I find that a definition of modernism that locates it within the ethics of composition rather than its products or processes, that sees it as a practice rather than a product, yields a richer and more historically

[84] Daniel Albright, *Modernism and Music: An Anthology of Sources* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 11. Emphasis his.
[85] Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, vol. 4: The Early Twentieth Century (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 4.
[86] Christopher Williams takes issue with techno-essential historiography in his review of Robert Morgan's twentieth-century music textbook in Christopher Williams, "Of Canons & Context: Toward a Historiography of Twentieth-Century Music," *Repercussions* 2, no. 1 (1993): 31–74.
[87] Anhalt, *Alternative Voices*, 3–21.
[88] Wishart, "Breaking Up is Hard to Do."
[89] Ben Earle, *Luigi Dallapiccola and Musical Modernism in Fascist Italy*, Music since 1900 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 15.

grounded means of musical analysis. Jonathan Flatley's work on the melancholic motivation of modernism is a particularly rewarding framework through which to understand the works discussed in this dissertation.

Following Walter Benjamin, Flatley defines modernism as a melancholic response to modernity. Modernity, with its advent of "urbanization, industrialization, colonialization and imperialism, modern warfare, the invention of 'race,' the advent of the modern commodity and mass culture, the emergence of modern discourses of gender and sexuality, and the pathologization of homosexuality,"[90] constitutes a "loss that cannot be mourned."[91] Melancholy happens as a result of this inability to mourn, in moments where the political becomes personal, and is experienced as a shared reaction to the shared phenomenon of modernity. But the melancholy that begets modernism is not of the depressive and paralyzing kind—rather, it serves as "a way to be interested in the world,"[92] and also a way to process the experience of modernity through what Flatley calls an "affective mapping."

An affective mapping is a way of transforming a political problem "that may have been previously invisible, opaque, difficult, abstract, and above all depressing…into one that is interesting, that solicits and rewards one's attention."[93] It makes the problem legible, first and foremost to the person creating the map. A necessary step in affective mapping is self-estrangement: "[m]y own emotional life must appear unfamiliar, not-mine, at least for a moment, if I am to see its relation to a historical context."[94] And alienation is certainly a recurring feature in commentary on musical modernism, seen not least in Adorno's oft-pronounced edict that

[90] Jonathan Flatley, *Affective Mapping: Melancholia and the Politics of Modernism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 3–4.
[91] Ibid., 9.
[92] Ibid., 2.
[93] Ibid., 4.
[94] Ibid., 6.

music should make a listener feel keenly the imperfection of her world: "the dissonances that frighten [an audience] speak of their own situation."[95] Nicholas Reyland also uses a definition of modernism that emphasizes "alienation, memory and mourning" in order to argue for Lutosławski's inclusion in the modernist canon.[96]

There are two conditions of modernity that seem to be particularly addressed and mapped by the continual renegotiation of the voice evinced by modernist composers. First is the advent of capitalism, of mass production, of commodity culture. Sciarrino, Reich, Xenakis, and Lachenmann all see the voice as a manifestation of singularity and resist its induction into any kind of ordering system. Second is the scientism and rationality of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and resulting demystification. For all of them, the voice remains a stronghold of mystery, of that-which-cannot-be-known in the midst of a world whose genome is increasingly fathomed. The very thing that is undertaken in a modernist affective mapping of the voice, then, is the voice's resistance to mapping.

That brings the story back to Tomlinson's modernist crisis of the voice: it has been caught up in a representational system where it becomes standardized and known, and one must alienate oneself from the voice in order to understand and ultimately transcend this situation. Entities like the voice that have the status of naturalness or inevitability must be questioned, revealed as constructed. Only then can the kind of productive melancholia Flatley describes take place, as the voice is refigured as singular and mysterious once again. Adorno often discusses this kind of musical affective mapping; it receives special attention in his late essay "*Vers une*

[95] Theodor W. Adorno, *Philosophy of New Music*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 11.
[96] Nicholas W. Reyland, "The Spaces of Dream: Lutosławski's Modernist Heterotopias," *Twentieth-Century Music* 12, no. 1 (March 2015): 37–70. Theories of melancholic modernism have been most often used in work on Neoclassicism: see Tamara Levitz, *Modernist Mysteries: Perséphone* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Jonathan Cross, "Paradise Lost: Neoclassicism and the Melancholia of Modernism," in *Rethinking Musical Modernism*, ed. Dejan Despić and Melita Milin (Institute of Musicology, 2008), 55–64.

musique formelle." For Adorno, an informal music is an ideal, a moving target whose trajectory is set when a theory of music is "able to think beyond its own limitations, to reach further than the end of its nose."[97] It is an impetus toward disruption, toward chaos, toward the unknown: toward the noumenal. Although he doesn't touch on issues of voice or melody specifically in this essay, Adorno does meditate upon how subjectivity is conveyed in music. The old forms of expressing subjectivity inherited from Expressionism, he says, are now "irretrievably obsolete:"

> In the tradition of Western nominalism art had always imagined that it could locate its enduring core and substance in the subject. This subject now stands exposed as ephemeral. While it behaves as if it were the creator of the world, the ground of reality, it turns out to be what the English call a "fake," the mere trappings of someone who gives himself airs, sets himself up as something special, while scarcely retaining any reality at all…Impossible though it be to conceive of music, or indeed any art, as bereft of the element of subjectivity, it must nevertheless bid farewell to that subjectivity which is mirrored in expression and hence is always affirmative, a form of subjectivity which Expressionism inherited directly from neo-Romanticism. To that extent the situation is irreconcilable with the position of classical Expressionism in which expression and the individual were unproblematic features of music.[98]

For Adorno, the curtain has been pulled aside, revealing the mystical categories of musical subjectivity and expression to be technical, "fake," conventional—phenomenal. Melody and voice, those media through which "individuals" have so often found "expression" in music, must surely be affected by this revelation. I would suggest that the concept of *musique informelle* offers a kind of affective mapping, a way that Adorno and his followers process and make productive a melancholia about modernity. And it is this constant reassessment of the known, of *technē*, that distinguishes them from Wagner, who seems to truly believe that a prelapsarian voice can be reconstituted.

---

[97] Theodor W. Adorno, "*Vers une musique informelle*," in *Quasi una fantasia: Essays on Modern Music* (Verso, 1998), 272.
[98] Ibid., 280.

In his discussion of the concept, Max Paddison points to the same kind of alienation that Flatley described as necessary for affective mapping, describing *musique informelle* as "a multi-faceted concept that enables us to see things from different and unusual angles and in a new and unfamiliar light. In other words, it alienates or estranges our thinking about form."[99] David Metzer also identifies a moment where the immediacy of musical expression came under scrutiny. He claims, however, that since 1980 the need to be alienated from modes of musical expression has abated, and that composers since that time are more willing to unproblematically establish "a line of communication between the work and listener in which the clarity and force of the expressive gestures have the music strike the listener in immediate and absorbing ways."[100] The examples he gives, however, are anything but direct: he follows Alastair Williams in pointing out that Wolfgang Rihm and the other so-called "Neo-Romantics" do not so much borrow as construct the materials used to communicate inner experiences and, in remaking the materials, they critique both the materials and the promise of such types of communication."[101] Even the Neo-Romantics, then, must distance themselves from their materials before reconfiguring them in what they see as an expressively effective way.

Subjectivity, expression: these markers of humanity in music continue to play an important role in how modernists think about music. And the voice is the medium, literally the mouthpiece, of these abstract qualities of presence. A musical voice is singular, just like the body it stands in for, and yet, it is not necessarily attached to a particular human body. Instead, it creates a vocalic body that is itself changeable, ephemeral, and noumenal. The vocal imaginary thus survives this process of alienation, but emerges under different terms.

---

[99] Max Paddison, "Contemporary Music: Theory, Aesthetics, Critical Theory," in *Contemporary Music: Theoretical and Philosophical Perspectives*, ed. Irène Deliège and Max Paddison (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 8.
[100] Metzer, *Musical Modernism at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century*, 17.
[101] Ibid., 14.

In summary, I'd like to proffer a working definition of modernism as a melancholic response to modernity, and adapt Flatley's framework for thinking of how modernists work through this response. In the case of Sciarrino, Reich, Xenakis, and Lachenmann, there seems to be a four-step process: (1) a melancholic response to the commodification and demystification so central to the experience of modernity, (2) a response to that melancholia that involves affective mapping, or alienation from and analysis of these aspects of modernity, (3) the consideration of the voice as potentially resistant or disruptive to these aspects, but not achieving this potential as it is currently or formerly used in classical music (4) the proffering of a musical "solution" involving an alternative form of voice that does resist and disrupt commodification and demystification.

Defining modernism (2)

The above definition of modernism is relatively inclusive, and it makes for unusual bedfellows. One can certainly find artists in many mediums and traditions working through issues of modernity via the voice: the voice is repeatedly raised as a problem in the TV series *Glee*,[102] Björk made an album composed almost entirely of voice sounds,[103] the use of auto-tune has been hotly debated as well as used in subversive ways since its advent,[104] Demetrio Stratos began as a pop singer but dedicated much of his short life to exploring vocal possibilities in order to "wean [singers] off modes of expression which are enshrined in the institutions and culture of the ruling classes."[105] But for purposes that are largely heuristic, the scope of my study is further

[102] See Seth Kim-Cohen, "Sound Today (Is No Longer a Function of the Ear)," *Non-Cochlear Sound*, accessed May 5, 2012, http://noncochlearsound.com/?page_id=101.
[103] Björk, *Medúlla*, CD (USA: Warner Bros. Records, 2004).
[104] Melissa Etheridge, "Screw You, Auto-Tune," *Billboard* 126, no. 32 (October 4, 2014): 13–13.Craig Anderton, "Auto-Tune: The Controversy That Will Not Die," *Pro Sound News* 37, no. 2 (February 2015): 29–29.
[105] Cited in Gianmario Borio, "Music as Plea for Political Action: The Presence of Musicians in Italian Protest Movements around 1968," in *Music & Protest in 1968*, ed. Beate Kutschke and Barley Norton (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 45.

limited to a particular group of composers working in a particular tradition. Even here, the criteria above cut across some established genre lines: Steve Reich in particular is often associated with the happy heterogeneity of postminimalism, which, in some narratives (including Reich's own), serves as modernism's biggest threat. In Chapter 3 I argue that the partitions separating Reich from the rest of the composers in this dissertation, which are largely constructed by Reich himself, can serve to conceal an important strain of asceticism in his music.

In his introduction to the *Cambridge Companion to Modernism*, Michael Levenson points out that modernists are (somewhat counter-intuitively) herd animals; that "[t]he willingness to live out the risks of experiment…[is] characteristically nourished within small groups of mutually confirming artists, able to defend one another against neglect, incomprehension, or often biting critique."[106] In his book on modernism, he reinforced the idea that modernism could only exist "when singular disturbances—the spectacle of Wagner, the shock of Ibsen, the scandal of Charles Baudelaire—became connected to one another."[107] As the changing relationship between Nono and Stockhausen shows, these alliances tend to shift—first, they supported each other, and then they relied on other supporters in their battles against one another.[108] In any case, all of the composers in this dissertation are woven into the common discursive fabric of contemporary classical music, both by their own active participation within its discourse and through that discourse's reach into festival culture and academic institutions. Their music is performed by new music ensembles, featured in new music festivals, and marketed both by themselves and by these institutional structures as intervening in the history of classical music. My story begins at Darmstadt in the 1950s, and all of the composers I discuss contend in one

[106] Michael H. Levenson, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 6.
[107] Michael H. Levenson, *Modernism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 8.
[108] Similarly, Reich's continued engagement with more traditional modernists, even if only in terms of negative polemics, binds him to these composers and their discourses.

way or another with the boundaries of modernism policed by the participants of this famous and influential summer course.

Although the story of a modernist reception of the vocal imaginary exerts a strong pull backward, I have limited the scope of this dissertation to what I think of as "post-serial modernism." This label might be somewhat misleading, as some of the composers I address count serial techniques among the tools in their toolkits. In this way, it parallels the term "post-tonal," which refers to a moment when classical music opened itself up to non-tonal possibilities even as tonal music continued to flourish. The phrase "post-serial" refers not to the categorical rejection of serial techniques, but to the rejection of serialism as the *only* approach to music. In the post-serial phase, it was no longer taken for granted that integrated serial practices were capable of generating musical coherence through their rigor alone. Serialism failed to become tonality's all-encompassing and equally enduring replacement, and what resulted was a new kind of pluralism, where serial techniques co-existed with other ways of both constructing and evaluating modernist music.

By using the term "post-serial," I want to make reference to a particular moment in the 50s and 60s when a number of composers, especially those circulating around the Darmstadt summer festival, had reached a point of diminishing returns with serialism. The idea that it would replace tonality as a shared and systematic language, one that could be modified and developed for years to come, had run its course and in fact ran counter to the search for the noumenal that so many of them chose (and choose) to undertake. Even Steve Reich, who for many years now has said only unkind things about serialism, experimented with serial techniques during his student days at Julliard and Mills. Actually, the heyday of "total serialism" lasted only

a few years, which is strange to think about given its prominent place in the narrative of twentieth-century concert music.[109] But it did leave a void in its wake.[110]

The exchange between Nono and Stockhausen that opened this chapter took place during exactly this time of transition from a serial to post-serial aesthetic; in the mid-1950s, both were beginning to question the role of serialism in their music. And as much as they existed on opposite sides—sides divided by a line they drew themselves—it seems that they were unified in the project of reaching for the noumenal through the voice. For Nono, the individual melodic singing voice represented singularity and mystery, while for Stockhausen, these same elements emerged out of ritual. Underlying their approaches to vocality, as well as those of the other composers in this dissertation, is, once again, a modernist reception of the "vocal imaginary:" one the one hand, a deep and pervasive belief in the power of the voice to bring forth subjectivity, in its unique ability to make music uniquely human, and on the other, the need to reinvent musical vocality in order to find the vocal imaginary.

Dissertation outline and a final note on methodology

In Chapter 2, Sciarrino finds his vocal imaginary in a strange and contradictory interplay between voice and silence that is on full display in his 1998 chamber opera *Luci mie traditrici*. On the one hand, he claims that "lack of singing is equivalent to feeling a void of the presence of a human protagonist;" on the other, his works present precious few instances of singing in any traditional form. For Sciarrino, "entrusting the voice to silence" allows the voice to be heard

[109] Joseph Straus seeks to address this misperception using data analysis in Joseph N. Straus, "The Myth of Serial 'Tyranny' in the 1950s and 1960s," *The Musical Quarterly*, 1999.
[110] For more on changing attitudes about serialism during the mid-century, see David Osmond-Smith, "New Beginnings: The International Avant-Garde, 1945–62," in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Anthony Pople (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 351–62.

as noumenal, evoking a vocalic body that is underdefined, unknown, and in a constant state of becoming. And it is in this reach for the noumenal where the authentic voice lies.

In Chapter 3, Steve Reich finds his vocal imaginary in a number of places throughout his career. Although the manifestation of "true voice" varies, his two-step method is consistent: first, using widely varying techniques, Reich reduces what he understands as phenomena out of the singing voice; this category encompasses "bel canto" vocal production as well as other aspects of vocal performance. Second, by reducing out phenomena, he aims to invite the noumenal back in as something "ambiguous" and underdetermined. The vocalic bodies Reich creates through his manipulations of taped speech, use of melodies inspired by cantillation practice, and "instrumentalization" of the voice are distinctly Rousseauian: singular and cohesive, immediate and authentic.

In Chapter 4, Iannis Xenakis finds his vocal imaginary in mass textures. He rejects an invocation of the human through melody as artifice or phenomenon: "I know it sounds ridiculous, but sometimes a sentimental melody can move me to tears. However, *I don't want to be moved*." He even speculates that life may have killed his lyricism. I contend, however, that mass textures such as those found in *Terretektorh* (1965-66) are a way for lyricism and musical humanity to become reborn in Xenakis' works in a way that meshes with his aesthetic, philosophical, and political ideals. In fact, the metaphors of living, animation, and even sentience actually play a foundational and generative role in how Xenakis conceives of these textures and how he wants them to be heard. The vocalic bodies created by these works preserve a delicate balance between the singular and the plural, the cohesive and the fragmented.

Helmut Lachenmann's ethics of constant negativity and renewal make him a particularly difficult and interesting case study for this project. Perhaps his vocal imaginary is best

exemplified by the music of his mentor Luigi Nono, and I show that throughout his long career, he has slowly (re)introduced aspects of Nono's vocality to his own music: first tone, then melody, and finally the musical speaking subject. Unlike the other composers in this dissertation, his ethics of the voice seem to change even as his commitment to a "still unfinished…struggle with the singing voice" remains steadfast. With the notable exception of his latest work, which is an unabashed Lied, Lachenmann's vocalic bodies flicker into being under adverse conditions and then fade away. They represent a vision of utopia that is both pristine and unattainable.

Abbate points out that thinking of musical analysis in terms of the voice can have a way of pushing it "beyond narrative as event-sequence and a plot-concept of music's narrativity."[111] She convincingly reads Lakmé's seductive bell song as an instance where the act of singing itself is far more forceful than the "plot" as revealed by the song's words. Some responses to Cone's work try to reconcile the realms of voice and plot by claiming that musical events, such as "keys, motives, instrumental sonorities, textures, rhythms, prominent vocal pitches, and so on"[112] can stand in as "personae." But like Abbate, my preference is to hew more closely to the notion of "voice" than "persona." What results is analysis that pays more attention to the subject of a musical narrative than the narrative itself; in other words, I'm more interested in what kind of vocalic bodies are created and how they emerge than I am in making an argument about what those bodies do or the stories they tell. Although my claims are absolutely dependent on the situation of modernity as well as the particular trials and traumas of each composer's relationship with music and the voice, this project does not offer a straightforward narrative. It makes no claim for or against compositional progress within its time period, and an Italian opera from 1998 mingles with a small-ensemble work from an American composer premiered in 1976,

[111] Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, xi.
[112] James Webster, "Cone's 'Personae' and the Analysis of Opera," *College Music Symposium: Special Issue on Edward T. Cone's The Composer's Voice* 29 (1989): 51.

which in turn shed light on a massive-scale orchestra piece written in the mid-sixites by a Greek-born composer working in France, which are in turn viewed against four decades of vocal and non-vocal writing by one of the luminaries of the German new music scene. By circumventing both narratives of progress and more positivistic approaches to form and musical construction, I have, in my own way, emulated the composers I discuss: mine is an analysis that itself reaches for the noumenal

Chapter 2 - Mountains of Songs: Salvatore Sciarrino and the Revitalization of Voice

A simple, unaccompanied song opens Salvatore Sciarrino's 1998 chamber opera, *Luci mie traditrici*, but it is not Sciarrino's song. Instead, it is a melody borrowed from an elegy by sixteenth-century composer Claude Le Jeune. In this prologue, the singing voice is the focal point, the *raison d'etre*. The remarkably consistent musical soundscape that Sciarrino establishes in the rest of the opera is absent here and here only; in retrospect, it seems that all of the moving parts in Sciarrino's busy musical world have paused to listen to the 400-year old echo of Le Jeune. The elegy is reprised in full three more times throughout the opera, but with each repetition Sciarrino introduces complicating factors: pauses, interruptions, and changing timbres. By the third reprisal in the penultimate movement, all sense of rhythmic differentiation is destroyed. The tempo is dramatically reduced (Sciarrino's direction is actually *senza tempo*), and the melody similarly dissolves as it is partially voided of tone and distributed, note by note, throughout the ensemble. Le Jeune's elegy has crumbled into ruins, such that only the barest traces of the singing voice remain. Sciarrino controls the erosion of the song carefully over the course of the opera, in a kind of time lapse: the gradual nature of this process ensures that the singing voice maintains a presence, even if it is, by the end, intensely effaced. In order to sing, Sciarrino relies on an old voice: one that is not his own. Even so, he can't seem to leave it alone: *Luci* is suffused with vocal presence, with attempts to sing that meet with more or less success (usually less). This an unwillingness to escape the power and signification of the singing voice altogether.

Sciarrino's writing about his music is similarly obsessed with voice and song. Throughout the years, he has cast himself in an almost messianic role, as the composer whose "little vocal discoveries" have given "song back all of its power without returning to old motifs which are insignificant, for these produce a superficial pleasure that runs contrary to the actual expression."[1] For instance, in *Perseo e Andromeda* (voices and electronics, 1992)—an opera with vocal writing extremely similar to that of *Luci*—the listener is primed to hear "an invented kind of vocalism that regains immediacy without going backwards."[2] Confident as they are, both of these statements reveal a certain anxiety about voice consistent with the modernist crisis of voice discussed in Chapter 1. The voice must be immediate, expressive, and above all *new*—it must not be caught in a system of representation that looks "backwards" with "old motifs."

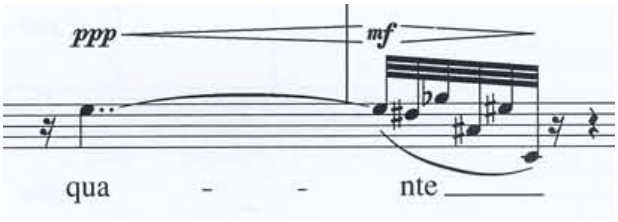
When Sciarrino talks about voice and making the voice new, he most often talks about song. For him, the concept of song reflects a multivalent understanding of how the voice functions in music: as I will show, it encompasses at times singing voices, vocal genres, specific preexisting songs, the singing subject, melody, and vocal timbre. Sciarrino's clearest statement of vocal ethics comes in the preface to his *12 Madrigali* (2007), which has the distinct tone of a manifesto. In it, Sciarrino lays out a problematic of the voice, and sketches the outline of a potential solution. First, he explains the consequences of neglecting song, maintaining that a "lack of singing is equivalent to feeling a void of the presence of a human protagonist." He goes

[1] Quartetto Prometeo, *Quartetto N. 7 ; Quartetto N. 8 ; Sei quartetti brevi* (Vienna: Kairos, 2012). Liner notes, pg. 18. "It is necessary to free the voice from inert imitation by instruments, from clumsy banality; but above all, it is necessary to give the song back all of its power without returning to old motifs which are insignificant, for these produce a superficial pleasure that runs contrary to the actual expression. Recently, I have been applying these little vocal discoveries to instruments. In these works, I wanted to avoid virtuosity, which is an extension of competition, adhering instead to the intimate and renowned tradition that Beethoven initiated with his Adagio-movements. For me, this was not an obvious choice and so it may come to some as a surprise."

[2] Sharon Cooper et al., *Perseo e Andromeda* (Milano: BMG Ricordi, 2000). Liner notes, pg. 5. "Composed in 1992, Perseo e Andromeda can be adopted as the operatic emblem of the contradictions with which humanity faces the third millenium. The harshness of an ancient myth is combined with the concerns of everyday life; we rediscover a sense of nature through technology; and we hear an invented kind of vocalism that regains immediacy without going backwards."

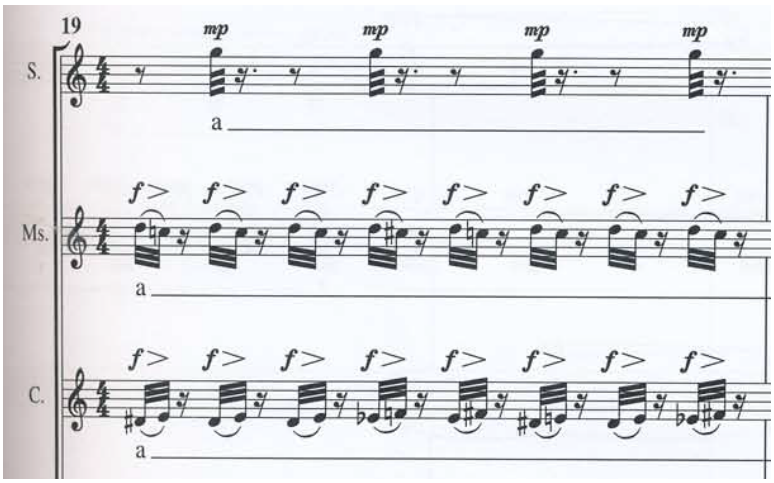
on to observe, "An unavoidable question therefore arises, a question of identity and alienation."[3] At stake in the unavoidable question of song, then, is the very humanity of Sciarrino's music. In order to have song, there must be singing; in order to have singing, presumably there must be a voice; in order to have a voice, one must exist as a human subject. The vocal imaginary clearly plays into Sciarrino's compositional ethics, and he seems to locate it within song.

Confronted with the vocal writing in the *12 Madrigali*, however, one could understandably question Sciarrino's espoused commitment to song: the piece is far from straightforwardly song-like. As is true for most works in the madrigal genre, it has no clear "human protagonist," instead featuring many lines in either homophony or counterpoint. More unusually, the vocal writing is repetitive, excessively ornamented, and awkwardly phrased: melodic in only the loosest sense. The most common gesture is a crescendoing long tone followed by a quick oscillation on a decrescendo, as in **Example 2-1**—this figure repeats throughout the work and I will also discuss it further later in this chapter. In movements 6 and 12 in particular, Sciarrino also explores quick, mechanically repetitive gestures such as those found in **Example 2-2**.



Example 2-1: Typical gesture in Sciarrino's 12 Madrigali. No. 1, mm. 22-23, bass

[3] Salvatore. Sciarrino, *12 madrigali* (Rome: Rai Trade, 2006). "Mancanza di canto equivale a sentire un vuoto di presenza umana protagonista. Si poneva dunque una questione impossibile da eludere, una questione di identità e alienazione."



Example 2-2: Repetitive gesture in Sciarrino's 12 Madrigali. No. 6, m. 19, soprano mezzo countertenor

Both of these gestures lack the simplicity, fluidity, and memorability of Mendelssohn's song-like melody from *Lieder ohne Worte* discussed in Chapter 1, but for Sciarrino, it is perhaps better to speak of other intertexts, other "vocal imaginaries": Monteverdi, who also wrote a set of madrigals prefaced by strong ethical statements on voice; Le Jeune, whose music figures prominently in *Luci mie traditrici*; Gesualdo, who inspired the story of *Luci*; Wagner, whose vocal ethics resonate in Sciarrino's fixation on song and on looking both forward and backward in order to find it. In what follows I shall explore Sciarrino's reception of these figures as well as how this reception shapes his approach to "song."

For all that song is essential to Sciarrino's compositional ethics, he also appears to be working from an idiosyncratic definition of the term. And he does say more about it in the preface to the *Madrigali*. Song, he writes, is:

> …the mysterious and powerful union between sound and speech. Word and sound, sound and word: this is singing. To create a song, it is not enough to simply compose for voice. It is first necessary to clear the mind, to make transparent the same intervals through which all the music of the world has passed, mountains of songs, in short what constitutes the giant landfill in which we live.

> Ecology is the birth of a consciousness, in order to enact renewal. So an ecology of sound certainly means a return to silence, but especially to find an expression without emotionlessness [aridità] and without rhetoric.[4]

Sciarrino's definition of song as "the mysterious and powerful union between sound and speech" resonates profoundly with Wagner's ideas about the role of voice and words in music: "Tone's most living flesh is the *human voice*, and the *word* is...the bone and muscle rhythm of this human voice."[5] As Lydia Goehr explains, Wagner's polemic is against formalists such as Hanslick who sought to locate music's meaning in abstract structure. Sciarrino, however, seems to be fighting a different enemy, and a distinctly modern one. Evident in this passage is Sciarrino's dissatisfaction with two conditions of modernity that I highlight in Chapter 1: first, the mass production of music and culture at large, represented by the "giant landfill" of our living conditions; second, the demystification of voice and song. Song is not simply music with words, but a mysterious—even magical—synthesis achieved only under very specific conditions.

Sciarrino sees the pursuit of song as urgent, a question of humanity, but also feels that it has great potential to be compromised or lost. It necessarily involves words, and yet, it should not trade in the mundane reality of "landfills" that presumably hold rhetoric: established and reified forms of vocality. This is where his notion of "ecology" comes in. Variously formulated as "ecology of sound," or "ecology of listening," the term recurs frequently throughout Sciarrino's writings. He devotes several pages to it in a 2001 essay, which he opens with a

---

[4] Salvatore Sciarrino, *12 Madrigali* (Rome: Rai Trade, 2008). "L'unione misteriosa e potente fra il suono e la parola. Parola e suono, suono e parola: questo è cantare. Per inventare un canto non basta soltanto comporre per voce. Necessario prima pulire la mente, rendere trasparenti gli stessi intervalli attraverso cui è passata tutta la musica del mondo, montagne di canzoni, insomma ciò che costituisce la gigantesca discarica entro cui viviamo.

L'ecologia è il nascere di una coscienza, per agire nel rinnovarsi. E dunque ecologia del suono vuoi dire certo tornare al silenzio, ma specialmente ritrovare un'espressione senza aridità e senza retorica."

[5] Richard Wagner, *Richard Wagner's Prose Works*, trans. William Ashton Ellis (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1995), 103. Cited in Lydia Goehr, "The Quest for Voice," in *The Quest for Voice: On Music, Politics, and the Limits of Philosophy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 114–115.

rhetorical question: "what significance does the expression 'ecology of sound' bear?"[6] His lengthy answer to this question echoes the above language; I have drawn out a few excerpts below:

> It is the rise of a feeling, a different way of relating to the world…
> It is necessary to liberate the ear from encrustation, repair and restore it from deafness…
> Cleanse your mind, you want to learn to create a vacuum inside, leaving room for the other you don't know.[7]

The ecology Sciarrino refers to, then, is more about cultivating a space within the mind than outside of it.[8] In this space, one attempts to discard the recognizable, the "encrusted," and seek the unknown, the underdetermined. To use the terminology from Kant that I introduced in Chapter 1, an ecology of listening seems to be a position in which one is best poised to experience the noumenal: Adorno's *musique informelle*, the unknown, the music that has not yet come into being. And to bring this into dialogue with the *Madrigali* preface, song seems to be a vehicle with which to approach an ecology of listening. But how? Once again, even casual contact with Sciarrino's *Madrigali* or *Luci mie traditrici* calls his written claims into question: one might expect something like Wagner's endless song, but instead, overt forms of repetition flourish in Sciarrino's music. What to make, then, of repetitive gestures like those found in **Example 2-2**, or of Sciarrino's use of Le Jeune in *Luci* and his reprisal of this pre-existing music throughout the work? Is it possible to reconcile Sciarrino's reification of certain moments into musical objects with his mandate to "liberate the ear from encrustation"?

---

[6] Salvatore Sciarrino, "Diario parigino, appunti per un," in *Carte da suono: (1981-2001)*, ed. Dario Oliveri (Palermo: Novecento, 2001), 249. "Quale significato ha l'espressione ecologia del suono?

[7] Ibid. Essa rappresenta il sorgere di una sensibilità, di un modo differente di rapportarsi al mondo… Necessario liberare l'orecchio dalle incrostazioni, ripararlo e restaurarlo dall'assordamento… Pulire la mente dunque vuoi dire imparare a fare il vuoto dentro, lasciare spazio all'altro che non si conosce."

[8] In fact, he has generally negative things to say about compositional experiments with spatialization: "Apart from Stockhausen, the bounce from one point to another in a room remains to date a very disappointing gamble." Ibid., 250. "A parte Stockhausen, il rimbalzare da un punto all'altro di una sala rimane sino a oggi un giochino assai deludente."

So far, Sciarrino has presented us with two contradictions. He claims that singing is absolutely essential, and yet the vocal parts that he writes are strange and awkward; he wants to seek the noumenal in his use of song, and yet his music constantly, even obsessively, recycles familiar material. In this chapter, I propose that Sciarrino evinces a modernist melancholia about the category of song, about its cooption by a system of mass production and demystification. I further propose that much of his music is structured, perhaps even generated, by a process of affective mapping—that is, alienation from the lost object (song) as a way of turning it into something "interesting, that solicits and rewards one's attention."[9] In order to escape the mountains of discarded songs, the category of song must be made unfamiliar. Sciarrino conceives of this unfamiliarity in terms of silence, or better, silenc*ing*.

Noumenon and phenomenon

Before I discuss further Sciarrino's notion of silence and how it operates in his music, I'd like to return to the noumenon/phenomenon binary that I began to develop in Chapter 1. This duo of terms was first put forth as philosophical concepts by Plato and then radically revised by Kant. Kant was concerned with the nature of knowing, and the relationship between subject and object. He distinguished between an object as perceived through the senses and regulatory concepts such as space and time (phenomenon), and an object as thing-in-itself existing outside of subjective perception (noumenon). For Kant, space and time are a priori, inborn, and it is thus impossible to understand an object outside of these conditions, or, put positively, it is only possible to understand an object phenomenally. Phenomena are the way that things appear, while noumena are the way that they are. As such, the noumenon is always a limit case. It isn't

[9] Jonathan Flatley, *Affective Mapping: Melancholia and the Politics of Modernism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 4.

knowable by humans due to our *a priori* conditions of understanding, but could theoretically be known by an omniscient being such as God.

Mark Evan Bonds describes how the rise of Kantian idealism in the nineteenth century led to music becoming increasingly associated with the noumenal, with realms beyond the usual modes of understanding. According to Bonds, "[w]ithout necessarily rejecting the phenomenal world, [idealism] posits a higher form of reality in a spiritual realm: objects in the phenomenal world—including works of art—are understood as reflections of the noumenal."[10] Although Kant himself doubted whether instrumental music could rise to the status of knowledge, formalists such as Hanslick and E.T.A. Hoffman found it useful to apply his ideas to instrumental music, which they conceived of as being especially close to the noumenal because of its lack of reliance on words and language. In E.T.A. Hoffman's words, instrumental music had the ability to open up "a world that has nothing in common with the external world of the senses." Gary Tomlinson, Lydia Goehr, and Carolyn Abbate all trace changing conceptions of the noumenon-music relation in the later nineteenth century and describe how for Wagner and his successors, the voice came to serve as the bearer of noumenon *par excellence*.[11] In defiance of formalists like Hanslick, Wagner essentially revived a Rousseauian ethics of the voice, striving not for autonomy from the realm of language, but for a transcendent synthesis between music and language. As I noted earlier, Sciarrino seems to follow suit in his formulation of song as "the mysterious and powerful union between sound and speech."[12] In a way, Wagner and Sciarrino

[10] Mark Evan Bonds, *Music as Thought: Listening to the Symphony in the Age of Beethoven* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 12.
[11] Gary Tomlinson, *Metaphysical Song: An Essay on Opera* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), 73–103; Goehr, "The Quest for Voice"; Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 15–16.
[12] Sciarrino, *12 madrigali*.

both bring a Rousseauian metaphysics of the voice full circle by claiming to have reached a utopian synthesis of language and music that Rousseau had mourned as lost forever.

Sciarrino's language around voice and song articulates a reach for the noumenal. Already in the quotations above, he offers a number of paired terms that can be mapped onto the categories of phenomenal and noumenal: old motifs preventing power, expression as superficial or actual, encrustation eradicated through liberation. In each pair, the phenomenal term has a negative valence: overly determined, phenomena lead to sedimentation, artificiality, to landfills of songs. They designate a music that is inert rather than mobile; superficial rather than deep; dead rather than alive. A constant in these bad or false musical states is that they seem to come from language itself, from the symptomatic freezing and parsing of sounds by a bureaucracy of signifiers, codes, and grammars. The noumenal terms, on the other hand, resurrect the 'mystery' and 'power' of song in their indeterminacy: these are the qualities that would be best perceived through an ecology of listening. Rousseau similarly narrativizes and ultimately mourns the voice's installation into a systematized and standardized set of codes, which he supposes robbed it of its natural range of expressive possibilities, as well as disconnecting the speech act from the primal power of sound:

> All this leads to the confirmation of this principle: that by a natural progression all lettered languages must change character and lose force as they gain clarity, that the more one aims at perfecting grammar and logic the more one accelerates this progress, and that in order to make a language cold and monotonous in no time, one has only to establish academies among the people that speaks it.[13]

For Rousseau, it is at the moment when vocal production becomes too rigidly organized that it loses its power to move and persuade, instead entering into an ossified, academic

[13] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Essay on the Origin of Languages and Writings Related to Music*, ed. John T. Scott, vol. 7, The Collected Writings of Rousseau (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1998), 303–304.

exchange. Like Sciarrino, he sees the voice's force, its power, as residing in its mystery. Rousseau's idealization of the prelapsarian voice—its transcendent status, obviating any necessary mediation between internal states and externalized sound, and its radical self-consistency, resisting all quantification and systematization—continues to reverberate throughout more recent musical thought. In Chapter 1, I discussed Adorno's invocation of the noumenal through his concept of *musique informelle*. But in a short essay on the relationship between music and language, Adorno draws closer to relating the noumenal to the vocal. He suggests that music is similar to language in that both are forms of sound that bear meaning, and even hints that they co-originate: that "the gesture of music is borrowed from the speaking voice."[14] Although they might begin together in the voice, music and language quickly diverge. As opposed to language, music is "freed from the magic of making anything happen"; it is "the human attempt, futile, as always, to name the name itself, not to communicate meanings …" And new music in particular "does away with the congealed formulae and their function, as mechanical, but not with the similarity to language itself."[15] Music, then, is vocal in origin, but it also transcends the voice's linguistic role and as such reaches for the name of the name, the *Ding an sich*.

Philosopher Adriana Cavarero similarly sees the voice has having a special capacity for resistance to logical parsing. For Cavarero, analysis and generalization is the modus operandi of the logocentric tradition of Western thought. She takes a number of thought traditions to task for their tendencies toward generalization when it comes to the voice. These traditions include Platonic metaphysics, "whereby speech is separated from speakers and finds its home in

[14] Theodor W. Adorno, "Music, Language, and Composition," in *Essays on Music*, ed. Richard Leppert, trans. Susan H. Gillespie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 113.
[15] Ibid., 114.

thought;"[16] linguistics, "where the voice becomes the scientific object of a cold analysis that understands it from the perspective of the semantic, in order to then incorporate the voice into a coherent system;"[17] and psychoanalysis and the study of oral cultures, which fail "to be tuned into the plurality of voices, each one different from the other, that make up the symphony."[18] For Cavarero, voice, and particularly women's voices, and even more particularly women's singing voices, upset the logical and metaphysical order by drawing attention to the singularity of a body:

> Silence—which according to the patriarchal order is 'golden,' especially for women—concerns speech, not song. As the myth of the Sirens teaches us, song is heard as naturally feminine, just as speech is naturally masculine. Destined to substantiate themselves in the semantic, men's voices tend to disappear in the mute labor of the mind, or thought. By modulating themselves in song, on the other hand, women's voices come to show their authentic substance—namely, the passionate rhythms of the body from which the voice flows…the singing voice cannot be domesticated; it disturbs the system of reason by leading elsewhere.[19]

Cavarero's "song" is an undifferentiated category, and a positive one: it provides a way of confounding logocentrism, of gaining knowledge outside of logical analysis. This knowledge bypasses phenomena, our structures of knowing—it is immediate, approaching the noumenal. While Sciarrino similarly believes in song's power to transcend the logocentric, he is, unlike Cavarero, a creator of song who must continually renegotiate its definition and police its boundaries. Recall that in the introduction to his madrigals he cautions that composing for voice is not the same as composing song. For Sciarrino, song itself is already compromised: infiltrated by the systemizing tendencies of logocentrism.

[16] Adriana Cavarero, *For More than One Voice: Toward a Philosophy of Vocal Expression* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 9.
[17] Ibid., 11.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid., 118.

Sciarrino wishes to avoid making another addition to the landfills of songs, and he wishes to do so through the abolishment of "rhetoric." Interestingly, this imperative seems to apply equally to his instrumental music. In a preface to his *Sei quartetti brevi* (1991) as Monteverdian as that for *12 Madrigali*, for instance, he fixates on a singable newness that can only emerge through a "banishing" of the old. He explains how

> [t]he emphasis on emotion becomes free from redundancy. There, where there is no rhetoric, tensions cannot dissolve and each artificiality is banished. Here, the cantabile develops itself in a homogenous manner, through which the discontinuity of time and space unveils unexpected insights by means of multiple and, for the strings, entirely new sounds.[20]

Even in this instrumental work, it is cantabile—song, melody, voice—that banishes the dreaded rhetoric and redundancy. Once again, however, it's not at all clear where to locate something like song, or, for that matter, a lack of rhetoric and artificiality, not least because of the consistent sonic register of *Sei quartette brevi*. The vast majority of the work is composed of nervous, overlaid gestures in stratospheric harmonics; the timbral envelopes which result are extremely unstable, but more importantly they seem quite perfectly opposed to the warmth and full tone of traditional Western singing. Individual gestures are Webernian in their combination of austerity and ephemerality—a single note, a short but plaintive glissando, a flutter of tremolo, almost always at a dynamic softer than piano. We are left with the same questions: how is this cantabile? How is this singing? And how can a work so full of repetitive gestures liberate the ear from encrustation? This is where Sciarrino's conception of silence comes into play.

[20] Quartetto Prometeo, *Quartetto N. 7 ; Quartetto N. 8 ; Sei quartetti brevi* (Vienna: Kairos, 2012). Liner notes, pg. 17.

Silencing

Silence is an important concept for both Sciarrino and his interlocutors. The term recurs countless times throughout his own essays and work commentaries, and Sciarrino's relationship with silence is the subject of at least one monograph, one article, and a large percentage of his biographical entry in the Oxford Musical Dictionary.[21] In his *Immagini, gesti, parole, suoni, silenzi* (*Images, words, gestures, sounds silences*), Gianfranco Vinay carefully traces Sciarrino's invocation of silence throughout his career and how it affects "the evolution of the relationship between word, sound and musical dramaturgy."[22] While this work is admirably comprehensive—it discusses virtually every piece in Sciarrino's large oeuvre—it tends to focus on biographical information and description of Sciarrino's works rather than the ethics that drive his turn to silence. David Metzer does relate Sciarrino's silence to a form of modernism, but he equates modernism with what at times seems to amount to simple musical curiosity: the search for new ways of expressing old ideas.[23]

At this point it should be clear that Sciarrino's conception of silence is of a post-Cagean vintage. Some of his pieces do use notated silence to great effect: for instance, the beginning of his Second Piano Sonata (1979-1983), which consists of bursts of bombastic chords with long, tense rests between. But as Cage reminded us with his familiar anecdote of visiting an anechoic chamber, silence is an ideal rather than a potential reality.[24] Like the noumenon, silence can be approached, gestured toward, even represented, but never actually achieved. Like the category of

[21] Considering that the literature on Sciarrino is still fairly small, this amount of attention paid to silence is indeed notable.
[22] Gianfranco Vinay, *Immagini, gesti, parole, suoni, silenzi: drammaturgia delle opere vocali e teatrali di Salvatore Sciarrino* (Rome: Accademia nazionale di Santa Cecilia; Ricordi, 2010), 5. "Una prima parte del libro passerà in rassegna, decennio dopo decennio, le opere vocali, corali e teatrali di Sciarrino, per cogliere l'evoluzione del rapporto fra parola, suono e drammaturgia musicale nel contesto dell'epoca e sullo sfondo dell'intera produzione del compositore."
[23] David Metzer, "Modern Silence," *The Journal of Musicology* 23, no. 3 (Spring 2006): 331.
[24] John Cage, *Silence: Lectures and Writings* (Middletown CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), 13–14.

song, the category of silence in Sciarrino's thought acts as a multifaceted metaphor that can be deployed in a number of ways. Nonetheless, he uses it to a consistent purpose: it is through silence, and specifically the silencing of *song*, that one can achieve "renewal," that one can approach an ecology of listening. He continues on to hint at how this might be possible; let us return for a moment to his remarks on the *12 Madrigali*:

> …an ecology of sound certainly means a return to silence but also and especially the regaining of a form of expression without emotional coldness and without rhetoric. When the voice is entrusted to silence, all that remains is the mouth, the oral cavity and saliva. The opening lips, boundary to a dark void, to thirst and to hunger.[25]

Sciarrino's "ecology" is brought about through a radical reduction. The voice is "entrusted to silence," alienated from its ability to sing. What remains is the trace of a voice found in the singular auditory landscape of a fleshly body. In this landscape, the body doesn't know words, but only pre-linguistic physiological states such as thirst and hunger. This reduction is one way that Sciarrino attempts to access what Barthes would call the grain of the voice, "the materiality of the body speaking its mother tongue."[26] Barthes associates this grain with what he calls geno-song,[27] and opposes it to pheno-song, the description of which echoes Sciarrino's opposition between voice and "rhetoric":

> The pheno-song…covers all the phenomena, all the features which derive from the structure of the sung language, from the coded form of the melisma, the idiolect, the composer, the style of interpretation: in short, everything which, in the performance, is at the service of communication, of representation, of expression…[28]

---

[25] Neue Vocalsolisten Stuttgart, *12 madrigali*. Liner notes, pg. 24.
[26] Roland Barthes, "The Grain of the Voice," in *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 270.
[27] *Geno-song* is "the volume of the speaking and singing voice, the space in which the significations germinate 'from within the language and in its very materiality'; this is a signifying function alien to communication, to representation (of feelings), to expression; it is that culmination (or depth) of production where melody actually *works on* language--not what it says but the voluptuous pleasure of its signifier-sounds, of its letters: explores how language works and identifies itself with that labor." Ibid.
[28] Ibid.

Like Sciarrino, Barthes sees the ideal voice as transcending "rhetoric," of opening up a space for ecological listening: one can imagine these coded melismata, these idiolects, heaped atop Sciarrino's mountains of songs. Also like Sciarrino, Barthes sees the materiality of the voice, its connection to the body that produces it, as the vehicle of transcendence. But the bodies that they speak of are very different. Barthes is concerned with the specific bodies of specific singers, and uses the voices of Charles Panzera and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau as examples. Sciarrrino's bodies, on the other hand, are more along the line of the vocalic bodies of Steven Connor discussed in Chapter 1: they are conceived by a composer rather than being voiced by a singer. The vocalic body Sciarrino describes here is "a dark void:" on the one hand fleshy and full of grain, and on the other fantastical and unformed. Paradoxes abound: it is only through a heard version of silence that an immaterial body reveals its grain.

It is not so much song itself that leads to Sciarrino's ecology of listening but rather the *silencing of song*. Or, formulated differently: song becomes dialectical, only able to emerge out of its own negation. Silencing is the crucial step of alienation that Jonathan Flatley describes, the critical distance that allows the category of song to be affectively mapped and made productive. I've suggested that song is a multivalent category for Sciarrino, and the act of silencing has a way of adapting to these different manifestations. To silence song can involve a process of erosion that takes place over time; an act of restriction or stifling; a highly attenuated and liminal state of quietude; or the remainder of vocal or instrumental timbre when song is subtracted; the list is potentially endless. In the following section, I'll read *Luci mie traditrici* closely in order to show some of these possible modalities of silencing.

Luci mie traditrici: what is song, and how is it silenced?

Although the work is compelling in its particularity, I've chosen *Luci mie traditrici* as an object of close study in this chapter because it is also representative of Sciarrino's oeuvre in some important ways. First, the work was composed during a time when Sciarrino was writing and talking about the voice to an unprecedented degree—Vinay points to 1990 as a turning point where song and vocal writing arose as major themes in Sciarrino's thought.[29] Second, the vocal and instrumental writing Sciarrino employs is typical of his compositional style, making use of techniques and figurations that can be found in many of his other works. Third, Sciarrino's borrowing of Claude Le Jeune's elegy brings forth common issues with his use of preexisting music in other works. Finally and most importantly, *Luci* saturated with voices, with attempts to sing that meet imposed silences of various kinds.

Luci is a chamber opera divided into two acts. Its narrative unfolds over the course of a single day, following four characters: a Duke, a Duchess, a Guest, and a Servant. The story adheres to a well-trodden operatic tradition in which all of the male characters desire the female character and their conflicting attentions result in the destruction of her virtue and then her life. In the final scene, the Duke orchestrates a grisly double murder in his bedchamber, stabbing the Duchess and her lover (the Guest) to death. Sciarrino crafted his libretto upon the tale of sixteenth-century composer Carlo Gesualdo, as told by a seventeenth-century dramatist in his play, *Il tradimento per l'onore*.[30] At some point during the composition of the piece, however, Sciarrino learned that Alfred Schnittke was writing an opera on the same topic (*Gesualdo*, 1994/5). As a result, he excised any direct references to Gesualdo and replaced the madrigalist's

[29] Vinay, *Immagini, gesti, parole, suoni, silenzi*, 4–5.
[30] The play was originally attributed to Giacinto Andrea Cicognini, but it is now generally believed that Cicognini is not the author. As his sketches at the Paul Sacher Stiftung show, Sciarrino created the libretto by crossing out large parts of the original play and using what was left.

music with an elegy by sixteenth-century French composer Claude Le Jeune, "*Qu'est devenu ce bel œil*" ("What happened to the lovely eye"). In sum, the opera narrates an abstracted and romanticized version of Gesualdo's story accompanied by the music of both Sciarrino and Le Jeune.

Luci is structured by an oscillation between sections that take place inside and outside the dramatic action. Its two acts are further divided into eight scenes that drive the dramatic action, most of which are duets (Scene IV's duet is interrupted by interjections from the lovestruck and eavesdropping servant). The sound world is remarkably consistent throughout the scenes. Everything revolves around the nuance, not the event—or rather, all events are a matter of nuance. The Prologue and three intermezzi, on the other hand, belong to a temporality that runs parallel to but separate from the plot of the scenes proper. The musical material here consists entirely of four different renditions of Claude Le Jeune's elegy, the text of which picks up on the themes of love and loss that pervade the action. While the musical material of the scenes tends to remain static, the prologue and intermezzi enact a single trajectory over the course of the entire opera: a slow transformation of Claude Le Jeune's elegy from vocalized melody to a particularly stylized form of instrumental silence. There are also two "Buio" ("dark") sections, to be performed in darkness, presumably during scene changes. **Table 2-1** provides an outline of the opera, along with Sciarrino's plot synopsis.

Act I	
Prologue	The voice behind the curtain sings of the loss of a lover
Scene I	In the garden the morning. The Duke shows the Duchess a hidden rose. She picks the rose. He warns her of the thorns. She hurts herself. He curses the rose. She is bleeding. He faints.

Table 2-1: Form of *Luci mie traditrici,* with Sciarrino's plot synopsis

Buio I	
Scene II	The Duke awakens from unconsciousness. A conversation about love—She says, He who loves is daring. –He says, He who loves is timorous. Both promise each other eternal love. The servant eavesdrops on the conversation. He loves the Duchess and is desperate.
Intermezzo I	
Scene III	The Guest and the Duchess discover their passion for each other. They are confused and feel helpless, at the mercy of their feelings.
Scene IV	In the garden at noontime. The eavesdropping servant hears the declaration of love and learns of the secret rendezvous.
Buio II	
Scene V	Inside, at noontime. The servant reveals the rendezvous to the Duke: Concern for your honor compelled me to speak. –I was not disgraced when you were silent. The Duke wants to restore his honor.
Act II	
Scene VI	Inside in the twilight. The Duchess regrets. The Duke has forgiven her. He inquires after her love: Exactly how do you love me?—Both promise each other eternal love. She will await him in the night.
Intermezzo II	
Scene VII	Inside. In the evening. The Duchess is embroidering. The Duke makes strange insinuations. They get ready for the night.
Intermezzo III	
Scene VIII	Inside, in the night. The Duke indulges in further sinister insinuations: Let me light this torch. –Wherefore?—As a sign of fidelity.—As for corpses?—He leads her to the bed: Speak to him who is in the bed. Who is in the bed?—He whom you loved too much.—She hesitates. He forces her to pull aside the bed curtain. Before her lies the Guest in his blood. The Duke stabs the Duchess to death. This thorn is yours, I want to prick you.

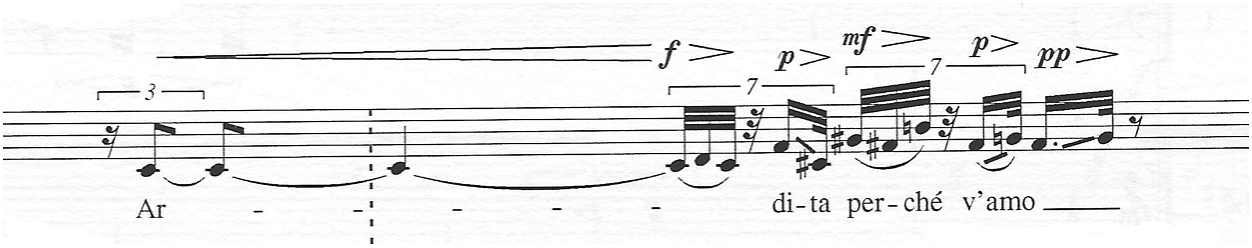
Table 2-1 (continued)[31]

[31] Klangforum Wien with Beat Furrer (conductor), Anette Stricker (soprano), Otto Katzameier (bass baritone), Kai Wessel (countertenor), and Simon Jaunin (baritone), *Luci mie traditrici*, compact disc (Kairos, 2001): Liner notes. Almost all of the translations from the Kairos recordings are from the liner notes, but at times I have made minor changes in order to better reflect Sciarrino's Italian.

What follows is an attempt to disentangle some of the strands of how Sciarrino thinks about song in *Luci mie traditrici*. I've divided it into three overlapping categories: melody, vocal timbre, and singing subject, and each of these manifestations of "song" has its own mode of silencing: restriction, reduction, and voiding, respectively.

Melody silenced through restriction

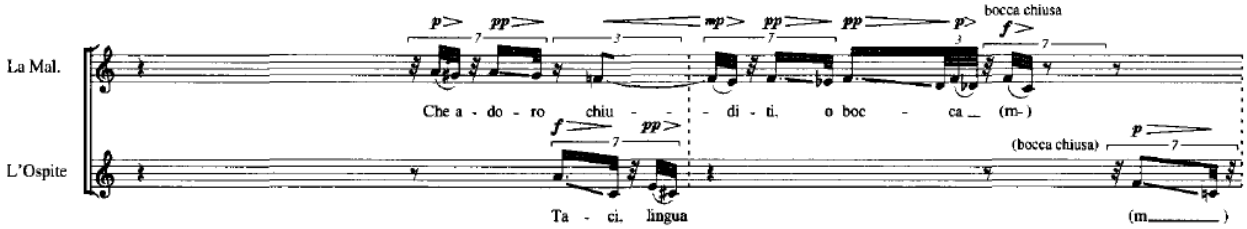
The characters of *Luci* are permitted to sing, but only under very specific circumstances. Sciarrino makes use of the classically trained singing voice more than any other composer discussed in this dissertation, and yet a soaring melody is notably absent in this and other works. As I hinted earlier, the peculiar vocal phrasing of the *12 Madrigali* (**Example 2-1**) is not confined to that piece; in fact, it can be found as far back as his works in the 1970s. Almost every vocal gesture in *Luci mie traditrici* is structured similarly with a crescendoing long tone followed by quick decrescendoing oscillation. An early exchange between the Duke and Duchess (Scene II) exemplifies how this figuration appears to impact their communication. The Duke has recently recovered from his swoon, and he and the Duchess discuss the nature of love before pledging themselves to one another eternally. When the Duchess declares her love for the first time, "*ardita perché v'amo*" (ardent because I love you), the phrase takes shape as a long tone followed by a series of shorter oscillating values (**Example 2-3**). The dynamics are meticulously notated, with a series of small hairpin figures operating within the larger one that spans the phrase.



Example 2-3: *Luci*, Duchess, mm. 9-10

In 1998, the same year of *Luci*'s premiere, Sciarrino wrote that, "asceticism is nothing but remaining silent. All forms of language and experience change when restricted, lose their normality.[32] And *Luci* does consistently, tirelessly perform vocal restriction on its singers—they struggle to articulate their text through the barriers of awkward prosody. At one point, the characters go so far as to silence themselves, although still through sound. In Scene III, the Duchess and Guest close their own mouths against the declarations of love that have poured out over the course of the scene. **Example 2-4** shows the text, translation, and notation for this moment.

Duchess: *Chiuditi, o bocca*	Shut thee, O mouth
Guest: *Lingua presontuosa*	Presumptuous tongue[33]

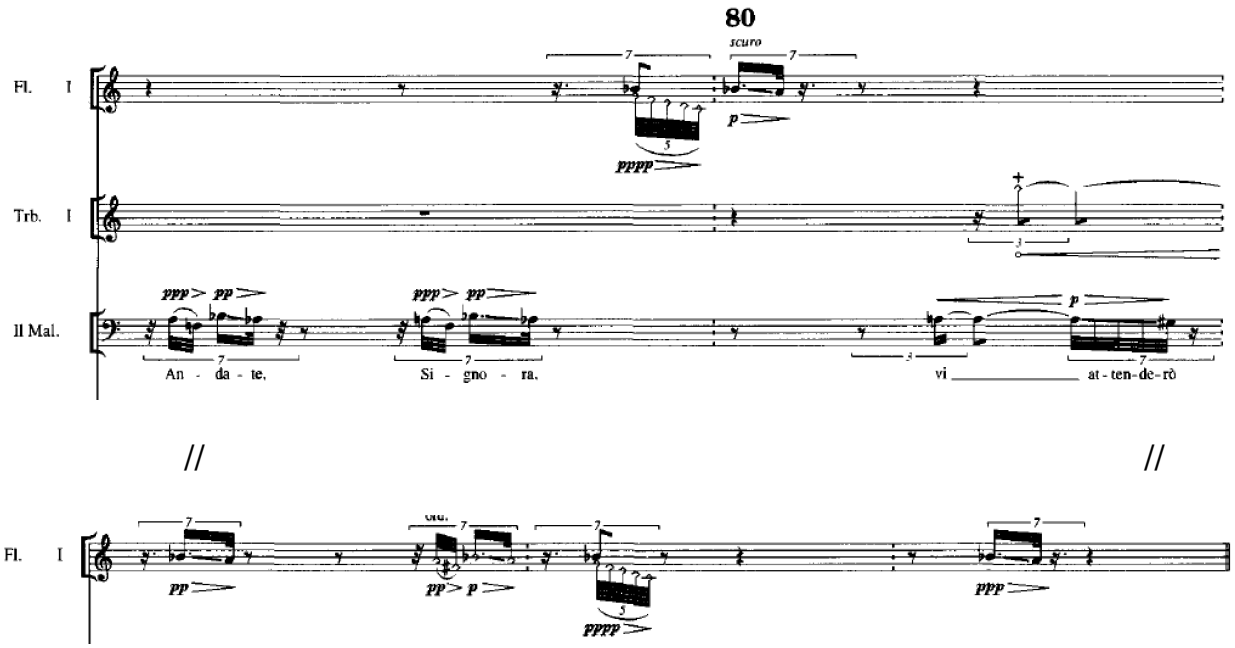


Example 2-4: Luci, Scene III, mm. 122-123 with text and translation. Note Sciarrino's directive of "bocca chiusa" (closed mouth).

Sciarrino seems to go to equal lengths to restrict vocal and instrumental melody; once again, the vocal imaginary links melody and voice. First of all, the instruments in *Luci* sometimes perform versions of the distinctive vocal gestures that pervade the work. In the second act especially, the flutes are used to echo vocal gestures. They are particularly active in mm. 85-110 of Scene VI, where they breathily echo and anticipate the Duke and Duchess. They

[32] Sonia Turchetta, Carlo Sini, and Ensemble Recherche, *Le voci sottovetro / Infinito nero* (Vienna: Kairos, 1999). Liner notes, pg. 24.
[33] Translation by Christoffer Lindner, in Klangforum Wien with Beat Furrer (conductor), Anette Stricker (soprano), Otto Katzameier (bass baritone), Kai Wessel (countertenor), and Simon Jaunin (baritone), *Luci mie traditrici*. Liner notes, pg. 13.

continue to become more assertive throughout Scene VII, concluding the movement with a repeated fragment drawn from the vocal parts against a backdrop of static pitch in the strings. **Example 2-5** shows the ending of Scene VII; note especially the differentiated role of the flute compared with the sustained tones in the other instruments.



Example 2-5: Flute and voice, end of scene VII. The flute part continues after the voices have fallen silent

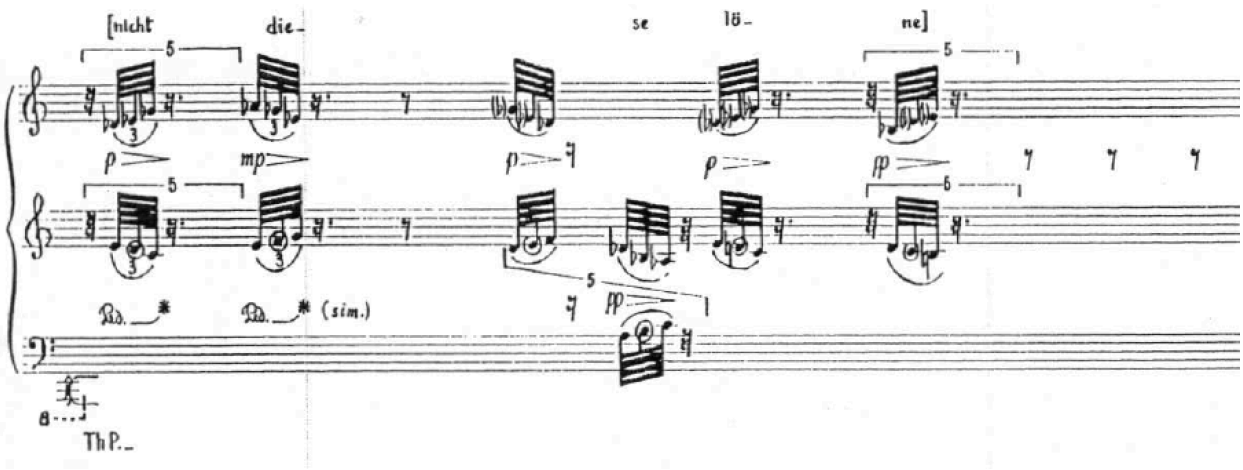
Even aside from a direct convergence of vocal and instrumental material, Sciarrino thinks of instruments as having the capacity for vocality. Like vocal melody, though, instrumental melody can only emerge through an act of restriction and silencing. This approach—again, evident throughout *Luci*—is also evident in his fifth piano sonata (1994-95). In a note to the score, Sciarrino clearly sets out the view that expression emerges from a conflict between voice and mechanical instrument:

> The beginning [of the Fifth Sonata] is recitative movement [sic]. The piano here wants to speak; it sobs and maybe laughs, we do not exactly know. There are small groups of notes which can paint a varied timbre not only from voices but also from the voice of the traditional piano. It grumbles, speaks a little like a

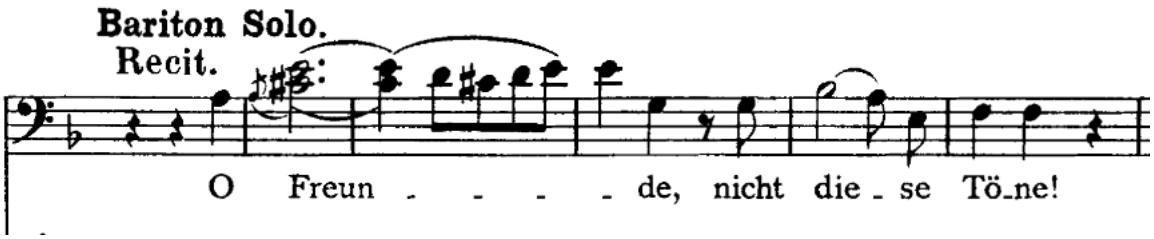
> machine, a little less than human expression. What may seem strange is that this makes the piano more expressive.[34]

Sciarrino sees the piano as shaped by a specific kind of gesture that is vocal in some ways and not in others. As with *Luci*, the gestural material in the fifth sonata is extremely restricted: the beginning—Sciarrino's "recitative"—is made wholly of rapid three-note gestures such as those that can be seen in **Example 2-6**. Sciarrino even specifies what the imaginary "voice" of the piano should be saying with a bracketed text above the piano part: it is a highly reimagined quotation of the first vocal entrance in the last movement of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* (**Example 2-7**). Each three-note flutter stands in for a syllable, although the pitch material has been completely transformed. *Nicht diese töne*, Beethoven writes, *sondern laßt uns angenehmere anstimmen, und freudenvollere* (Not these sounds! Let us rather strike up more pleasing and joyful ones).[35] Sciarrino only quotes the first three words, though, and seems content to dwell in the negative space they suggest when taken apart from the second half of Beethoven's phrase. These tones are silenced, as is the piano's melody, but for the composer something emerges anew from this silencing. It is precisely the piano's existence in a space between human and machine, its loss of "normality," that makes it expressive. Silencing through restriction, the application of the mechanical to the human, affects Sciarrino's vocal *and* instrumental music.

[34] Hodges, Pizzo, and Wosner, *Piano Sonatas II-V; 4 Notturni*. Liner notes, pp. 17-18.
[35] Although Schiller wrote most of the text to the "Ode to Joy," Beethoven wrote this short introduction himself.



Example 2-6: Sciarrino, Piano Sonata V, opening



Example 2-7: Beethoven, Symphony 9, baritone entrance

Vocal timbre silenced through reduction

Earlier, I drew a connection between the following passage and Barthes's idea of the grain of the voice:

> When the voice is entrusted to silence, all that remains is the mouth, the oral cavity and saliva. The opening lips, boundary to a dark void, to thirst and to hunger.[36]

I would now like to return to the idea of entrusting the voice to silence in order to explore how Sciarrino creates for himself a fantastical yet all-too-material vocalic body in his music. In *Beyond Words*, Steven Connor takes on the problem of "noise" within vocal production, pointing out that the voice is capable of producing sounds that challenge the traditional binary distinction between noise and voice; these sounds include "the lisp, the gasp, the sigh, the rasp, the whistle,

[36] Neue Vocalsolisten Stuttgart, *12 madrigali*. Liner notes, pg. 24.

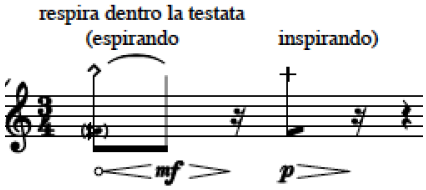
the hiss, the brrr, the purr, the snore, the sniffle, the crepitus, the croak."[37] He calls attention to the fact that while these distinctions seem clear, and are important for how we situate our metaphysics of the voice, they actually stand on unsteady ground. The breath is particularly problematic in this way:

> …although there is nothing in the voice that is not made of breath, though voice is breath through and through, there is yet a ravine that runs through voice, cleaving the true, transfigured voice from the mere unvoiced breath, and holding voice apart from that in the voice that is yet not voice. It is above all the noise of the breath that has seemed to constitute this shadow song, this whisper music, the voice of the unvoiced in the voiced.[38]

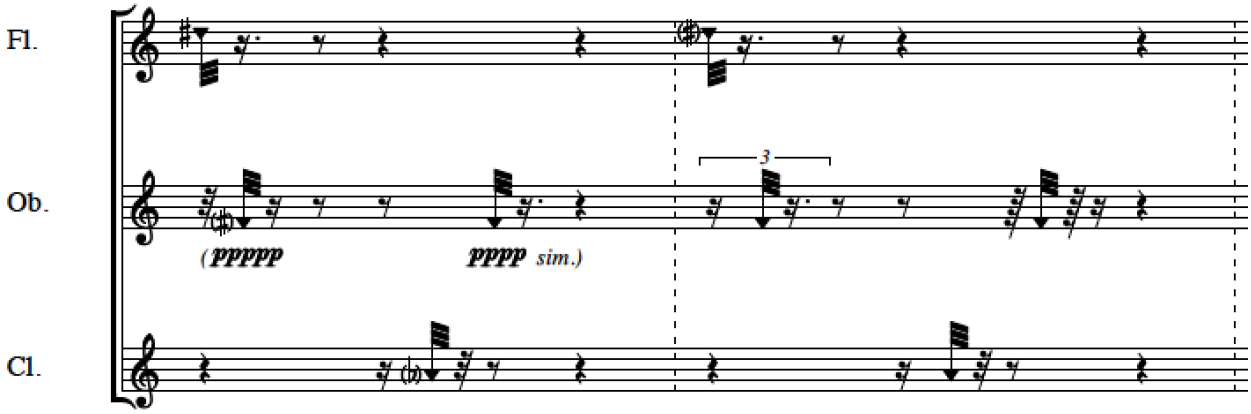
For Connor, breath is "shadow song," an underdetermined not-yet-voice, and it seems to be exactly this liminal quality that attracts Sciarrino to "opening lips, boundary to a dark void, to thirst and to hunger." One way that Sciarrino explores the material body in his works is through metabolic sounds, particularly those of breaths and heartbeats. To take him literally in his exhortation to entrust the voice to silence is to expect music made up entirely of the sounds that a body makes in order to digest and respire, and these sounds do occur frequently in Sciarrino's works, both vocal and instrumental. *Introduzione all'Oscuro* (1980), *Lohengrin* (1982/4), and *Il suono e il tacere* (2004), for instance, all contain sighs and heartbeats. Among his oeuvre, the opening eleven minutes of *Infinito Nero* (1997) come perhaps the closest to a pure version of entrusting the voice to silence. The work is scored for instrumental ensemble and one singer, and is based on the visions of St. Maria Maddalena de'Pazzi as transcribed by her four attendants. The nun's revelations came in quick bursts, and the beginning of *Infinito Nero* dramatizes the long, expectant silences that would have occurred between visions. Melody, singing, and voice have been radically reduced from this timespan—silenced—leaving a void filled by a patient

[37] Steven Connor, *Beyond Words: Sobs, Hums, Stutters and Other Vocalizations* (London: Reaktion Books, 2014), 34.
[38] Ibid., 35.

exploration of breath and heartbeat sounds. Importantly, though, none of these sounds are actually produced by the vocalist, but instead by instruments. The flutist breathes through the instrument (**Example 2-8**), and also holds down a steadily pulsed heartbeat around which the oboe and clarinet continually shift (**Example 2-9**).



Example 2-8: Sciarrino, Infinito Nero, breathing figure in flute



Example 2-9: Sciarrino, Infinito Nero, heartbeats in flute, oboe, and clarinet

It is left to the instruments of *Infinito Nero* to sound the body of Maria Maddalena de'Pazzi. Her body's intimate soundscape is stylized, and this transfer has the effect of rendering the boundary between body and instrument permeable, such that instruments become capable of producing bodily sounds.[39] Sciarrino is fond of borrowing from the distant past, and perhaps this is another instance: Connor points out that "in ancient and medieval conceptions of the body's

[39] Rebecca Leydon discusses the use of primary versus secondary parameters and how it relates to narrative in *Infinito Nero*. Paraphrasing Leonard Meyer, she explains that "primary parameters are understood in a relational sense to other sounds within a sound stream…whereas secondary parameters are immediately grasped in an instantaneous bodily fashion." See Rebecca Leydon, "Narrativity, Descriptivity, and Secondary Parameters: Ecstasy Enacted in Salvatore Sciarrino's *Infinito Nero*," in *Music and Narrative since 1900*, ed. Michael Leslie Klein and Nicholas W. Reyland, Musical Meaning and Interpretation (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012).

relationship to its physical and spiritual environment, for instance, individual bodies are seen as much more radically open to processes, influences, and agencies coming from the outside than they are in the modern world."[40] *Infinito Nero* is symptomatic of Sciarrino's more general tendency to conceive of the boundary between inside and outside as permeable, which allows the inward states of his operatic characters to be projected outward onto instruments. And it is not only a body's metabolic sounds that can be transmuted in this way, but also the very consciousness of a character. This is evident in his note for *Lohengrin*:

> Evoke the space within is a sort of epigraph to the new *Lohengrin*…*Lohengrin* is thus a cosmogony, entirely vocal. Elsa, Elsa's mouth, is its point of irradiation, but we are in the centre.[41]

…and echoed in his note to the first recording of *Luci mie traditrici*:

> Instruments usually serve as the foundation. In this case [of *Luci*], voices are the gravitational centre around which the other sounds orbit. Torn constellations embody streams of consciousness. As though you could hear what the protagonists sense around themselves.[42]

Sciarrino's vocalic bodies in these works are thus evoked by both vocal and instrumental sounds. Further, in an interview with Vinay, Sciarrino suggests that instruments themselves can produce metabolic sounds. When discussing a technique of running one hand up and down the keys of a piano without sound in order to pick up resonances, he said: "It is as if we can hear all the noises of the piano which are normally hidden by the sound. It is as if the piano also produced heartbeats."[43] The metabolic sounds of instruments, then are those sounds that they

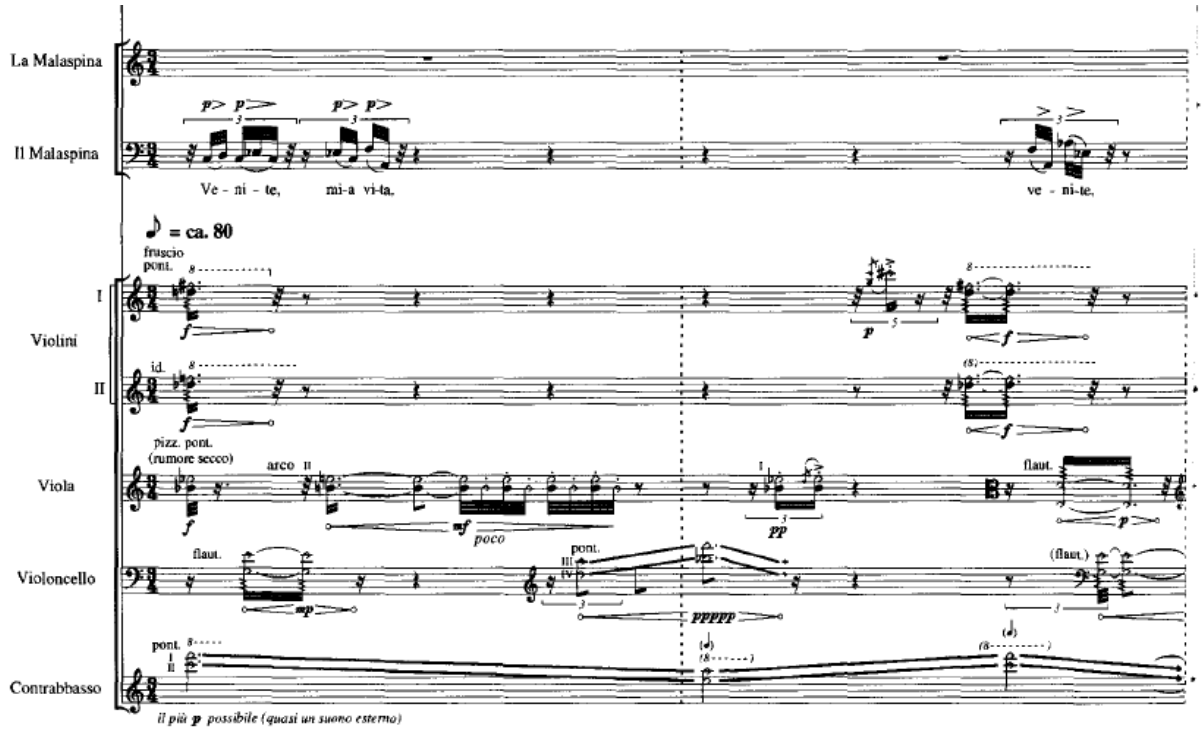
---

[40] Steven Connor, *Dumbstruck: A Cultural History of Ventriloquism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 13. Gary Tomlinson makes a similar claim in Tomlinson, *Metaphysical Song*, 9–27.
[41] Daisy Lumini and Gruppo Strumentale Musica d'Oggi, *Lohengrin azione invisibile per solista, strumenti e voci* (Italy: Stradivarius, 2008). Liner notes, pg. 4.
[42] Sciarrino, liner notes to *Luci mie traditrici,* 47.
[43] Nicolas Hodges, Oscar Pizzo, and Shai Wosner, *Piano Sonatas II-V; 4 Notturni* (Brussels: Cyprès, 2001). Liner notes, pg. 17.

make involuntarily, that make up, like Connor's breath, "the voice of the unvoiced in the voiced."

Luci doesn't contain heartbeats and breathing sounds to the extent of *Infinito Nero*, but it does feature long 'silences' with a similarly tense quality. David Metzer points out that the singing of *Luci* takes place against what he calls "rings of silence": an ever-present background of extended instrumental techniques such as key clicks and bow scraping.[44] These textures are in place from the very opening of the work. As the Duke invites his wife to attend to a rose he wishes to pick (*venite, mia vita, mirate qualia/mezza nascosta*, "Come, my life, see this one/half-concealed"; see **Example 2-10**), his voice is surrounded by a glassy instrumental texture that comprises of a number of distinctive figures that recur throughout the scene in subtly shifting combinations. The strings interject oscillations and tremolos using both artificial and natural harmonics, all over the texture of a slow, multi-stop harmonic slide in the bass, with a *sul pont*. marking adding extra indeterminacy to the fragility of the sound. As is true throughout the work, "pure" tone is nowhere to be heard in the instrumental accompaniment. In fact, it is conspicuously absent.

[44] Metzer, *Musical Modernism at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century*, 100.



Example 2-10: Luci, Act I, Scene I, mm. 1-2

Metzer points out that extended instrumental techniques are often those rendered inaudible in traditional playing modes; a clarinetist deemphasizes key clicks, while a violinist focuses on bringing out the fundamental tone of the string rather than its harmonics. The result of frequent use of extended techniques in a piece like *Luci* is a negative image, a sounding portrait of silence, as silenced "noise" steps out of the sonic shadows and becomes the foundation of the musical texture. The resultant sounds are unmistakably musical: they are made by highly trained performers and framed within the ritualistic space of the concert hall. But as legible as they are, they also seem deictic: to be pointing to music rather than being, in themselves, music. The sound of a heartbeat guarantees the presence of a human even if that human is restricted from singing, and lurking behind Sciarrino's extended techniques is the presence of an instrument capable of rendering a lyrical cantabile at full tone. His use of these techniques, then, involves a reduction that corresponds to the reduction he enacts on the voice: both instrument and voice are "entrusted to silence."

The absence of "pure tone" in Scene I of *Luci mie traditrici* is drawn into sharp relief, indeed made conspicuous, by the Prologue that directly precedes it. It is only in these opening minutes of the opera, when an unaccompanied countertenor sings the melody from Le Jeune's elegy in its entirety, that the voice is allowed to flourish, to be fully present without the kind of restriction discussed in the previous section. **Figure 2-1** shows two spectrograms that give a colorful representation of the stark difference in the sound worlds of the Prologue and Scene I: the first graphs the first minute of the Prologue, and the second graphs the first minute of Scene I. In the passage from the Prologue, the vast majority of the wave forms exist at the bottom of the spectrum, near the fundamental. This designates a clearly pitched timbre, relatively close to a sine wave. In the passage from Scene I, the wave forms are much less closely grouped, especially in the moments without voice. This dispersal captures a sense of the "noisiness" of the heterogeneous array of extended techniques. The opera thus opens with the sound of what a voice could have sounded like—the ensuing sounds, both in the intermezzi and in the scenes proper, are framed and conditioned by this moment. Sciarrino sets up the object of silencing here, and it's quite concrete.

I argued that extended instrumental techniques are, for Sciarrino, a mode of performing silence—that bringing forth these silenced sounds, just like bringing forth embodied sounds like heartbeats and breathing, puts an instrument under erasure by presenting its absence, so to speak. Over the course of its four iterations in the opera, Sciarrino gradually transmutes Le Jeune's elegy into "silence," putting it under erasure in a manner designed to foreground this very process. Its texture is transformed from vocal in the traditional sense to vocal in the fleshy sense Sciarrino describes: entrusted to silence. By the final recapitulation, it arrives at a point where it

is almost indistinguishable from the wall of instrumental sound that pervades the scenes proper, Metzer's "rings of silence."

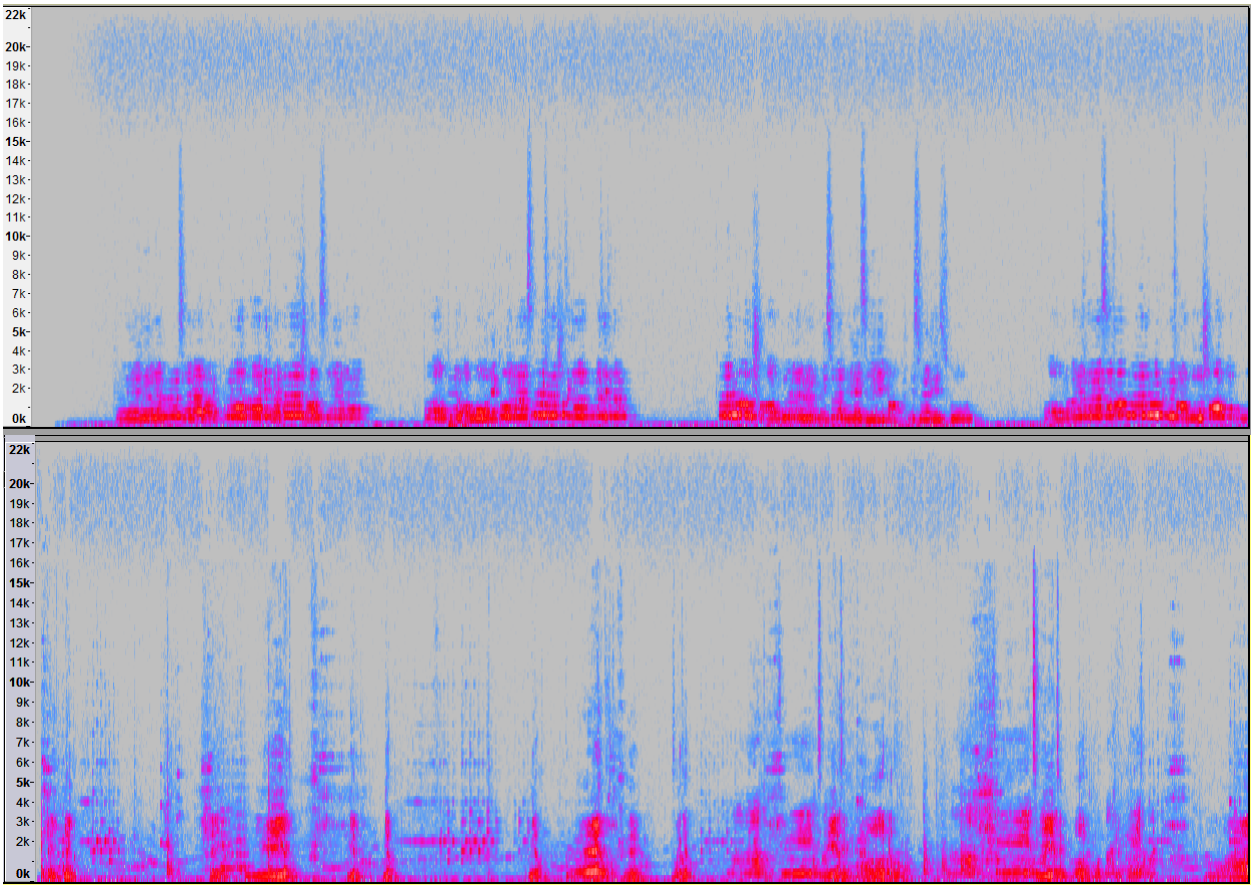


Figure 2-1: Spectrographs of the first minute of *Luci*'s Prologue (above) and Scene I (below)[45]

The first intermezzo of *Luci* is another instance where an instrument stands in for voice: it's an instrumental arrangement of Le Jeune's elegy with its original harmonization. For the most part, the instruments realize the three vocal parts of the original composition faithfully. The cello and two saxophones carry the prologue's melody in unison, but in every phrase, the cello "diminishes to the point of disappearance" (*dimin. sino a sparire*) while the two saxophones sidle in around the fourth beat of the phrase, with the second saxophone in "false unison" as it is made sharp by adjusting the mouthpiece (*falso unis. [il II intonazione crescente avvitando il*

[45] Annette Stricker et al., *Luci mie traditrici: Opera in Due Atti* (Germany: Kairos, 2001).

bocchino]). The effect of this timbral and dynamic voice exchange between instruments is a subtle sense of instability that creeps in toward the end of every phrase, only to dissolve at the beginning of the subsequent phrase as the instruments reclaim the dynamic level of the intermezzo's opening bar. Another subtle intrusion into the vocal tranquility of the first intermezzo takes the form of short interjections of artificial harmonics in the violins, as in mm. 3-4. This timbre, by now very familiar from the sound world of the scenes proper, also destabilizes the vocal nature of the intermezzo, growing increasingly active as the movement progresses. By the end of Intermezzo I, the timbre of artificial harmonics is present most of the time, but its short, fragmentary phrases and hairpin dynamics make it slippery, difficult to grasp. These hairpin gestures echo the vocal figuration in the scenes proper, to similar effect.

In the second intermezzo, the glassy sound of *Luci*'s instrumental world continues to invade Le Jeune's composition. The first viola stands in for the voice from the Prologue throughout the intermezzo, sounding its melody. Alto flute doubles viola, but with alternating dynamic swells, creating a shifting timbre reminiscent of the exchange between cello and saxophone in the first intermezzo. The now-familiar melody is still recognizable, but the high register and tremolo in the viola combined with the breathy tone of the flute further remove the music from the realm of the vocal and begin to deliver it to the realm of silence. The choice of flute and viola links the intermezzo with the scenes proper; like the flute, the viola has moments where it echoes vocal gestures. In the "Buio" (dark) section of Scene I, for instance, it echoes the last gesture sung by the Duchess before it fades away and begins to participate in the instrumental texture. In the first intermezzo, Sciarrino's destabilization of Le Jeune's melody is subtle, but in the second his interventions become unmistakable. Some instruments, particularly the bass clarinet, sound short interjections throughout the movement in a manner that would be

reminiscent of the first intermezzo, except that this time, these gestures are not doubling the pitch material of Le Jeune's composition. Instead, they are highly dissonant, lending them an almost combative air. An especially striking moment in mm. 35-38, as the trombone first obstructs the melody and then dares to interject a short melodic gesture of its own in m. 37.

The third and final intermezzo makes painstaking, halting progress through Le Jeune's elegy. All sense of rhythmic differentiation is destroyed as the tempo is dramatically reduced (Sciarrino's direction is actually *senza tempo*), and the melody similarly dissolves as it is distributed, note by note, throughout the ensemble. The texture is exquisitely delicate. As chords built out of meticulously notated artificial harmonics bleed into one another, the strain of maintaining such a fragile quality is palpable. Foreshadowing the Duchess's murder in the subsequent scene, the movement has the unmistakable air of a funeral march; a toll on the muted bass drum accompanies every chord change. Even the drum part is rendered frail and insubstantial by extreme muting. This intermezzo is also interrupted, but far more often: every few bars, the trudging melody pauses, and the ensuing space is filled by breath sounds in the brass and flutes interspersed with occasional, indeterminately pitched tongue slaps in the first bassoon. The transition from vocal texture to silence is cut off the barest heartbeat away from completion: the voice is almost entirely effaced, but does remain precariously present.

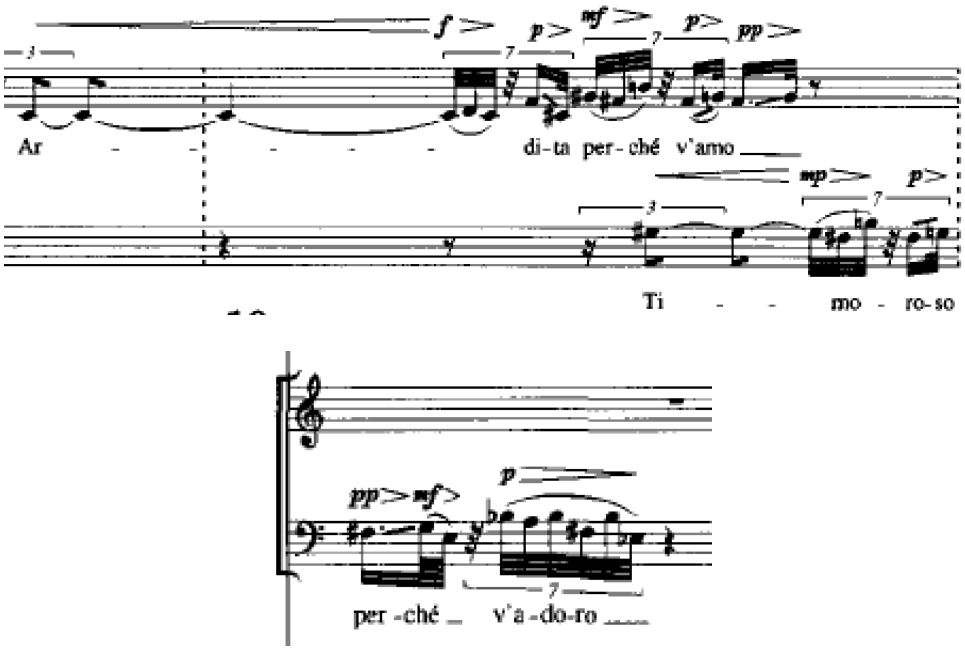
One might speak of a voice exchange taking place throughout the course of *Luci*'s Prologue and three intermezzi: the Prologue begins with the voice of Le Jeune's thwarted lover, and the final intermezzo ends with Sciarrino's particular rendition of a voice as "entrusted to silence." In the former, we are confronted again with one of the contradictions that guide this chapter—why are we allowed to experience Le Jeune's melody in full? Is his elegy not to be found amidst the landfills of songs that Sciarrino scorns? It seems that Sciarrino has found a way

to have his cake and eat it too. On the one hand, the voice at the beginning is meant to bring forth its own kind of numinousness, a familiar and non-alienated jouissance of exactly the kind that Sciarrino rejects in his preface to the *Madrigali*. On the other hand, it is allowed to flourish only under the conditions of its subsequent alienation and silencing: first, it has to be a song not Sciarrino's own, a song borrowed from the distant past. Second, it has to be reduced over the course of the opera, transformed into a different kind of voice: Sciarrino's "boundary to a dark void."

Singing subject silenced through voiding

The characters of *Luci* are peculiar, and peculiarly developed. They speak, passionately and at length, but they do not listen; the libretto is rife with disagreement and misunderstanding, and they never seem to change or instigate change in one another. I've already discussed how the consistently awkward text setting in Scene II seems at odds with the Duke and Duchess's ardent declarations of love (**Example 2-3**), and the tempo of their conversation contributes to an almost eerie effect. The Duchess's declaration of love appears to fall on deaf ears, as the Duke interrupts her to express a similar sentiment. The most important part of her phrase, *perché v'amo*, fades back into the background instrumental texture as the Duke's voice swells over it (**Example 2-11**); despite their shared message, the two characters are thus talking at cross purposes. It's remarkable how consistent these patterns remain between times when the Duke and Duchess are in strife (such as the first scene) and times when they appear to be united in purpose, as during this excerpt. They continually interrupt each other, and every phrase is labored and afflicted with lacunae created by short, gasping rests. At the end of Scene II, the Duke says "*andiamo, o mia vita*" and the Duchess responds, "*via seguo, o mio bene*" ("Let us be off, my life"/"I follow you o

my love"). Even here, the two lovers are not walking in step, but are instead leading and following.



Example 2-11: *Luci*, Scene II, mm. 9-11

Everyone in *Luci* falls in love at least once—in fact, very little of the dialogue is not consumed by fiery avowals of love and commitment. But this repetition, the constant state of heightened drama, serves to deaden the impact of these declarations much as the repetitive text setting deadens the impact of Sciarrino's melodic lines; it reveals and highlights the constructedness of the dramatic situation. One begins to suspect that at the core of each of these characters is a "dark void," a profound silence. This is most apparent in the third scene, which ends with pointing language, speech about speech:

Guest: *Sentite*	Listen
Duchess: *Uditemi*	Listen to me
Guest: *Che*?	What?
Duchess: *Cosa*?	What?
Guest: *Nulla*	Nothing
Duchess: *Niente*	Nothing

Again, meaning arises from a certain kind of silence; the characters of *Luci* are perhaps the most articulate in precisely those moments when they refuse to speak or speak only to say nothing. Carolyn Abbate reads the end of Lakmé's bell song in Delibes's eponymous opera as a moment in which the presence of a particular voice is far more important than the story the voice tells: "In this epilogue, both the sequential plot described by the words of the song, and the coherent sequence of musical events in the song, have dissolved into fragments as Lakmé becomes *explicitly* a body emanating sonority."[46] In both this case and the third scene of *Luci*, speech is voided and song draws attention to itself: an emptiness in plot becomes a fullness in grain.

The deadening effect of repetition is not felt only in the vocal lines. Like the fifth piano sonata, *Luci* is constituted by a small number of recognizable instrumental gestures—musical objects—whose circulation is free and seemingly random: in the opening, for instance, the saxophones tongue short, percussive bursts; the violins play tremolos on artificial harmonics; the viola oscillates between B and E; the bass and cello perform slow harmonic slides. In fact, sketch materials at the Paul Sacher Stiftung suggest that Sciarrino's compositional process revolves around the placement of predetermined musical objects. He appears to have written the vocal part in full before rendering it in miniature onto graph paper and surrounding it with colorful shapes that represent these musical objects—a yellow zigzag, for instance, stands in for the oscillating B-E figure in the viola that recurs frequently throughout the opera.[47] **Figure 2-2** shows a precompositional sketch for *Perseo e Andromeda*. Rather than being a linear act akin to

[46] Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, 9.
[47] Even the text is an assemblage: Sciarrino worked through La Forgue's text and slashed out the majority of it, leaving a libretto more terse and cryptic than its source.

speech, composition becomes an act of construction that reveals its constructedness at every turn. In this way, the composer himself is a vocal void.

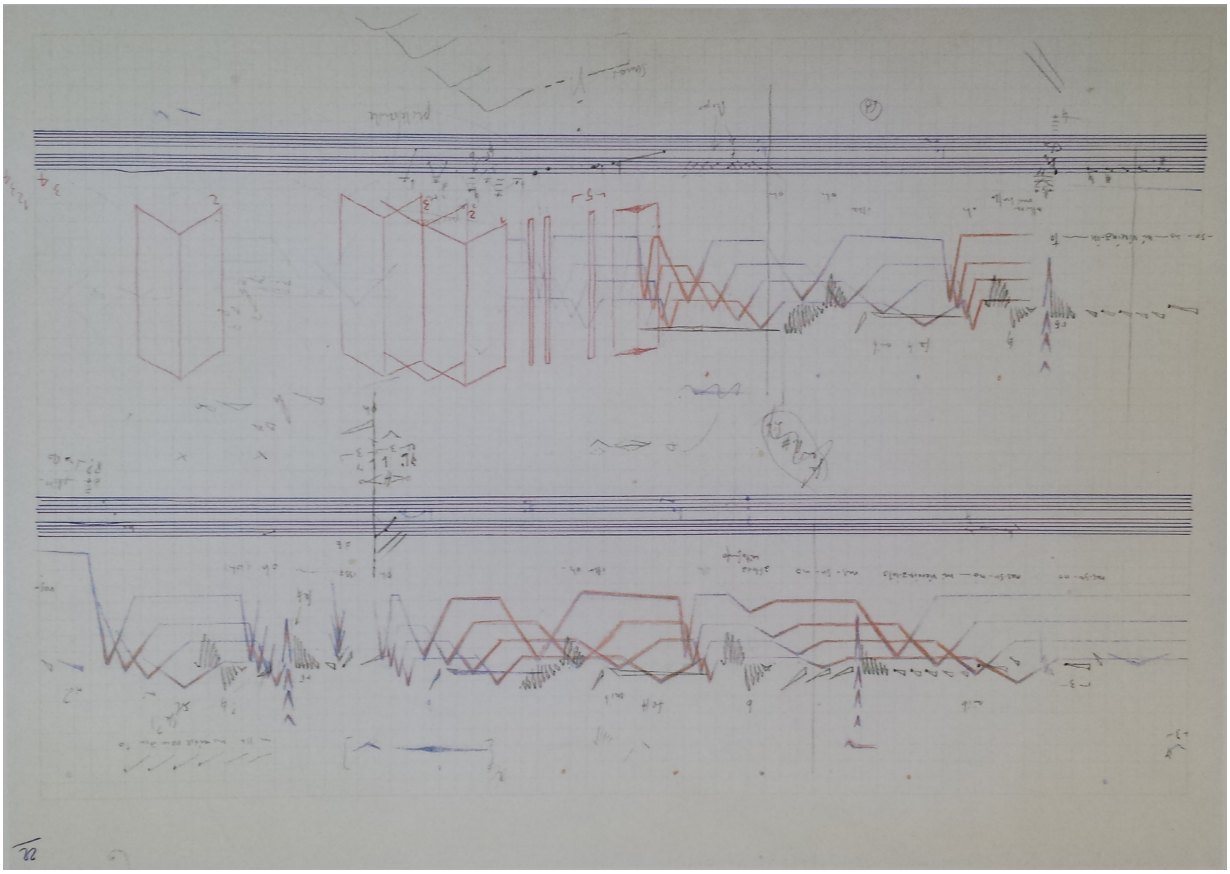


Figure 2-2: Sciarrino, sketch of *Perseo e Andromeda*

The temporality of Sciarrino's modernism

Like Rousseau, and like Wagner, Sciarrino sees the story of the voice as the story of a fall. In the pronouncements that I set out at the beginning of this chapter, he claims to give "song back all of its power" and help vocalism "[regain] immediacy." But unlike the imagined nostalgia of Rousseau and Wagner, Sciarrino's longing for the past exists in tension with a mandate to regain what is lost "without returning to old motifs" and "without going backwards." There exists a tension between past and present. This is not a straightforward progress-narrative,

but neither is it a call to return to a specific historical moment. Rather, it suggests a kind of rejection of "history" *tout court*, at least insofar as Sciarrino's history-of-the-voice is one indelibly marked by "redundancy," "rhetoric," "artificiality." In this sense, Sciarrino's voice suffers from history, as an unfolding temporal process of mortifying accumulation, the filling up of vital and enlivening apertures, the freezing of mobilities and indeterminacies, the foreclosing of possibility. If it is an act of revival, strictly speaking it has no object; what has been lost is a kind of lack that the post-lapsarian life of the voice keeps closing up. There is a strange, surprising tinge of conservatism in this vision: it is a vision of an almost pre-modern voice, a voice before modernity usurped its magic.[48]

In a note to 1999 voice-and-ensemble work *Cantare con silenzio,* Sciarrino returns to this vision in a particularly pointed way:

> Lately my music has formulated a desire for greater intensity of expression, and reduced its means. Some residual bitter experience, combined with the spark of imagination, I do not know. In fact, my music increasingly wants to become the voice. It would be painful for me to say the already said, far more painful than the risk of being unpleasant. Melodies and recitations, new, then, and equally touching, that is, old. Not those of our grandparents: I mean deeply ancient, near the point where expression becomes fear. And yet totally new. Lines suspended in a vacuum, beyond this there is little else. Dwellers of the night, which accompaniment for them would ever be sufficiently bare? I can only bring together the hardness of the present, the beaten stones, the gunfire.
>
> And time of silences and wounds. Also hidden resonances. Now we can "sing with silence," in the words of Maddalena de 'Pazzi […]
>
> Self-improvement. Everyone must want it, because each is born already in dialogue.
>
> We have no other weapons against the seductions of the banal, against the drying up of knowledge, the cooling of the world.[49]

[48] This resonates with Gary Tomlinson's description of the transition between the pre-modern notion that the human body was inseparable from the world around it and modern dualism. See Tomlinson, *Metaphysical Song*. See also Mary Ann Smart's incisive review, where she points out the advantages and problems that come from Tomlinson's apparent nostalgia for pre-modern thinking in *19th-Century Music* 23, no. 1 (1999): 103–9.

[49] Salvatore Sciarrino, *Carte da suono: (1981-2001)*, ed. Dario Oliveri (Palermo: Novecento, 2001), 182–83. Thanks to Jess Peritz for help with the translation. "Ultimamente la mia musica ha formulato un desiderio di maggiore intensità espressiva, e riduzione dei suoi mezzi. Un certo residua amaro dell'esperienza, combinato all'accendersi dell'immaginazione, non so. Di fatto, la mia musica vuole sempre più farsi voce. Sarebbe penoso per me dire il già detto, assai più penoso che il rischio di risultare sgradevole. Melodie e recitazioni nuove dunque, ed egualmente

The note is pathetic—that is, full of unabashed pathos—but this shouldn't conceal its conceptual commitments. Desire for the noumenal saturates it. The past Sciarrino seeks is deliberately beyond living memory—before the time of grandparents, but also modernity, history. It is utopian in a way that recalls the double etymology of the word, "good place" and "no place."[50] It is itself a void, a place of uncertainty and even fear. It is a no-place with coordinates strikingly similar to Adorno's *musique informelle,* "saying it without knowing what," "making things without knowing what they are." And as Sciarrino makes clear, the way for his music to approach this historical void—or rather, this void *in* history, this pre-history constantly reappearing *at historical moments*—is through the figure of the silent voice, singing, like the ecstatic Pazzi, "with silence." Something of this thinking is captured in Sciarrino's "conceptual translation" of Nono's title *La lontananza nostalgica utopica futura*: "the past reflected in the present (*nostalgica*) brings about a creative utopia (*utopica*), the desire for what is known becomes a vehicle for what will be possible (*futura*) through the medium of

---

toccanti, cioè antiche. Non quelle dei nostri nonni: intendo profondamente antiche, vicino al punta dove l'espressione diviene spavento. Eppure totalmente nuove. Linee sospese nel vuoto, oltre c'è poco altro. Abitatrici della notte, quale accompagnamento sarebbe per esse mai nudo abbastanza? Sono riuscito ad accostarvi solo la durezza del presente, le pietre battute, gli spari.

E tempo di silenzi e di lacerazioni. Anche di risonanze nascoste. Ora possiamo "cantare con silenzio", secondo l'espressione di Maddalena de' Pazzi.

[…]

Più di altre, questa composizione può apparire come un rituale di riflessione o un'esperienza di pulizia del percepire, per meglio indagare le direzioni e le intermittenze del tempo e della spazio. Non a caso la scelta dei testi e indirizzata verso la prospettiva morale dell'individuo, verso la soggettività del tempo e l'interazione tra morte e vita, per finire con una cosmogonia intonata dalla scienza moderna. Non deve sorprendere quella parola, morale. V'e un passaggio indistinto eppure a tutti necessaria, dove la nostra vita diventa eccezionale qualora subentri il coraggio della creatività. Per raggiungere in pieno le proprie potenzialità, entrano in gioco l'uomo vecchio e l'uomo nuovo, se veramente vogliamo cambiare.

Migliorarsi. Ciascuno deve volerlo, perché nasca già dentro se il dialogo.

Non abbiamo altre armi contra le seduzioni del banale, contra l'inaridirsi del sapere, il raffreddarsi del mondo."

[50] The term, of course, was coined by Sir Thomas More in *Utopia*, ed. George M. Logan and Robert M. Adams (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989). Many scholars have discussed this ambiguity in More's nomenclature, most recently James Romm, "More's Strategy of Naming in the Utopia," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 22, no. 2 (1991): 173–83.

distance."[51] And this translation in turn recalls Jonathan Flatley's process of affective mapping, and the four steps I laid out in Chapter 1: (1) a melancholic response to the commodification and demystification so central to the experience of modernity; (2) a response to that melancholia that involves affective mapping, or alienation from and analysis of these aspects of modernity; (3) the consideration of the voice as potentially resistant or disruptive to these aspects, but not achieving this potential as it is currently or formerly used in classical musical practice; and (4) the proffering of a musical "solution" involving an alternative form of voice that does resist and disrupt commodification and demystification.

Paradoxically, Sciarrino's no-place only seems accessible via history, via the routes provided by specific music-historical coordinates, whether they be sound-figures, genres, venues, scenarios, or people. The clashing presence of these sundered or damaged pasts is precisely what makes the no-place appear as their antithesis, "deeply ancient" and "totally new" at once. It is a drastic which is produced, ironically, by the failure of the gnostic. (This may go some way to explaining Sciarrino's historical "crate-digging", his search for particularly well-hidden historical arcana: ideal "gnostic objects", of which Pazzi herself is an exemplar.) The pre-existing melody is such an archetype. The composers inspiring *Luci* are already outside history, or at least deeply uneasy in it; they chafe against their own time, too "modern" for it and simultaneously not properly modern enough. I have already shown how Sciarrino picks up aspects of both Monteverdi and Wagner's dissatisfaction with contemporary vocal practices.[52] But perhaps a more important foil is Gesualdo, whose music Sciarrino felt compelled to abandon

[51] Melise Mellinger and Salvatore Sciarrino, *La lontananza nostalgica utopica futura* (Vienna: Kairos, 2000). Liner notes, p. 13.

[52] Both Monteverdi and Gesualdo often come up in discussions of modernism: Massimo Maria Ossi goes so far as to claim that Monteverdi himself was a modernist, while Glen Watkins shows how modernists have used Gesualdo to their own ends through the years. See Massimo Ossi, *Divining the Oracle: Monteverdi's Seconda Prattica* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 250–252; Glenn Watkins, *The Gesualdo Hex: Music, Myth, and Memory* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010).

in *Luci*, but whose presence makes itself felt nonetheless. In *Luci,* Gesualdo remains the sign of something still at odds with his own modernity, a modernity perhaps best signified by Monteverdi's *seconda prattica.* As Maria Rika Maniates points out, Gesualdo worked alongside practices of *seconda prattica*, but to very different ends:

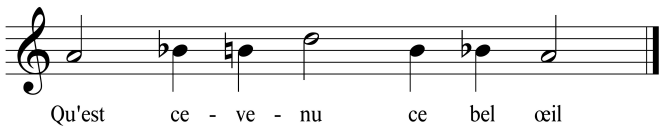
> In Gesualdo's *maniera*, unorthodox treatment of nonharmonic components remains a deliberate deviation from the *ars perfecta*; in this sense, it functions as a negative factor in an extreme stylization of past tradition. And from this point of view, Gesualdo emerges as an archmannerist whose audacities presume an ingrained response to normal procedures. Gesualdo uses his tricks to shock and surprise.[53]

Ironically, Maniates contextualizes Gesualdo's flouting of convention in relation to Monteverdi, who used unorthodox chords as "positive factors" that work as "progressive ingredients of baroque style." If Monteverdi and Gesualdo are both swept up in their modernity, Monteverdi at least attempts to "feel at home in it;" Gesualdo remains outside it, even as he works within it.

Le Jeune may seem an odd choice to replace Gesualdo, but his in some ways quite contradictory humanist tendencies resonate even better with Sciarrino's own. Le Jeune was a prominent member of the Baïf Académie, composing in the emerging style of *musique mesurée à l'antique*. Le Jeune's elegy itself is furthermore a study in musical resurrection. As a humanist and a follower of poet Jean-Antoine de Baïf, Le Jeune was deeply interested in reaching backward to the mythicized power of ancient Greek music. D.P. Walker and François Lesure explain how the development of *musique mensurèe* in Baïf's academy was based on two main assumptions: "first, that music and poetry must be closely united, as in antiquity; secondly, that this union, if properly carried out, would result in a revival of the ethical effects of ancient music."

[53] Maria Rika Maniates, *Mannerism in Italian Music and Culture, 1530-1630* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 392.

So again, a commitment to the "deeply ancient" *as* the "totally new". The particular Le Jeune song that Sciarrino uses, "*Qu'est devenu ce bel œil*," is a well-known example of this effort. An elegy, it was only published posthumously in 1608 as part of a collection of works categorized under the heading of *musique mesurée*. In it, Le Jeune attempts to recapture the ancient effects in three ways. First, he followed the *musique mesurée* practice of understanding his text as divided into long and short syllables, and setting them in strict proportion such that long syllables were twice the length of short. Second, he set the work homophonically so that the text could be easily understood. Both of these techniques were meant to create a close text-music relationship, and specifically one where music is subordinate to text. Finally, the remarkably chromatic tonal language of the elegy is a product of Le Jeune's experimentation with Greek tetrachords as understood by Zarlino, and one in particular that contains the tones of the [0125] set class. In presenting the elegy's top line alone, Sciarrino's Prologue inevitably foregrounds this tetrachord which marks it so consistently (**Example 2-12**):[54]



Example 2-12: Opening gesture of *Luci*'s Prologue with Greek tetrachord

But it does something else as well: it removes at least the minimal if deeply unorthodox tertian harmonic supports with which Le Jeune "protects" the melody, keeping it moored in a dialectic of tension and release. Without these supports, the elegy's melody becomes increasingly harmonically uncoordinatable; the effect is uncanny, of an object both old—weathered, damaged, potentially in ruins—and new—incomplete, precarious, only just barely

[54] For more on Le Jeune, *musique mensurée*, and Baïf, see D. P. Walker and François Lesure, "Claude Le Jeune and 'Musique Mesurée,'" *Musica disciplina* 3, no. 2/4 (1949): 165–168.

sketched out. It is perhaps Sciarrino's own ad-hoc way of trying to re-introduce something there not just *in* Le Jeune's elegy, but there *when* it was first performed, and since lost as the piece became yet another object in the mountains of late modern song. In this case, as in so many others, Sciarrino adds by taking away.

In *Luci mie traditrici* as well as other works, an anxiety and melancholy about the modern conditions of mass production and demystification generate a piece where song is evoked in a multitude of ways, but also painstakingly denied the opportunity to define itself fully, to settle in to legibility and become a "comfortable" part of the world. Flatley is careful to note that the aesthetic responses to modernity that fall under his conception of modernism are neither "cathartic, compensatory, nor redemptive,"[55] and this is especially noticeable when it involves the treatment of the voice, which is so often understood as having redemptive power. Sciarrino's is a song that no one can sing along to, a song that aims at that place in an individual body and person where words fail, where melody breaks or blanches, where only silence is audible.

[55] Flatley, *Affective Mapping*, 5.

Chapter 3 - Voice and Residual Meaning in Steve Reich's *Music for 18 Musicians*

In 1963-64,[1] Steve Reich completed music for a Robert Nelson film called *The Plastic Haircut*. This was the first time Reich had worked with tape, and he drew his materials from a compilation called *Greatest Moments in Sport*, which featured voices of famous American athletes like Babe Ruth and Jack Dempsey. The form is much looser and less process-oriented than Reich's later and more famous tape pieces like *It's Gonna Rain* (1965) and *Come Out* (1966), but one can hear his burgeoning interest in splicing and looping, and also in manipulating recordings of the speaking voice. The work begins with a mélange of phrases such as "outstanding contender" and "national pastime," many of which are uttered in the distinctively forced style of mid-century sports announcers. As it progresses, collage gives way to seamless mixture: the source material becomes increasingly fragmented and less indexical, prefiguring the more methodical process of *It's Gonna Rain*.

Compare this *musique concrète*-inspired work to *Music for 18 Musicians*, premiered in 1976. At first blush, these two works could easily be by different composers. The uses of the voice, in particular, are remarkably dissimilar. *Music for 18* is performed entirely by live players (with the help of microphones and amplification), and its steadily pulsed, wordless texture offers no obvious purchase in terms of indexicality. In *The Plastic Haircut*, as well as Reich's better-known early tape pieces, he cuts, loops, and layers the speaking voice, placing it in an estranged aesthetic context. In *Music for 18*, we hear something quite different: a *singing* voice, and—more

[1] According to Ross Cole, creating the film took place over a long span of time and people remember the exact time of its completion differently. See Ross Cole, "'Fun, Yes, but Music?' Steve Reich and the San Francisco Bay Area's Cultural Nexus, 1962–65," *Journal of the Society for American Music* 6, no. 03 (August 2012): 325–26.

importantly—a singing voice imitating musical instruments, blurring the line between one and the other.

In this chapter, I propose a deep relation between these pieces: that in both cases, Reich takes on the voice as a problem. Across his career, Reich's solutions to this problem are manifold, informing—perhaps driving—even such singular works as *Tehillim*. Ultimately, I claim that Reich is motivated by finding for himself what I call the "vocal imaginary" in Chapter 1. My argument will unfold in four parts. First, I'll do some close reading of Reich's writings and interviews that illuminate this problem. Second, I'll turn an analytic lens on two works composed before and after *Music for 18 Musicians*, respectively—*It's Gonna Rain* and *Tehillim*—to see how it plays out in music. Third, I'll focus on a close reading of *Music for 18;* and finally I'll close with some thoughts about how Reich's relationship with the voice might complicate his professed relationship with modernism, calling into question his adversative stance vis-à-vis modernist practices.

As a way into the deep relation between *The Plastic Haircut* and *Music for 18*, I turn to Reich describing the optimism he felt upon completing the music for the earlier piece:

> The exciting thing was that the voices, used as sound, nevertheless have a residual meaning that was also very ambiguous—it could be sporting, or sexual, or political—and immediately seemed to me to be the *solution to vocal music*.[2] (1970, emphasis mine)

First of all, this work is nowhere to be found on Reich's official catalogue from his well-maintained website, suggesting that it failed to constitute a lasting solution.[3] Second, the need for a solution implies a problem, and yet, his problem is articulated only in the most indirect terms. The fact that almost half of his works to date feature voices suggests that the problem is not

[2] Steve Reich, *Writings on Music, 1965-2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 53–54.
[3] "The Steve Reich Website," accessed December 13, 2014, http://stevereich.com/.

simply the presence of the voice itself. In fact, in 1996 Reich confirmed the important role voice continues to play in his music:

> *It's Gonna Rain, Come Out, Drumming, Music for Mallet Instruments, Voices and Organ, Music for 18 Musicians, Tehillim, The Desert Music, Different Trains, The Cave, City Life,* and *Proverbs*—they're all vocal pieces, though in very different ways. Sometimes they're recorded words, with or without instruments, sometimes it's singing words, sometimes it's vocalise. I realized that many of my best pieces do, in fact, use a singing or speaking voice.[4] (1997)

If the problem does not reside within the voice itself, is it something that accompanies the voice? Something the voice does? Reich does express often, and in strong terms, his dislike for the classically trained singing voice; his writings are strewn with severe opinions like the following:

> I find most operatic voices to be somewhat artificial, loud and abrasive to listen to.[5] (1989)
>
> bel canto…at least to my ear, sounds artificial as a vocal style in English.[6] (1996)

These accusations of artificiality, made seven years apart, suggest that, for Reich, the decision of what kind of voice to use is an ethical one. His concern about an *artificial* voice implies that there exists the possibility of a better voice that is somehow real—*authentic*. I would argue that his "problem of vocal music" in 1963 already registers this concern with authenticity. Taking a more leisurely pass through Reich's statement about *The Plastic Haircut*—with a particular focus on some of the key terms he employs—can reveal how he contends with the problem of authenticity and the voice:

> The exciting thing was that the voices, used **as sound**, nevertheless have a **residual meaning** that was also **very ambiguous**—it could be **sporting, or sexual, or political**—and immediately seemed to me to be the **solution to vocal music**.

[4] Steve Reich, *Works 1965-1995*, compact disc (New York: Nonesuch, 1997). Liner notes, interview with Jonathan Cott, pg. 29.
[5] Reich, *Writings on Music, 1965-2000*, 157.
[6] Ibid., 194.

In stating that he uses these voices **as sound**, Reich's first move is to call for "reduced listening", a practice extensively theorized by Pierre Schaeffer and more recently Michel Chion and Brian Kane.[7] In reduced listening, one isolates a sound from its cause in order to appreciate it aesthetically as a 'sound object'. In this case, the cause is people speaking. The voices in *The Plastic Haircut* are not meant to be heard as voices, Reich says, but simply as sounds. Right away, though, he turns back on himself: the reduction is somehow incomplete, and leaves a **residual meaning**. These voices pass through a filter meant to separate sound from source, vocalization from vocalizing subject, and yet, the filtration process is imperfect, deliberately so. It leaves a remainder, a residue, which is itself **very ambiguous**—underdetermined—and yet, it is something that connects the voices back to their sources, and particularly to the communicative intentions and subject positions (**sporting**, **sexual**, **political**) behind these utterances. I suggest that this residue, this entity that evokes subjectivity but in an underdetermined way, is Reich's **solution to** *subjectivity in* **vocal music**: a means of recuperating the voice as capable of "fortify[ing] the expression of the subject."

But to recuperate it from what? Why is what Reich called the operatic voice artificial? He complains about a grating timbre, but the real problem seems to lie in what he perceives as its reified, historically over-determined nature. The operatic voice is a historical artifact, an anachronism:

> …if your opera is about characters who lived anywhere from the 1930s to the present, and then you unquestioningly have your singers sing as if they stepped out of eighteenth- or nineteenth-century Germany or Italy, you create a superficial and inadvertently foolish and amusing situation.[8] (1992)

[7] Michel Chion, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), especially Chapter 2; Brian Kane, *Sound Unseen: Acousmatic Sound in Theory and Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 5.
[8] Reich, *Writings on Music, 1965-2000*, 167.

Reich proves himself a bad historian here, for opera's history is rife with polemics and reformations surrounding different kinds of "operatic voices." But collapsing the plethora of vocal styles that flourished in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Germany and Italy (opera seria and its Gluckian reform, bel canto, verismo, Wagnerian melodrama, and so on) into a single category allows him an ethics of the voice that reveals a distinctly Rousseauian strain. For Reich, representing a contemporary character through the modality of the classically trained voice is "superficial", even "foolish": too rigid, too codified, too *historical*. It's an over-standardized practice, an outmoded tool impinging upon an authentic mode of expression: it has been compromised by the phenomenal. As such, it gets in the way of the noumenal "residual meaning" that is so exciting to Reich in his note to the *Plastic Haircut*.

Both Reich and Sciarrino reject the phenomenal and seek the noumenal through voice. But an important difference between them is that Reich doesn't share Sciarrino's interest in origins, in a Rousseauian narrative of a fall. Sciarrino understands the present crisis in relation to the past, but Reich sees a voice free from phenomena as a moving target, a goal to be strived for. He is adamantly pro-progress and consistently values music he sees as of its immediate moment, rejecting notions of absolute worth or timeless musical precepts. The operatic voice is thus not inappropriate for past composers—Rossini, Verdi, and Wagner each had their own ways of dealing with the voice, which was acceptable for them in their own times—but in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, it is an unseemly relic, better unheard and unseen.

This chapter will show that as much as the singing voice presents a problem for Reich, it is nonetheless a means by which he seeks out the noumenon in his works. He pursues this "sensory upset" and attempts to evoke the "ambiguous" and "residual meaning" of the singing voice by means of a double move. First, using widely varying techniques, Reich reduces what he

understands as phenomena out of the singing voice. This category encompasses "bel canto" vocal production, as described above, as well as other aspects of vocal performance—in the following section, I will understand phenomena along three axes identified by the composer. Second, by reducing out phenomena, he aims to invite the noumenal back in as something "ambiguous" and underdetermined. As I will show, Reich's understanding of what constitutes the phenomenal is idiosyncratic and raises serious problems, particularly in his early works; indeed, he at times rejects one form of artifice only to fall into another. To illustrate how the reductive process plays out, I turn now to two pieces, one from early in Reich's career, and one from mid-to-late.

Persona, melody, and meaning in *It's Gonna Rain* and *Tehillim*

In the two most famous tape works from the 1960s, *Come Out* and *It's Gonna Rain*, Reich loops and phases short spoken phrases. The result is that the musical aspects of the speech—pitch and rhythm—become increasingly salient. Reich's professed intent, at least at the time of this piece (1965), was to "keep the original emotional power that speech has while intensifying its melody *and* meaning through repetition and rhythm."[9] In this formulation, meaning and melody are mutually reinforcing. A reflection two decades later, on *Different Trains* (1988), echoes this idea: "We are, with speech melody, in an area of human behavior where music, meaning, and feelings are completely fused."[10]

> Notice the consistent terminology in these statements:
>
> keep the original **emotional** power that speech has while intensifying its **melody** *and* **meaning** through repetition and rhythm.

[9] Ibid., 19. Emphasis Reich's.
[10] Ibid., 181.

> We are, with speech **melody**, in an area of human behavior where **music**, **meaning**, and **feelings** are completely fused.

In each, we have three terms for the "residual meaning" (remember, this is Reich's phrase) that accompanies the voice. The first is melody or music—the sound of the voice experienced aesthetically. Let's call this **melody** as a heuristic. The second is **meaning**—the semantic information conveyed by a vocalist's words. The third is emotion or feeling—the affective urgency that lies behind an utterance, the sense that it issues from a human subject. Again, as a heuristic, let's call this **persona**. Martin Scherzinger and others have rightly pointed out that the relationship between these three elements is not nearly so harmonious and mutually reinforcing in *It's Gonna Rain* as Reich maintains.[11] Contra Reich, a more critical way of interpreting this piece would note how it separates these aspects of the voice (persona, meaning, melody), and performs an act of reduction on each. I will focus here on *It's Gonna Rain*, part 1, taking them each up in turn.

Persona

It's Gonna Rain has a "character" of sorts, a subject whose "emotion" and "feelings" are supposedly "intensified" through the compositional process itself. This subject is Brother Walter, the African-American Pentacostal preacher Reich recorded in San Francisco's Union Square in 1964. In his note to the piece, Reich maintains that:

> [a] human being is personified by his or her voice. If you record me, my cadences, the way I speak are just as much me as any photograph of me. When other people listen to that they feel a persona present.[12] (1965)

[11] Martin Scherzinger, "Curious Intersections, Uncommon Magic: Steve Reich's *It's Gonna Rain*," *Current Musicology*, no. 79/80 (Fall 2005): 207–44; Sumanth Gopinath, "The Problem of the Political in Steve Reich's *Come Out* (1966)," in *Sound Commitments: Avant-Garde Music and the Sixties*, ed. Robert Adlington (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 121–44.
[12] Reich, *Writings on Music, 1965-2000*, 21.

Reich strives to bring forth the body of a speaking subject in his music, and this vocalic body is cohesive, singular: in a word, Rousseauian. This leads to a paradox, because the only way to create such an idealized vocalic body is to absent the actual body of Brother Walter—the subject in question—from the performance situation. The auditory experience of *It's Gonna Rain* is pointedly acousmatic, and invites "reduced listening" in the Schaefferian sense. This ambivalent relationship to the staging of a "character" is, in fact, entirely consistent throughout Reich's oeuvre. Alongside his experimentation with the voice exists a deeply related search for a "new kind of musical theater" (a term that surfaces repeatedly in his writing beginning in the late 1980s). Why new? In an interview about a much later work, *The Cave* (1993), Reich described the problems he encountered at the idea of incorporating singing characters into the work: "I don't really feel comfortable with the idea of singers acting biblical roles—that tenor is Abraham…hmm."[13]

He limits his discussion here to biblical roles, but, surveying his work from the very earliest pieces to the most recent, one notices a distinct lack: despite all of the voices in Reich's works, and despite his many claims to music theater, there exists not a single *actor*. That is, he has never asked a singer to take on a particular persona, to speak in the first person as a character.[14] It's not just the operatic voice, then, that Reich opposes; banishing it is necessary but not sufficient to address his particular aversion to the phenomenal. The idea of having a character is inconsistent with his idealized vocalic body, which must be immediate and authentic. The acousmatic reduction of *It's Gonna Rain* constitutes one way that Reich reduces "acting" from

[13] Ibid., 175.
[14] Reich's closest brush with 'acting' occurs in *The Cave*, where musical instruments and singers echo speech samples. As Antonella Puca points out, though, it is absolutely essential that the spoken parts be present—it is in the microintervals of speech that Reich finds a person's "inner voice." For Reich, the music is a decoration of this inner voice, "stylizing, stressing the tonal part." Antonella Puca, "Steve Reich and Hebrew Cantillation," *The Musical Quarterly* 81, no. 4 (December 1, 1997): 551. Reich quotations from Enzo Restagno, *Reich* (Torino: EDT, 1994), 111.

his works while maintaining a sense of character. It's a bit of a paradox, and more than a bit of a problem: according to Reich, the best way to present a vocal subject is to physically absent the subject through the very medium of its presentation.[15]

Meaning

Though Brother Walter' original oration was quite coherent, within this piece he doesn't speak full, semantically intact sentences. Instead, his words are fragmented, looped, and layered. The result of this reduction, however, is that the apocalypse that Brother Walter describes actually arrives; what word prophecies, sound delivers. Another paradox: the less speech we understand, the more the music makes us understand the speech. Loss of semantic content becomes a kind of enactment of its message.[16]

Melody

For Reich, who is remarkably consistent about giving the recorded spoken voice pride of place in terms of authenticity, it is important that Brother Walter's voice is unmediated by the "interpretive" act of singing. In an interview about *Different Trains*, for instance, he identifies a phenomenal aspect to the mediated nature of singing, favoring the 'documentary' quality of the recorded voice:

> There is no singer's 'interpretation' but, rather, this: people bearing witness to their own lives. Their speech melody is the *unpremeditated organic expression* of the events they lived through.[17] (1996, emphasis mine)

---

[15] Several authors have taken on the fraught relationship between theater and acting and contemporary music. See Herbert Lindenberger, *Situating Opera: Period, Genre, Reception*, Cambridge Studies in Opera (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Jelena Novak, "Singing Corporeality: Reinventing the Vocalic Body in Postopera" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Amsterdam, 2012).

[16] Maartin Beirens makes a similar point about music enacting words, positing this interpretation as an alternative to that put forth by especially Sumanth Gopinath, who hears the dissolution of voices in the early tape pieces as a form of violence. See Maarten Beirens, "Voices, Violence and Meaning: Transformations of Speech Samples in Works by David Byrne, Brian Eno and Steve Reich," *Contemporary Music Review* 33, no. 2 (March 4, 2014): 210–22; Gopinath, "The Problem of the Political in Steve Reich's *Come Out* (1966)."

[17] Reich, *Writings on Music, 1965-2000*, 198.

As Reich sees it, a singer "interpreting" Brother Walter's words in a "premeditated" way would be "inorganic," and incapable of "expressing" him authentically. *Singing* is out of the question. And yet: speaking is "unpremeditated," "organic," "expressive." In another interview, Reich raises the stakes even further by claiming that "speech melodies are windows into people's souls" and emphasizing their importance in dramatic music: "because it's impossible to separate the music from the person speaking."[18] If singing is a form of phenomenon here, a tool separable from the subject wielding it, the spoken voice—inseparable from its source—exists in the category of the noumenal. It would seem that rather than abandoning Rousseau's (and Cone's) call for the authenticity and subjective immediacy of the vocal act, Reich has simply relocated these qualities from the singing voice to the speaking voice.

His tape manipulations effect a parallel move in their aestheticization, even stylization, of the voice. As Diana Deutsch showed empirically in 1995, looping a recorded voice gives it the "illusion" of melodiousness:[19] the singing voice, structurally absented from the piece, thus re-emerges in unconventional form. In the early tape pieces, *Reich has turned the speaking voice into a singing voice* both in terms of what it sounds like and what it signifies.

There are problems here—serious ones. And the last decade of scholarly work on Reich has initiated a robust critique of Reich's early tape pieces. Martin Scherzinger points out that "Reich's descriptions of Brother Walter's role in the making of *It's Gonna Rain* are disarmingly technical," with the result that the singular, corporeal personage of the preacher is lost in two kinds of abstraction. First, when his voice is subjected to the impersonal process of phasing, it loses its context:

[18] Ibid., 178.
[19] Diana Deutsch, Trevor Henthorn, and Rachel Lapidis, "Illusory Transformation from Speech to Song," *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* 129, no. 4 (2011): 2245–52.

> Walter's voice becomes an instrumental abstraction in service of new musical subject matter and compositional technique. Walter's own field of referents and coordinates is thereby set adrift, if not banished, and the disruptive interrogations that Walter's sermon potentially pose, as well as the historical conditions of discrimination, inequality, and poverty (within which Reich, probably without permission, is able to amplify and transform the voice of a black street preacher), are thereby disavowed.[20]

Second, Brother Walter is made to stand for a "*topos*, as arbitrary as it is generalizing, about those racialized as 'black':"

> African American vocalization is here sent up into the service of an age-old preoccupation with the originary unity of speech and song, a site of what Hal Foster calls "symbolic plenitude" and "natural vitality," all too often associated with the "primitive" Other.[21]

For Reich, speech is more natural than song. And throughout his writings there's a sense that even within speech, a Black voice—one that "hovers between speaking and singing"[22]—is even *more* natural than a voice he would consider unmarked, such as his own. Further, this assumption relies upon a Rousseauean origin myth, the very vocal imaginary that he seeks to disavow in his critique of the operatic voice. As this dissertation explores, the power of this myth remains strong in the musical world despite weathering a steady siege from a number of different fronts. Perhaps most famously, Derrida reads Rousseau's *Essai* closely and expertly deconstructs his valorization of speech as natural and originary.[23] Recent work by Nina Eidsheim has shown the broad and potentially damaging stakes of "the assumption that vocal timbre is the unmediated reality of the body," exploring the "racialized perception and reification of timbre" and showing

[20] Scherzinger, "Curious Intersections, Uncommon Magic," 217. For more on Reich and race, see recent work by Sumanth Gopinath: "Reich in Blackface: *Oh Dem Watermelons* and Radical Minstrelsy in the 1960s," *Journal of the Society for American Music* 5, no. 2 (2011): 139–93; "The Problem of the Political in Steve Reich's Come Out (1966)."
[21] Scherzinger, "Curious Intersections, Uncommon Magic," 218. Ross Cole points to a similar idealization in Reich's attitude toward John Coltrane in "Fun, Yes, But Music?," 319.
[22] Reich, *Writings on Music, 1965-2000*, 21.
[23] Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976).

how the Black singing voice is constructed—performed, in the sense of Judith Butler.[24] Thus, Reich relies on standardized aspects of vocality after all, phenomena that are all the more insidious for his obliviousness to them. Rather than accessing something authentic, he falls back upon a construction of racialized vocal timbre that is as reified as it is problematic.

It should be clear by now that I'm using "reduction" somewhat differently from Schaeffer. First, I'm relocating it from a practice of listening to a practice of composition. Recent work by Brian Kane is helpful in setting up the idea of acousmatic listening as "a historical and cultural practice,"[25] and I wish to do the same, here, albeit on a scale both larger and smaller: smaller, in that I've limited my scope to Reich and the voice; larger, in that I see the acousmatic reduction as only *one of many* techniques Reich uses to reduce the phenomenal and invite the noumenal. For instance, the much later *Tehillim* (1981) uses a very different technique of reduction.

Given Reich's association between the singing voice and mediation—his accusing the singing voice of being phenomenal—the newly, radically melodic *Tehillim* raises questions. Has Reich simply made peace with the singing voice? The piece is scored for four women's voices and chamber ensemble, and from its opening bars until its close half an hour later, singing voices bubble forth almost without pause—sometimes one, sometimes many, sometimes in unison, and sometimes in counterpoint or phase. **Example 3-1** shows a passage near the beginning where two voices rise and fall in a lively, modal counterpoint. Reich gives a transcription and translation of the first movement's Hebrew text as follows:

---

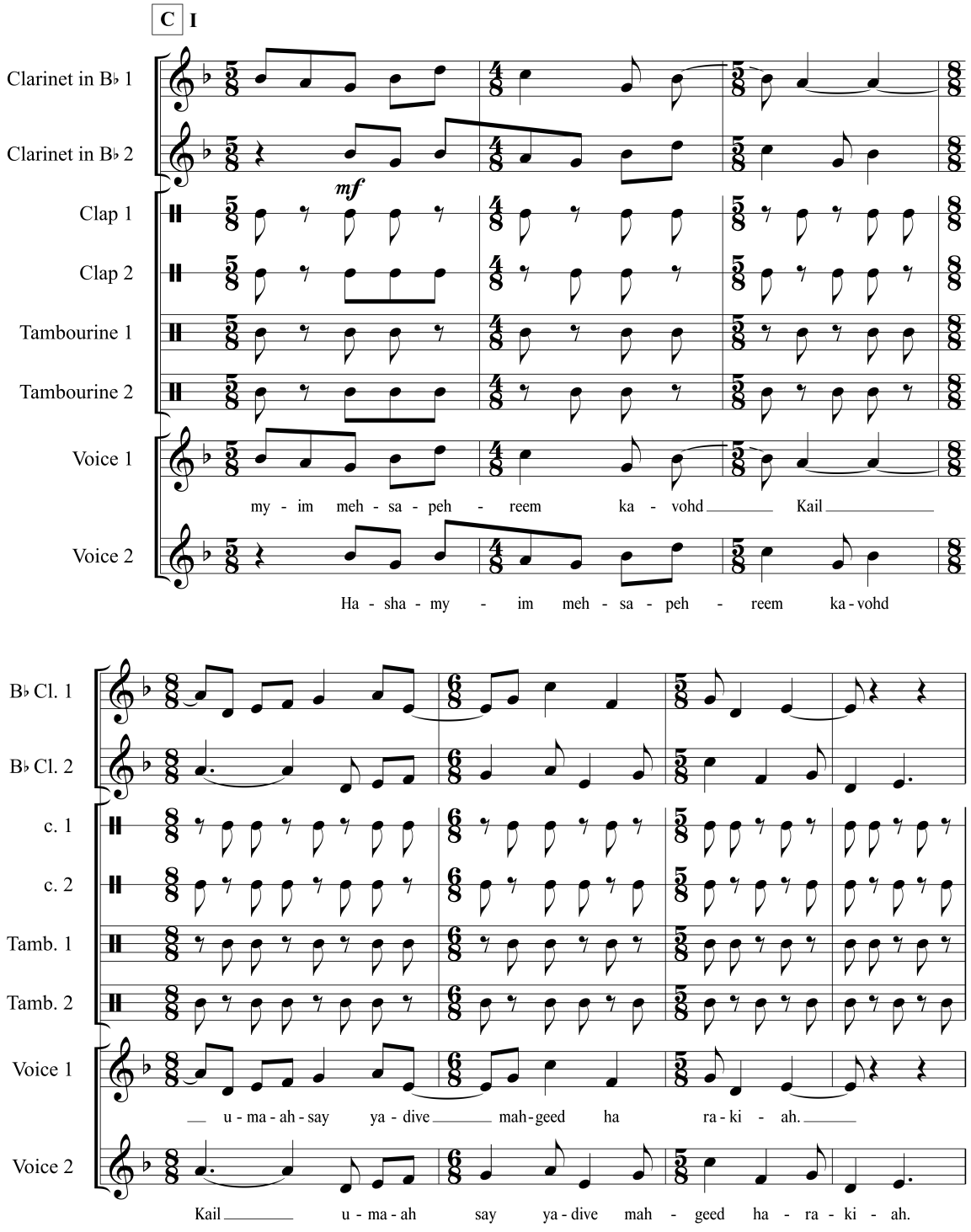
[24] Nina Sun Eidsheim, "Voice as a Technology of Selfhood: Towards an Analysis of Racialized Timbre and Vocal Performance" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, San Diego, 2008). For Butler on gender performance, see Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Theatre Journal* 40, no. 4 (1988): 519–31; Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

[25] Kane, *Sound Unseen*, 7.

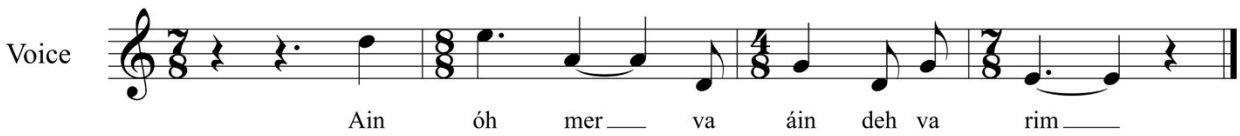
Ha-sha-mý-im meh-sa-peh-rím ka-vóhd Káil,	The heavens declare the glory of G-d,
U-mah-ah-sáy ya-dive mah-gíd ha-ra-kí-ah.	the sky tells of His handiwork.
Yóm-le-yóm ya-bée-ah óh-mer,	Day to day pours forth speech,
Va-lý-la le-lý-la ya-chah-véy dá-aht.	night to night reveals knowledge.
Ain-óh-mer va-áin deh-va-rím,	**Without speech and without words,**
Be-lí nish-máh ko-láhm.	Nevertheless their voice is heard.
Beh-kawl-ha-áh-retz ya-tzáh ka-váhm,	Their sound goes out through all the earth,
U-vik-tzáy tay-váil me-lay-hém	and their words to the ends of the world.

Tehillim is Reich's first attempt at text-setting, and he claims that it was the first time that "the music had to serve the purpose of the meaning of the words"—a statement one must take with a grain of salt considering the foundational role of text-music relationships in, for instance, *It's Gonna Rain*.[26] Antonella Puca discusses the importance of the recurring fifth line of this text (quoted in boldface above), which itself describes a vocal reduction. In fact, *Music for 18 Musicians*, which preceded *Tehillim*, contains only voices without speech and without words. Reich intentionally chose to set the fifth line of the text on pitches that could fit any number of keys (G, A, D, E minor; see **Example 3-2**): the "basic ambiguity [of its pitches] suggests that when we hear a voice without speech and words we are not only hearing music, but music of the most open sort, which is consonant with many harmonic interpretations."[27] What we are hearing, in other words, is a reach for the noumenal, the *informelle*.

[26] Liner notes to George Manahan et al., *Tehillim* (München: ECM Records, 1982). Cited in Puca, "Steve Reich and Hebrew Cantillation," 545.
[27] Puca, "Steve Reich and Hebrew Cantillation," 547. Reich quotes from liner notes to Manahan et al., *Tehillim*.



Example 3-1: *Tehillim*, rehearsal CI



Example 3-2: *Tehillim*, rehearsal AIII with pickup, Voice 2

Notably absent in *Tehillim* are some of the reductions present in *It's Gonna Rain*: the voice is allowed to sing, to present text, even to present the body: this song *comes from singers*. Who could describe *this* music as critical of the voice? But even as certain reductions fall away, others come into play. First of all, the text is a third-person narration of vocalization rather than being a vocalization itself: *Tehillim*'s vocalizing psalmists lack the specificity of the "character" Brother Walter in *It's Gonna Rain*. A voice is heard, but without speech and without words. Reich's choice of texts that are descriptive rather than emotive, together with his decision to disperse these texts across the vocal ensemble, create the impression that there is no *unité de mélodie* specific subjectivity or presence that could be understood to lie behind the vocal utterances.

This reconciliation to the singing voice also involved an act of reduction before pencil even hit page. Beginning with *Music for Large Ensemble* (1978), Reich expresses an interest in what he calls "somewhat longer and ornate melodic lines" that stem from his study of Hebrew cantillation in 1976-77.[28] Before this time, the word "melody" recurs frequently in his writings and interviews but is used to refer only to short motivic cells such as those found in the phasing pieces. But beginning around 1977, melody refers to a number of cells that are strung together in a way that is meant to replicate the structure, but not the sound, of cantillation.[29]

[28] Reich, *Writings on Music, 1965-2000*, 97.
[29] Ibid., 113–14.

In an essay on cantillation in his compositional practice, Reich describes an unbroken legacy of Biblical intonation that reaches back to pre-literate times.[30] He relies on musicologist Abraham Idelsohn, quoting him extensively in his essay on cantillation:

> The Biblical intonations preserved in the memory of the people, were transmitted orally from generation to generation. Yet an attempt was made in the early centuries to find a way by which these intonations could be preserved. Similar attempts, as we know, were also made by all the other ancient nations, such as the Indians and the Greeks; and were the beginnings of musical notation, which, after a long development, resulted in the modern system of writing music. The earliest system was the notation of the rise and fall of the voice … with … handsigns, in Greek cheironomia, made by the teacher or musical leader…. We notice this custom in ancient Egypt, shown on the wall-pictures of the pyramids. The Talmud gives evidence of the custom of using finger-motions in the air in Palestine and in Babylonia in the beginning of the Christian Era…Gradually, there developed the system of naming each detail of the nuances marked by voice and hand. But not satisfied with the cheironomia, every nation mentioned above invented *written signs* independently which were *imitations* of the *hand-marks* …The development (among Jews) continued for several centuries until the system received its finishing touches in Tiberias and was introduced in the Bible in the ninth century as a means by which the Scripture should be chanted. However, the use of an accented Bible for public reading in the service was not permitted. For this purpose only the original Scroll without vocalization or accents had to be used.[31]

In this narrative, Reich finds an origin story to rival Rousseau's.[32] Cantillation moved from the voice to gesture and finally to the written page—a narrative of the advent of the phenomenal in the vocal act. Especially after the 1980s, Reich sees himself as involved in "the restoring of melody, counterpoint and harmony in a recognizable but completely new context."[33] But it is crucial, I think, that this is a context entirely distinct from the Western classical tradition, especially in Reich's own narration. In essence, the

[30] Although Reich is also quick to acknowledge that this tradition encompasses a wide range of practices that vary regionally—he studied what he calls the Lithuanian tradition of cantillation.
[31] Abraham Zebi Idelsohn, *Jewish Music: Its Historical Development* (Courier Dover Publications, 1929), 67–69. Cited in Reich, *Writings on Music*, 107-9.
[32] Reich's interest in origins, both musical and religious, is evident in a number of his works, including *The Cave*, which explores the origins of Judiasm, Christianity and Islam.
[33] Reich, *Writings on Music, 1965-2000*, 187.

tradition, and the very word that signifies it, affords Reich in *Tehillim* his double move: reduction of classical vocal phenomena, and the invitation of the noumenon back in—this time as actual singing—but nonetheless under the sign of the authentic. Singing is re-sanctioned.[34]

Vocal Reduction in *Music for 18 Musicians*

It's Gonna Rain and *Tehillim* represent two different operations through which Reich recuperates singing and its excesses from deep suspicion, but there exists in his oeuvre a third approach to the voice most clearly seen in a set of four classic works from the 1970s: *Drumming*; *Music for Mallet Instruments, Voices, and Organ; Music for 18 Musicians;* and *Music for a Large Ensemble*. The late 60s and early 70s find the composer exploring; having allegedly exhausted the possibilities of phasing, he sought new structural imperatives. Around 1970, with *Drumming*, he arrived at a distinctive texture composed of steady and rapid pulse, relatively slow-moving tertian harmony, and short repeated motivic patterns. This quartet of pieces also all feature wordless, repetitive female vocal parts, raising the question of whether the voice can be "just another instrument" in a musical ensemble. Given Reich's demonstrated preoccupations, one might guess the answer to be "no"—and it is. But in a way that may be surprising. Works like *Music for 18 do* perform vocal reductions; and moreover, they *do* reduce voices to instruments. But these reductions are undertaken *precisely so that the music may sing*. I'm going to again consider these reductions along the three axes that Reich identified.

[34] But not without some degree of irony, as cantillation is not always considered to be "singing" in Jewish practice.

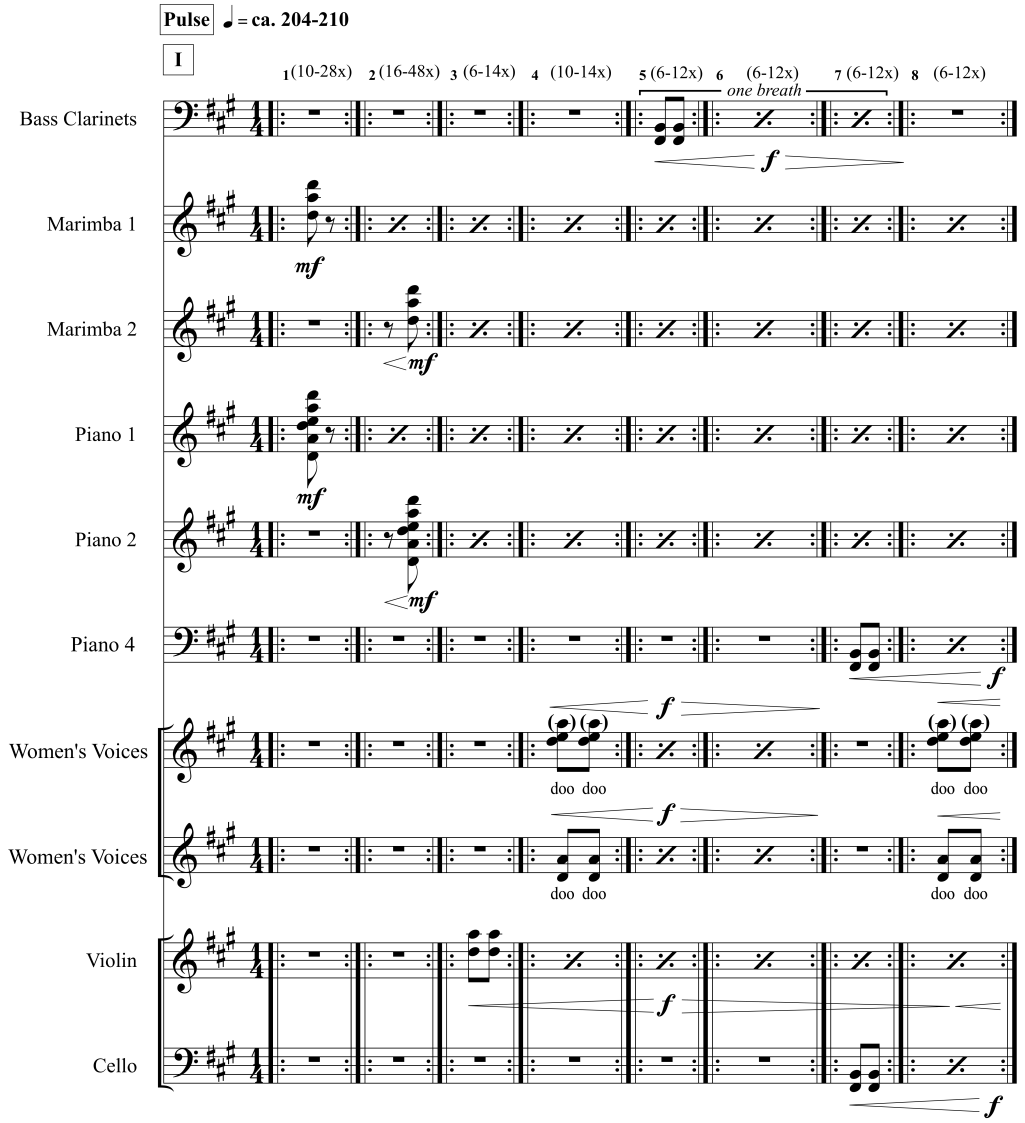
Melody

In a performance of *Music for 18*, there are vocalists on stage, executing sound predetermined in terms of rhythm, pitch, and timbre. This is singing, but of a very different kind than that which usually happens on a musical stage—say, the hundreds of other Manhattan venues featuring singers the night of *Music for 18*'s 1976 premiere at Town Hall. It's also a very different kind of melody than Reich would have heard in his own home growing up; his mother, June Carroll, was a singer and songwriter of some renown. In Chapter 1, I outlined some common characteristics of melody, and I'll look at several of them in detail to show Reich's process of reduction.

TIMBRE. In his performance notes, Reich instructs the vocalists to perform "vocalise syllables, which are chosen so as to imitate, as exactly as possible, the sounds of some of the instruments." They are almost always doubled by instruments and their syllables are designed to match: "doo" for piano, "ee" for violin, "ah" for clarinet. **Example 3-3** shows the opening of the work, with the voices doubled by and imitating the sound of the pianos. The piece performs an inverse of Rousseau's musical mimesis, with voices imitating instruments rather than the other way around—one way of reducing out the operatic vocal style that Reich deems "abrasive" and "artificial." It also radically resituates the singers within the ensemble. As Carolyn Abbate has pointed out, the listening practice of classical musical is extremely voco-centric: "In varying degrees, in all vocal music…the sound of the singing voice becomes, as it were, a 'voice-object' and the sole center for the listener's attention."[35] Contrary to this convention, which extends

[35] Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 10. Michel Chion makes a similar argument for "vococentrism" in film in Michel Chion, *The Voice in Cinema*, trans. Claudia Gorbman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

across most or all Western popular genres as well, the listening experience of *Music for 18* is not structured as melody and accompaniment or even voice and accompaniment. Rather, it appears that Reich wishes to blur the ontological categories of voice and instrument. And further, it's not that the instrument aspires to the condition of the vocal, but rather that the voice attempts to sound like an instrument—an attempt that has the distinct feel of a demotion in the context of the vocal imaginary.



Example 3-3: *Music for 18 Musicians*, mm. 1-10

Insofar as this blend is successful, subjectivity is distributed heterophonically across the ensemble in the manner of the West African and Balinese ensembles Reich is so eager to emulate. If, however, one takes Reich seriously when he claims that a human is personified by her voice, perhaps it's also *unsuccessful*, even deliberately so. *Music for 18*'s voices could be heard as instruments, but given Reich's consistent preoccupation with the voice and what appears to be a continued faith in the vocal imaginary (if a relocated one), perhaps it makes more sense to experience this voice/instrument blend in a constant state of uncoupling, of attempting to disentangle into a Rousseauian *unité de mélodie* with accompaniment. The baggage of the singing voice, the "residual meaning" that it bears, creates another paradox: the more alike the voice and instruments become, the more pressure is exerted on this voice/not-voice distinction, and the more tension arises between these categories.

PHRASING. Melodies in the classical tradition are usually composed of phrases that last roughly the length of a breath; sometimes, they take the form of a period or a sentence. Although breath-length phrases are structural, actually absolutely integral, to *Music for 18*, they operate in a completely different way. Reich identifies two different kinds of time occurring simultaneously in the piece. The first is grid-time: a relentless eighth-note pulse often maintained by the mallet instruments and pianos. The second is fluid, dynamic time created by the constant push-and-pull of voices and winds, which perform hairpin gestures based on the length of a breath.[36] The wave-shapes are dictated by logistical bodily concerns—the physical limitations of those instruments in the ensemble animated by breath—but they also lend the work a respiratory quality, constantly in tension with its inexorable pulse. The result is that certain musical elements continually snap

[36] These hairpin gestures differ from Sciarrino's in that they are meant to feel organic, whereas Sciarrino's seem designed to "restrict" or put pressure on normal vocal phrasing.

into focus and mesh back into the texture. These focus objects differ for different listeners, in different performances, and even with different sound engineers.

RUBATO. It is the melodist's privilege to take liberty with tempo, to hold a particularly poignant note just a little bit longer, to pick up speed when the music intensifies. *Music for 18*, however, demands that its performers maintain strict pulse throughout the span of the hour-long work. The beginning of the work (**Example 3-3**) is especially austere in how its repeated cells last only a beat or sometimes a half beat; in other sections, the cells last up to six beats. This is physically and mentally grueling labor; some pianists even tape their fingers together in order to avoid repetitive stress injuries.

In *Repeating Ourselves*, Robert Fink draws a parallel between the mechanical nature of Suzuki pedagogy and minimalism, claiming that

> Suzuki training turned its tiny charges not into fluent improvisers, or budding interpreters of the canon (as advertised), but into young protominimalists: inured to repetition, estranged from interpretation, precisely calibrating their own moving in and out of phase with a sound recording; like Steve Reich, doing their best, while playing along with a machine, to give a fair approximation of its perfection.[37]

It's true that striving for mechanical production is an important part of *Music for 18*, but had Reich wanted the music to be mechanically perfect, he would have pursued means of mechanical reproduction in order to "police interpretation" a la Suzuki.[38] In fact, he did experiment with mechanical reproductions in the 1960s by using electronic devices to create phasing effects. He composed *Melodica* (1966) by playing the eponymous instrument on tape loops, and created an instrument called the "Phase Shifting Pulse Gate" that provided what was essentially click tracks for musicians to use as they perform phasing music. Reich, however,

[37] Robert Fink, *Repeating Ourselves: American Minimal Music as Cultural Practice*, 1st ed. (University of California Press, 2005), 222–23.
[38] Ibid., 224.

seems generally dissatisfied with the results of these experiments—he speaks of *Melodica* as "a transition from tape music to instrumental music" rather than a work that stands on its own merits,[39] and similarly, the Pulse Gate languishes on the top shelf of his closet, unopened since 1970. He describes the discovery he made upon achieving this higher level of rhythmic accuracy:

> …the "perfection" of rhythmic execution of the gate (or any electronic sequencer or rhythmic device) was stiff and unmusical. In any music that depends on a steady pulse created by human beings, it is actually tiny microvariations of that pulse created by human beings, playing instruments or singing, that gives life to the music…I felt that the basic musical ideas underlying the gate were sound, but that they were not properly realized in an electronic device.[40] (1970)

Reich's reasoning here resonates with Charles Keil's notion of "participatory discrepancies"—Keil argues that the "power of music," its capacity to be "personally involving" and "socially valuable," results from human indeterminacy, the fact that good performance "must be 'out of time' and 'out of tune.'"[41] It is thus that another paradox emerges: it is the unflinching fidelity to the "inhuman," the attempt to achieve mechanical perfection, that produces the humanity of the performers and the live performance situation. Since 1970, this paradox seems absolutely central to Reich's aesthetics to the point where he is uninterested in working in a situation that fails to engender it.

Persona and Meaning

I'd like to return to the idea of a voice as index of persona, as articulated in Reich's note for *It's Gonna Rain*. If, as Reich says, voice stands in for subject, what is one to make of the voices in *Music for 18*? Narrative, words, and affect are all reduced from the vocal parts: they resist the assignment of a persona to an unprecedented degree (neither preacher nor psalmist nor

[39] Reich, *Writings on Music, 1965-2000*, 22.
[40] Ibid., 44.
[41] Charles Keil, "Participatory Discrepancies and the Power of Music," *Cultural Anthropology* 2, no. 3 (August 1, 1987): 275.

testifier). If these singers are acting, they are taking on the role of musical instruments—sounding, yet inanimate, conglomerations of metal and wood. In this sense, they are acting in a way that deconstructs the *act* of acting. The distribution of the singers' bodies on stage contributes to their instrumentalization. As **Figure 3-1** shows, Reich suggests that they stand two-deep, facing inward rather than outward toward the audience—not soloists, but members of a cohesive ensemble.[42] For Reich, meaning emerges out of the reduction of singer-as-actor, at least in this oft-quoted analysis of *It's Gonna Rain*:

> When that persona begins to spread and multiply and come apart, as it does in *It's Gonna Rain*, there's a very strong identification of a human being going through this uncommon magic.[43] (1965)

Although the use of voice in *Music for 18* is extremely consistent—it never undergoes the destructive process Reich describes here—there is nonetheless an effect of "uncommon magic" to be discovered in this piece. Rather than coming into being over time, though, it exists within the vocal writing from its very onset.

[42] In fact, the singers worked deliberately to become ensemble members rather than soloists in both name and sound. An earlier version of the work, presented at The Kitchen in May 1975, was entitled *Work in Progress for 21 Musicians and Singers*. The title then became *Music for 18 Musicians and Singers*, and was finally changed to simply *Music for 18 Musicians* after the singers made a case for the change during rehearsal. The singers have also talked about needing to lighten their voices in order to better blend with the instrumental ensemble. Conversation with Russell Hartenberger, July 23 2015.

[43] Reich, *Writings on Music, 1965-2000*, 21.

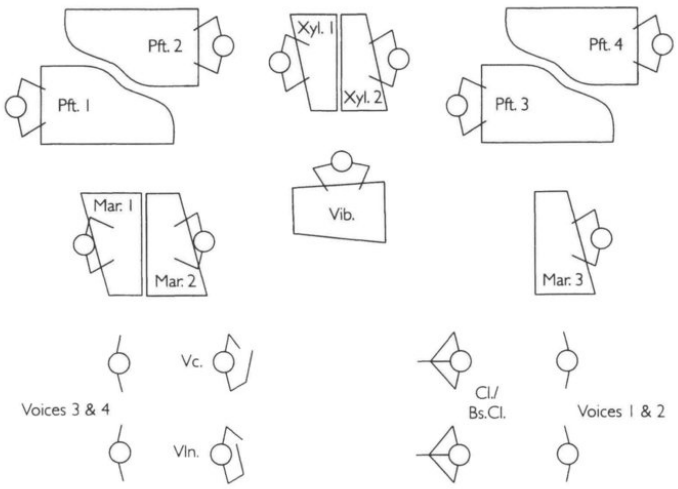


Figure 3-1: Reich's suggestion for stage placement in *Music for 18 Musicians*

Reich as Modernist?

The Plastic Haircut, It's Gonna Rain, Music for 18 Musicians, and *Tehillim*: for Reich, all of these pieces represent different solutions to the problem of the singing voice. And the fact that each is representative of a distinct period in his oeuvre suggests that his response to this problem, his need to reduce the singing voice, has been of fundamental importance for much, or even all, of his output to date. I propose that Reich's careful and critical approach to the voice productively complicates the relationship he claims with modernism. More specifically, it blurs the Reich-vs.-modernism dichotomy proffered by the composer and too often reinscribed in the literature surrounding him.

In studies of musical minimalism, 1974-6 is often identified as a watershed between the minimalist works of the sixties and the emergent phenomenon of postminimalism.[44] The former

[44] Robert Fink identifies 1974 as the year that minimalism entered the mainstream, although he also argues that this more popular form of minimalism was actually already postminimalism. Robert Fink, "(Post-)minimalisms 1970–2000: The Search for a New Mainstream," in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Anthony Pople (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 541–42. The three editors of the *Ashgate Research Companion* mark 1974 as a seminal year; see Keith Potter, Kyle Gann, and Pwyll ap Siôn, "Introduction: Experimental, Minimalist, Postminimalist? Origins, Definitions, Communities," in *The Ashgate Research*

category, including works such as Reich's and Philip Glass's process music, is more concerned with conceptual purity and thus is more associated with modernism; the latter category is comprised of works where a preponderance of influences—high and low, near and far—are meant to coexist happily and seamlessly, and is thus more associated with postmodernism. Jelena Novak goes so far as to define postminimalism as "neither a style nor a movement, but a heterogeneous conceptual field."[45] Robert Fink points out that terminology tends to be quite inconsistent—in fact, by the time minimalism entered a wide public consciousness, it was already postminimalism.[46]

1976 saw, within three months of each other, the premieres of *Music for 18 Musicians* and Philip Glass's *Einstein on the Beach*, and Keith Potter has noted the "relationships between chord and pulse, tentative melody, sensory textures and, most of all, the dastardly double-act of speed-warp and incipient harmonic directionality"[47] that marked a departure for both composers. This was also the time during which John Adams, a decade younger than Reich and Glass, was beginning to establish his own career with works like *Phrygian Gates* and *China Gates* (both 1977). The harmonic directionality in these pieces makes them a better fit with postminimalism, and Adams was the first of a younger generation of composers that continues to work within the

---

Companion to Minimalist and Postminimalist Music (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 1–16. Keith Potter puts it at 1976 in Keith Potter, "Mapping Early Minimalism," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Minimalist and Postminimalist Music*, ed. Keith Potter, Kyle Gann, and Pwyll ap Siôn (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 19–37. Kyle Gann prefers 1978 in Kyle Gann, "A Technically Definable Stream of Postminimalism, Its Characteristics and Its Meaning," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Minimalist and Postminimalist Music*, ed. Keith Potter, Kyle Gann, and Pwyll ap Siôn (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 39–60.

[45] Jelena Novak, "From Minimalist Music to Postopera: Repetition, Representation and (Post)modernity in the Operas of Philip Glass and Louis Andriessen," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Minimalist and Postminimalist Music*, ed. Keith Potter, Kyle Gann, and Pwyll ap Siôn (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 130.

[46] Fink, "(Post-)minimalisms 1970–2000: The Search for a New Mainstream," 541–42.

[47] Potter, "Mapping Early Minimalism," 35.

postminimalist paradigm today.[48] Novak quotes Philip Glass as a way of illustrating postminimalism's "heterogeneous conceptual field":

> From my point of view, all things are available. Any stylistic development. If I can make it work, if it makes sense in the music, then I use it. In that case for me there are no barriers connected with history or places. Pieces come out of the historical moment, but after that they exist as kinds of techniques.[49]

The only prohibition Glass holds, it seems, is on prohibition itself. Reich's embrace of certain elements of popular music, including pulse and quasi-functional harmony, aligns him with a postminimal/postmodern heterogeneity. His rhetoric is also suffused with the capitalist notion that a composer should "give the people what they want."[50] At times, he does embrace the very conditions of modernity that the other composers in this dissertation seem motivated to resist. The plentitude of America, for instance, requires an act of recalibration:

> Stockhausen, Berio and Boulez were portraying in very honest terms what it was like to pick up the pieces of a bombed-out continent after World War II. But for some Americans in 1948 or 1958 or 1968—in the real context of tail-fins, Chuck Berry and millions of burgers sold—to pretend that instead we're really going to have the dark-brown angst of Vienna is a lie, a musical lie.[51] (1987)

Faced with a million burgers sold, Reich sees no room for angst—he seems to deny the melancholia that Flatley posits as essential to modernism. And yet, even amid this excess, there remains a privation in his music, a prohibition. I do not wish to say that Reich's ethics of the voice can't or shouldn't be understood in relation to his embrace of certain elements of modernity, nor that modernism can't be present in popular culture and its aesthetic objects. To do

---

[48] Most notably, those circulating around the Bang on a Can festival—for an informative, if overly sympathetic, introduction to their stance on the status of modernism and classical music, see *In the Ocean* (2001), a documentary by Frank Scheffer.

[49] Jelena Novak, "Everything Is Available: A Conversation with Philip Glass," trans. Tamara Rodwell-Jovanović, *New Sound: International Magazine for Music*, no. 14 (January 1, 1999): 21. Cited in Novak, "From Minimalist Music to Postopera: Repetition, Representation and (Post)modernity in the Operas of Philip Glass and Louis Andriessen," 131.

[50] Novak, "From Minimalist Music to Postopera: Repetition, Representation and (Post)modernity in the Operas of Philip Glass and Louis Andriessen," 131. Original quotation from Jelena Novak, "Everything is Available: A Conversation with Philip Glass," *New Sound*, 14 (1999): p. 21.

[51] Quoted in K. Robert Schwarz, *Minimalists* (London: Phaidon, 1996), 49.

so would only serve to draw more starkly boundaries that seem ever less useful.[52] I do think, however, that it's important to note that the voice remains a site of resistance in his music, and further, that although the notion of eradicating the barriers between high and low is important to understanding Reich's music, it also fails to capture something essential about it. For Reich, steps must be taken in order to ensure the voice's singularity and mystery: to use it in its role as a 'window' into a person's soul, to evoke its 'residual meaning'. An act of reduction is ethically necessary, and certain prohibitions remain in place even as they support a music of supposed plenitude and pluralism, consumer-ready, buoyed by burgers, tail-fins, and Chuck Berry. Reich's career-long problematic of the singing voice, his constant reach for the noumenal through innovative vocal techniques, suggests that he did not make the seamless transition to postminimalism along with Glass. All things are not available, not just any stylistic development is allowed, not all barriers connected to history and places are removed. And this bears itself out in concrete form: Reich cannot—or will not—compose straightforward singing actors such as those found in Glass's *Fall of the House of Usher* and Adams's *Nixon in China*.

His excitement at having found a potential 'solution to the voice' came while he was deeply involved in the Bay Area's avant-garde scene; Ross Cole has shown the influence of Reich's fellow members of the San Francisco Mime Troupe with its emphasis on Funk art, Terry Riley, Robert Nelson, and the members of the San Francisco Tape Center during this time.[53] Cole also touches briefly on Reich's relationship with Luciano Berio, with whom he studied at

[52] Authors such as Christopher Ballantine have argued that seeing musical modernism as high art in an antagonistic relationship with low art misses key elements about both—see his contribution to Gianmario Borio, "Round Table: Modernism and Its Others," ed. Laura Tunbridge, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 139, no. 1 (January 2, 2014): 200–204. More generally, Douglas Mao and Rebecca L. Walkowitz see modernism studies as engaging in a project of expansion across the high/low divide as well as chronological and locational boundaries in Douglas Mao and Rebecca L. Walkowitz, eds., *Bad Modernisms* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

[53] Cole, "Fun, Yes, But Music?" Cole also shows the influence of Reich's connections to the art world upon his return to New York in Ross Cole, "'Sound Effects (O.K., Music)': Steve Reich and the Visual Arts in New York City, 1966–1968," *Twentieth-Century Music* 11, no. 02 (September 2014): 217–44.

Mills College during his San Francisco years. I would like to further explore that connection here in order to reveal a shared and distinctly modernist attitude. In fact, Reich's ethics of the voice, his search for vocal jouissance and rejection of what he sees as ossified vocal technē, reveals a closer allegiance to composers like Berio than with the postminimalists he claims as comrades.

Berio was famously enthralled with the voice, and with specific vocalists such as Cathy Berberian. But he was also preoccupied with the voice-as-a-problem, as something whose excess had to be dealt with, and carefully:

> I have always been very sensitive, perhaps overly so, to the excess of connotations that the voice carries, whatever it is doing. From the grossest of noises to the most delicate of singing, the voice always means something, always refers beyond itself and creates a huge range of associations, cultural, musical, emotive, physiological, or drawn from everyday life, etc…As has already been said many times, the voice of a great "classical" singer is a bit like a signed instrument which, as soon as you have finished playing, you put away in a case. It has nothing to do with the voice that the great singer uses to communicate in everyday life.[54]

It is striking how both Berio and Reich 'receive' the historical voice as a carrier of both outmoded technē and inevitable excess—all the more striking, given their vastly different 'solutions.'[55] The idea of putting "the voice of a great 'classical' singer" away in a case after use corresponds with Reich's accusations of artificiality and instrumentality, and suggests that Berio also sees an ethical stake in the idea of representing a character within classical singing conventions. Certainly Berio's musical-theatrical characters, from the fractured persona in *Sequenza III* and the schizoid protagonist of *Recital I (for Cathy)* through the highly ambiguous characters of the late musical actions *Outis* and *La Cronaca del Luogo*, are great 'problem-

[54] Luciano Berio, Rossana Dalmonte, and Bálint András Varga, *Two Interviews*, trans. David Osmond-Smith (New York: Marion Boyars Publishers Ltd, 1985), 94.
[55] Martin Scherzinger's work on Berio's *Coro* and political multitude shows that both composers were, however, interested in a distributed vocal subjectivity inspired by contact with African musics. See Martin Scherzinger, "Luciano Berio's *Coro*: Nexus between African Music and Political Multitude," in *Luciano Berio: nuove prospettive = new perspectives: atti del Convegno, Siena, Accademia chigiana, 28-31 ottobre 2008*, ed. Angela Ida De Benedictis, vol. 48, Chigiana (Firenze: L.S. Olschki, 2012), 399–430.

carriers' of the voice. Furthermore, the way Berio characterizes the baggage of the voice (cultural, musical, emotive, physiological) reflects the same double-sided sense of excitement and anxiety about 'residual meaning' that surfaces in Reich's assessment of *The Plastic Haircut*. Each composer fashions himself as contending with an excess inherent in the voice, an excess intimately connected to the human subject producing it. Berio suggests that a critique of the classical singing voice has been made many times, and this dissertation argues that it has—by Reich, and also by some of the most well-known practitioners of musical modernism, a few of whom appear in other chapters of this dissertation.

The historiography of composition in the second half of the twentieth century relies on Reich's difference from such figures; it is arguably one of its most important partitions. And despite the notable resonances between his and Berio's discussion of the voice, Reich is an active upholder of this partition: he has again and again reduced American and European modernism to straw men, almost caricatures. The former is subsumed under the heading of "John Cage," and the latter of "serialism." Cage represents "the idea of composing through tossing coins, or oracles, or other chance forms,"[56] while serialism was a "break with the natural principles of resonance and with human musical perception…the postman does not whistle Schönberg."[57] Of course European modernism, especially since the 1960s, encompasses more than serial techniques, and serial techniques are used in a variety of ways in this repertory, many of which are neither totalizing nor meant to be a piece's most salient feature. Similarly, American experimental practice is more than Cage, and Cage himself is more than aleatoric compositional techniques.

[56] Reich, *Writings on Music, 1965-2000*, 93.
[57] Ibid., 159.

Scholarship dealing with minimalism and modernism has been perhaps too quick to follow Reich's lead. In the introduction to the recent *Ashgate Research Companion to Minimalist and Postminimalist Music*, for instance, its editors compare minimalism—which comprises "the composers who command a large following both within and outside the orchestral establishment"—to the "ongoing dissonant abstraction of what's come to be termed High Modernism."[58] The specific repertory they refer to here is not clear; I suspect that like Reich, they mean the Darmstadt serialism of the 1950s and now less certain "serial tyranny" of American "PhD music."[59] For both Reich and the editors of the *Research Companion*, the simplified understanding of modernist trends allows Reich to be neatly situated within these practices. In a manner similar to his approach toward non-Western musics, Reich is able to articulate a few concepts that he incorporated into his own compositional process while compartmentalizing and essentially disowning the rest:

> I sometimes see both serial music and Cage as influencing my music…by suggesting that any radical kind of organization is possible, on the one hand, and, on the other, forcing me back on my own rhythmic and tonal inclinations that received no satisfaction whatever from either of these musics. Serialism and Cage gave me something to push *against*.[60] (1989)

A commonplace understanding of musical modernism (here coded as serialism and Cage), which Reich seems to share, associates it with a specific set of taboos—most famously a taboo against tonality, but also against pulse. As the above citation demonstrates, Reich has been adamant that these features play a role in his music to the point of thumbing his nose at high modernists like Stockhausen and Boulez. He also sees modernists as out of touch with, and opposed to, popular musical styles:

---

[58] Potter, Gann, and Pwyll ap Siôn, "Introduction: Experimental, Minimalist, Postminimalist? Origins, Definitions, Communities," 2.
[59] A term coined in Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, vol. 5: Music in the Late Twentieth Century (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 160.
[60] Reich, *Writings on Music, 1965-2000*, 159.

> We are living at a time now when the worlds of concert music and popular music have resumed their dialogue. Perhaps I have had a hand in this restoration myself…It seems that the wall between serious and popular music was erected primarily by Schonberg and his followers. Since the late 1960s, this wall has gradually crumbled and we are more or less back to the normal situation where concert musicians and popular musicians take a healthy interest in what their counterparts have done and are doing.[61] (1992)

Reich's treatment of the voice complicates both of these narratives, leaving certain walls untouched, and others unexpectedly collapsed. For what is more endemic to popular music than melody and singing—and, more importantly, their zealous cooperation in a staging of the performative vocal subject as a persona, a character, a frontman? A more provocative corollary question would be: what is the difference between Reich's complex prohibition of such qualities and the alleged 'serialist' prohibition of tonality and pulse—and, not incidentally, melody? Certainly, as Robert Fink and others have pointed out, *Music for 18 Musicians* and the works that follow embody now canonic aspects of postminimalism: the intervention of willful decision–making in otherwise more automated processes, the increasing role of harmonic directionality, and "recombinant teleologies."[62] But the boundary between minimal/modernist and postminimal/postmodernist becomes much more difficult to maintain when considering that the early process pieces depend on the "residual meaning" of the recorded voice or the imperfections of live performance—the small mysteries that evoke the noumenal—whereas the late pieces remain rigorous and anti-subjective in their prohibition on a certain *kind* of singing voice and a certain *kind* of acting.

At the end of his famous essay on "the grain of the voice," Roland Barthes hints at new possibilities for thinking about voice and modernism:

> It goes without saying … that the simple consideration of 'grain' in music could lead to a different history of music from the one we know now … Were we to

[61] Ibid., 168.
[62] Fink, *Repeating Ourselves*, 47–55.

> succeed in refining a certain 'aesthetics' of musical pleasure, then doubtless we would attach less importance to the formidable break in tonality accomplished by modernity.

If we write a history of modernism based on the voice as Barthes suggests, which side would claim Reich? Modernism "broke" tonality in a complicated and incomplete way. The same could be said of pulse. Reich, by contrast, is adamant about the place of both tonal harmony and pulse in his music. And yet, his method of vocal reduction strikes me as a particularly modernist one—it constitutes one way of productively expressing a melancholia about modernity that is central to modernism as practiced by Reich's contemporaries. What if, to extend Barthes's reasoning, we think of modernism as "breaking" the voice? What if Reich appears to be, almost accidently, on the vanguard of the very discourse he disavows?

Chapter 4 - Iannis Xenakis and a Living Music

In a 1980 interview, Bálint Varga caught Iannis Xenakis in a rare moment of uncertainty. When asked why his music was so "savage" and "aggressive," Xenakis replied confidently that "no really great music is tender," and challenged Varga to provide a counterexample. When Varga hummed a few bars of Schubert's "Heidenröslein," however, Xenakis was forced to concede the point: "some short pieces are soft and quiet—perhaps some longer ones too—but in general really great music combines peace and struggle, serenity and pain." Varga pushed further, observing that Xenakis' compositions "lack lyricism," and the composer's response is telling: "Perhaps that's so, I don't know. I do lack lyricism. Maybe life killed it in me—but it's also possible that I was born without it. I don't know."

The tentative and contradictory nature of this answer is somewhat unusual for Xenakis. Perhaps his compositions lack lyricism, and perhaps they don't. Or perhaps they do, and life killed it in him—or, perhaps, it was a lack he was born with. In a 1980 essay on his relationship with Xenakis' music during his post-war years, Milan Kundera seems to agree that the composer's lyricism is dead and furthermore provides a hypothesis for what killed it. He writes about finding solace in Xenakis' music after the 1968 Russian invasion of his native Czechoslovakia. The lives of Kundera and Xenakis do exhibit some striking parallels that have allowed the novelist to relate to the composer: both were active communist party members in their early years; both participated in failed Resistance movements in their home countries and were eventually exiled to France; both expressed a sense of disillusionment after these events and turned away from overt political commentary and toward less overt aesthetic forms (fiction and music, respectively). It was just a few years after the Prague Spring that Kundera "fell in

love with the music of Varèse and Xenakis,"[1] and the author claims that it was this very sense of disillusionment that drew him to these composers.

"But why did I search for solace in Xenakis and not in Smetana's patriotic music where I could have found the illusion of my nation's need to survive although it had just been sentenced to death?"[2] Kundera wonders. It seems that for him, the music that once held comfort—even "the three first long notes of a largo" on the violin that make a sensitive listener sigh "oh, that's so beautiful"[3]—was now revealed to be empty, "brainless," and manipulative. This was also the case for sentimentality itself, which Kundera (following Carl Jung) calls the "superstructure of brutality." He writes that "it is at that point that music became for me the deafening noise of emotions, while the world of noise in Xenakis' compositions became beauty; beauty washed clean of dirty affect, devoid of sentimental barbarism." [4]

Kundera locates the origins of Xenakis' music externally:

> not in the artificial sound of a note that has isolated itself from nature in order to express human subjectivity, but in the noise of the world, in a 'sound mass' that doesn't gush from the heart, but comes to us from the outside, like the pitter-patter of rain, the din of a factory, or the chanting slogans of a crowd demonstrating.[5]

Kundera, then, not only agrees with Xenakis' self-assessment that he lacks lyricism, but lauds this dearth as a means of circumventing manipulation—the ruse that Smetna's anthemic music perpetrates on his listeners. Lyricism, once thought to be noumenal, is exposed in its conventionality, its phenomenal nature. Life thus killed the ability to accept comfort in melody for Kundera, and the author theorizes that it killed it in Xenakis as well. It is telling that both Kundera and Varga link the idea of humanity in music with lyricism or melody, although both do

[1] Milan Kundera, "Postface: Total Rejection of Inheritance Or, Who Is Iannis Xenakis?," in *Performing Xenakis*, ed. Sharon E. Kanach, vol. 2, Iannis Xenakis Series (Hillsdale, New York: Pendragon Press, 2010), 391.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid., 393.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid., 394.

it implicitly. Varga moves seamlessly from talking about the "savage" and "aggressive" nature of Xenakis' music to talking about its lack of lyricism. Savagery occurs when the animal overtakes the human, and it seems that this is played out in music by various compositional parameters overtaking lyricism. Kundera compares the "violin largo" which presumably "gushes from the heart" to the sound mass that "comes to us from the outside." In a later essay, he also contrasts Xenakis' music with the idea of a Lied, "that song of the Romantics meant to display the 'affective activity' of the composer's soul," expounding upon how Xenakis' music offered "consolation in the nonsentience of nature."[6] Xenakis and Varèse "spoke to [Kundera] of a life freed of human subjectivity, aggressive and burdensome; they spoke of the sweetly nonhuman beauty of the world before or after mankind moved through it."[7] Evident behind Kundera's triumphant embrace of the external is a deep melancholia for a more innocent time, a time when Smetana's triumphant tunes seemed appropriate for representing a nation on the rise.

Voice seems to lurk in the background as the connective tissue between humanity and lyricism for both of these Xenakis interlocutors, and the vocal imaginary provides a basis for this connection. Non-sentient music can't sing, not even through a violin. And for Kundera, the disillusioned modern subject, Xenakis' escape from manipulative sentimentality, from the need to represent humanity in music, from lyricism, and from (implicitly) the voice, is only fitting. And yet, I find these assessments to be inadequate when faced with the gestural nature of Xenakis' music. *Pithoprakta* (1956), for instance, begins with its performers knocking on their string instruments—a timbre far removed from the vocal. But the changing densities of these knocks, their tendency to swell and recede in distinct and cohesive gestures, lends the whole a certain vocality. The vocal effect is even more pronounced when pitched material enters the

[6] Milan Kundera, *Testaments Betrayed: An Essay in Nine Parts*, 1st ed. (New York: Harper Collins, 1995), 70–71.
[7] Ibid., 71.

picture. No single part presents itself as a solo melodic line to be accompanied, and nor does the ensemble come together into a unison, but the *divisi* ensemble does form a teeming mass which moves as one, rising and falling, expanding and contracting, sometimes resting on a single chord, sometimes moving quickly across the orchestral register, sometimes splitting into two or more layers that operate independently.

These kinds of mass textures, which are perhaps the defining characteristic of Xenakis' oeuvre, may not be melodic in the sense of "the artificial sound of a note that has isolated itself from nature in order to express human subjectivity." In obvious ways, they fail to live up to the standard of Rousseau's *unité de mélodie*. When compared with one of Mendelssohn's *Lieder ohne Worte*, for instance (the exemplar of instrumental melody cited in Chapter 1), Xenakis' works clearly lack certain characteristics we associate with melody: pure tone, limited range, smooth articulations, and above all a singularity of pitch that would allow them to be credibly reproduced by a voice. Sharon Kanach describes how Xenakis subverts these norms with his "cherished" capacity for "selective amnesia," where a performer must "'forget' all the lessons learned to 'beautify' one's sound: how to homogenize instruments' registers, disguise breathing, compensate intonation with lush vibrato…the standard panoply of polishes."[8]

Kundera has a point—the trauma of the war does seem to have exacted an aesthetic toll on Xenakis, driving him away from melody and toward what might be construed as "savagery." But despite the composer's recourse to abstract mathematical modeling for his music, and despite his marked aversion to the sound of the violin largo summoned by Kundera, his music is suffused with lyricism: lyricism of a very strange kind. The "artificial note," that perniciously false marker of subjectivity, continues to be foundational to Xenakis' music, but its existence is

[8] Sharon E. Kanach, ed., *Performing Xenakis*, vol. 2, Iannis Xenakis Series (Hillsdale, New York: Pendragon Press, 2010). xiii.

transmuted, one might even say reincarnated. If life did kill lyricism for Xenakis, perhaps it was also reborn in a different guise in the post-war years.

In this chapter, I explore the ethics and politics surrounding Xenakis' use of mass textures. For Kundera, the single note comes from within—it gushes from the heart, in fact—but a mass texture can only come from without. This is not necessarily true, however, for Xenakis, who absolutely insists that his music exhibit a kind of vitality, even sentience. Furthermore, I argue that these mass textures allow his politics to be reborn alongside his lyricism, that they model something very like the political ideals for which Xenakis fought in the Greek Resistance. Xenakis' music is thus much less abstract and more political than he and many of his interlocutors would have us believe.

I ground this discussion in *Terretektorh*, a large-scale work composed in 1965-66 and premiered in 1966 by Xenakis' longtime mentor Hermann Scherchen. The work is scored for 88 players, each with a separate part, and instead of performing on stage, the members of its orchestra are distributed throughout the audience in the performance space. *Terretektorh* contains a bevy of "Xenakis-isms" such as mass textures and glissandi, and the added element of spatialization enhances and adds further dimensions to some of the political considerations he grapples with every time he uses a mass texture—in other words, in most or all of his works.

Higher Forms

Xenakis' fondness for "objective," "scientific" language is well-known. At times it lapses into the problematic, especially when Xenakis overplays his hand with hubristic and highly masculinized prose such as that which opens *Formalized Music*:

> …The effort to reduce certain sound sensations, to understand their logical causes, to dominate them, and then to use them in wanted constructions; the effort to materialize movements of thought through sounds, then to test them in

> compositions; the effort to understand better the pieces of the past, by searching for an underlying unit which would be identical with that of the scientific thought of our time; the effort to make 'art' while 'geometrizing,' that is, by giving it a reasoned support less perishable than the impulse of the moment, and hence more serious, more worthy of the fierce fight which the human intelligence wages in all the other domains—all these efforts have led to a sort of abstraction and formalization of the musical compositional act.[9]

Formalized Music was written from 1955 to its original publication in 1963 (this just two years before Xenakis began composition on *Terretektorh*). This passage touches upon many of the characteristics of musical "high modernism:" its turn toward abstraction and structuralism, its scientism and emphasis on teleology and progress, its desire to reread and conquer past music, and its intention to establish new methods and techniques. The book follows through with verbiage that is often polemical and often obfuscatory, and a stance that largely disavows cherished musico-critical categories such as "beautiful/ugly" or even "pleasant/unpleasant" in favor of the "logic" or "intelligence" of sounds.[10]

This passage expresses a wish to control the noumenal "sensations" and "impulse" with the phenomenal categories of "logic," and "reasoned support"; Xenakis seems intent on eradicating the very aspect of numinousness that Reich and Sciarrino seek. This brand of musical "high modernism" is in keeping with the structuralist thought that flourished in 1960s Paris. As Jimmie LeBlanc points out, "one common trait to [structuralist] thinkers [such as Claude Lévi-Strauss (anthropology), Louis Althusser (philosophy), Roland Barthes (literature), Jean Piaget (psychology)] was their acceptance of the postulate that abstract, universal and unchanging structures exist beyond ever changing appearances."[11] LeBlanc discusses several defining

[9] Iannis Xenakis, *Formalized Music: Thought and Mathematics in Composition*, ed. Sharon E. Kanach, Harmonologia Series: No. 6 (Hillsdale, New York: Pendragon Press, 1992)., ix.
[10] Ibid., ix and 156.
[11] Jimmie LeBlanc, "Xenakis' Aesthetic Project: The Paradoxes of a Formalist Intuition," in *Xenakis Matters: Contexts, Processes, Applications*, ed. Sharon E Kanach (Hillsdale, N.Y.: Pendragon Press, 2012), 59. LeBlanc argues convincingly that Xenakis uses ancient Greek thinkers, especially Pythagoras and Parmenides, "as a remote philosophical basis and justification for the structuralist spirit of his time." Ibid., 64.

characteristics of structuralism, including a valuation of thought over feeling, a belief in progress, the tendency to evaluate art within a particular context rather than ahistorically. These characteristics lead to the "death of the subject," to the Deleuzian "structuralist hero" that evaluates from an "empty position:" "the 'subject' is essentially defined as a *place.*"[12] Structuralism in music, then, has a very specific and highly abstract kind of vocalic body.

One outcome of this empty position is a problematic collapse of time and space: the "laws" of music Xenakis hopes to extrapolate would, theoretically, transcend culture. Discussing tonal music, serial music, Indian music, and Japanese music all in one breath, Xenakis acknowledges that "they are all separate worlds, continents or islands, each with its own closed rules." He believes, however, in a deeper unifying truth: "One has to examine what these islands have in common, what mental structure is present deep down in all of them; whether there is a path leading to each and whether it's possible to create a higher order."[13] The problems inherent in the attempt to do away with historical contingency in favor of a "metamusic"—also known as "autonomy"—are well-documented in critiques of modernism, and recent scholarship on music during the Cold War has shown that the stance of "autonomy" is in itself highly politically charged.[14]

Xenakis' status at Darmstadt and Donaueschingen during this time was largely that of an outsider; in an interview with Varga, for instance, he describes with some bitterness how the

[12] LeBlanc, "Xenakis' Aesthetic Project," 62. LeBlanc draws the last citation from Etienne Balibar and James Swenson, "Structuralism: A Destitution of the Subject?," *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, no. 1 (2003): 13–14. For more on abstraction as a means to unity in Xenakis' thought, see Carmen Pardo Salgado, "Le rôle de l'abstraction chez Iannis Xenakis," in *Présences de Iannis Xenakis*, ed. Makis Solomos (Paris: Centre de documentation de la musique contemporaine, 2001), 107–12.
[13] Bálint András Varga, *Conversations with Iannis Xenakis* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1996), 51.
[14] For more on modernism's relationship with its contexts, see Laura Tunbridge et al., "Round Table: Modernism and Its Others," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 139, no. 1 (January 2, 2014), especially Borio's lengthy bibliography footnoted on pg. 178. For more on the Cold War and autonomy, see Martin Brody, "'Music for the Masses': Milton Babbitt's Cold War Music Theory," *The Musical Quarterly* 77, no. 2 (Summer 1993): 161–92; Mark Carroll, *Music and Ideology in Cold War Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

serialists, particularly Boulez and Stockhausen, had a stranglehold on musical prestige during the 1950s.[15] He also had difficulty finding his way into compositional circles in France after his emigration there, being met with some combination of bafflement, criticism, and disinterest by luminaries such as Nadia Boulanger and Arthur Honegger.[16] Nonetheless, recent work has brought Xenakis' structuralist leanings into dialogue with those of Pierre Boulez, the emblematic structuralist of modernist music.[17]

Boulez, too, wanted to extrapolate laws and compose music according to them, but as LeBlanc points out, Boulez continued to dwell in the realms of musical laws while Xenakis' ambition was nothing short of a radical intervention in how music and musical composition are conceived: it is not just the laws of music that Xenakis wished to extrapolate, but in fact the laws of the world.[18] Throughout his life, he remained deeply invested in the idea that nature, society, physical motion, as well as architecture and music, are all founded on a basic set of principles—principles he made, in his own estimation, great progress in uncovering. "Everything is everywhere,"[19] intones the preface to *Formalized Music*. And almost twenty years later, he expresses a similar sentiment to Varga: "The artist works with forms. Forms are present everywhere: in space, on the earth, in fauna, in society."[20] Xenakis seeks the tie that binds logical, musical, and physical motion.

---

[15] Varga, *Conversations with Iannis Xenakis*, 35–36. For more on Xenakis' outsider status, see Jennifer Iverson, "Statistical Form amongst the Darmstadt School," *Music Analysis* 33, no. 3 (October 1, 2014): 357–361.
[16] Varga, *Conversations with Iannis Xenakis*, 26–27. Avant-garde composition circles in Paris during the 1950s seem to have formed opposing camps behind two great teachers, Nadia Boulanger and Olivier Messiaen. Xenakis was certainly in Messiaen's camp, as was Boulez. When asked about his relationship with Boulanger during his student days, Boulez replied that "After the war, Messiaen and Leibowitz were the most important figures and no one had any use for Boulanger." Léonie Rosenstiel, *Nadia Boulanger: A Life in Music*, 1st ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1982), 353. See also Jérôme Spycket, *Nadia Boulanger* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1992), 126–130.
[17] LeBlanc, "Xenakis' Aesthetic Project"; Ricardo Mandolini, "Boulez-Xenakis: La conjonction des utopies," in *Présences de Iannis Xenakis*, ed. Makis Solomos (Paris: Centre de documentation de la musique contemporaine, 2001), 67–70.
[18] LeBlanc, "Xenakis' Aesthetic Project," 64–68.
[19] Xenakis, *Formalized Music*, viii.
[20] Varga, *Conversations with Iannis Xenakis*, 126.

The fact that Xenakis' structuralism operated on what might be called a higher level than Boulez's (higher in the sense that it encompassed not only music, but *everything*) led to an important difference between the two composers: whereas Boulez (ostensibly) permitted only "*basic concepts* having a direct relationship with the phenomenon of sound, and with that alone" to influence his composition,[21] Xenakis was able to find a place for emotion and intuition within his compositional imperatives. In fact, these considerations play an important role alongside the others: "To make music means to express human intelligence by sonic means. This is intelligence in its broadest sense, which includes not only the peregrinations of pure logic but also the 'logic' of emotions and of intuition."[22] As I will show, though, the emotions and intuitions that Xenakis portrays are not necessarily his own. Xenakis' structuralism is in fact a means of expressing emotions through sound—but only after a specific process of abstraction.

Another important result of the difference between Xenakis' and Boulez' structuralism is a fundamental disagreement about what should constitute musical materials. This is clear in Xenakis' 1955 article "The Crisis of Serial Music," which criticized serial procedures as ineffective on the grounds that the structures underlying compositions could not be heard by any listener, no matter how skilled. Rows are linear structures, and yet:

> Linear polyphony destroys itself by its very complexity; what one hears is in reality nothing but a mass of notes in various registers. The enormous complexity prevents the audience from following the intertwining of the lines and has as its macroscopic effect an irrational and fortuitous dispersion of sounds over the whole extent of the sonic spectrum. There is consequently a contradiction between the polyphonic linear system and the heard result, which is surface or mass.[23]

[21] Pierre Boulez, *Boulez on Music Today* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), 30–31.
[22] Xenakis, *Formalized Music*, 178. Cited in LeBlanc, "Xenakis' Aesthetic Project," 66.
[23] Iannis Xenakis, "La Crise de La Musique Sérielle," *Gravesaner Blätter* 1 (1955): 2–4. Cited in Iannis Xenakis, *Formalized Music: Thought and Mathematics in Composition*, ed. Sharon E. Kanach, Harmonologia Series: No. 6 (Hillsdale, New York: Pendragon Press, 1992), 8.

For Boulez during the 1950s, the structural rigor and integrity of a piece was enough to justify its merit. For Xenakis, though, who was interested in the connection between music and other domains, structural integrity was not enough; the work had to be heard in accordance with its universalized principles. This essay widened the chasm between Xenakis and the serialists, although the attention and notoriety it garnered him, along with the faithful support of Scherchen, helped him ascend into the most rarefied musical circles even despite this rift. More importantly, it articulates one of the most compelling contemporary criticisms of total serialism in terms of linearity. The *crise musique serielle* is in fact a crisis of line, of melody, of lyricism—and, following the reasoning of the vocal imaginary—of voice and subjectivity. By overlayering too many complex melodies, the serialists are actually left with none: an undifferentiated dispersion of sounds.

They are also left without a subject, without a clear vocalic body. How, then, does Xenakis ensure a musical subject? It is not by advocating for a Rousseauian texture of melody and simple accompaniment. In fact, throughout the years he displays a consistent aversion to beautifully rendered melody in the Romantic sense. Xenakis' claim that he may have been born without lyricism suggests that this aversion might have to do with a certain lack of proficiency as a melodist, but one moment in his interviews with Varga in particular reveals a prohibition that has far more to do with ethics than ability. "I know it sounds ridiculous, but sometimes a sentimental melody can move me to tears. However, *I don't want to be moved*." He goes on to claim that this reaction is a culturally contrived sham, whereas he wishes to create an effect through "the music itself."[24] This comment brings to mind Kundera's discussion of the danger of sentimentality, of its role as the "superstructure of brutality." Like Kundera, Xenakis is made uncomfortable by the perceived contingency of melody, as well as (it seems) its emotional power

[24] Varga, *Conversations with Iannis Xenakis*, 10–11. Emphasis mine.

and proximity. Also like Kundera, Xenakis evinces melancholia for a time when he could let himself be moved by melody and lyricism, when their phenomenal and constructed nature was less evident and less of a problem.

His embrace of phenomena in the form of logic and musical rules can thus be understood as a banishment of phenomena of a more insidious variety. In order to avoid being manipulated by music's conventional ways of evoking emotion and sentimentality, Xenakis has to go back to square one and reconceive its very definition, its purpose. Melody is thus banished, but there are ways that it makes a sly return: first, as an accidental by-product. When Varga points out a few places where melodies occur and asks about whether they happen intentionally or accidentally, Xenakis responds, "In the cases you have listed, accidentally. In following a train of thought the corresponding music might produce something which is reminiscent of a melody. Am I to break the continuity of thought only to avoid that? Sometimes I do change it but at other times I don't care."[25] Melody, then, can exist as a somewhat distasteful derivative, but is never to be striven for in and of itself. The second way it can flourish in Xenakis' music is through mass textures that retain some aspects of "linearity" while forsaking others: it is these textures that constitute Xenakis' solution to the *crise musique serielle*.

Mass textures as a new kind of linearity

Xenakis sought a "possible escape route from the 'linear category' in musical thought" in thinking about music in terms of mass rather than line.[26] But as is probably apparent by now, I don't think that Xenakis succeeded, or even really attempted, to escape this 'linear category'

[25] Ibid., 63.
[26] Xenakis, *Formalized Music*, 8.

altogether. On the contrary, I see his project as one of rescuing a sense of line, melody, lyricism, and voice, although in radically altered form. It is an effort to construct a *new kind of linearity*, one that meshes with his aesthetic, philosophical and political ideals. In other words, Xenakis intends to rescue lyricism not only from the serialists, but also from the "superstructure of brutality" in which it has become complicit. A close analysis of *Terretektorh* will show how these mass textures can stand in for voice and vocality in certain ways.

The score to *Terretektorh* is rather overwhelming; printed on oversize (11.5x16 in.) paper, two pages are still required in order to display its 88 separate staves. Trying to hear the piece as 88-part counterpoint is a nonstarter, and Xenakis' comments about the *crise musique serielle* strongly imply that this is not the way that he would choose for it to be heard. The dispersal of its players across space further complicates an attempt to hear line in the traditional sense. It is fruitful, however, to think of the music as organizing itself into a limited number of distinct textures, what James Harley calls "sonic entities."[27] I hear six, some of which can be further divided into subcategories; they are described in turn below and then condensed into **Table 4-1**.

SE 1 (sonic entity 1) is a tight cluster that emphasizes pitch class E. The most pronounced iteration of this texture occurs during the opening two minutes of the piece (mm. 1-75), which contain only the pitch E4. At m. 76, the pitch splinters into a dyad and then a cluster, and sinks downward until it is abruptly juxtaposed with a mass of string glissandi (**SE 4**) in m. 93. A stable E-based sonority occurs twice more in the piece, once in mm. 195-97 and then again in mm. 206-215.

[27] James Harley, *Xenakis: His Life in Music* (New York: Routledge, 2004). Harley points out that the difficulties these "entities" present to traditional modes of musical analysis is probably the cause of "the lack of attention Xenakis' music has received in the analytical community" (viii).

SE 2 is a "cloud" of percussive sounds that are sometimes heard as individual attacks and sometimes as an indistinguishable mass. Beginning in m. 99, for instance, each attack of the slapstick can be heard. Eventually, though, they build into a cascade that can only be experienced holistically.

SE 3 is a half-note pulse in the toms. Unlike the other categories, it only appears once (mm. 119-170). After a few introductory bars (m. 119-121), it settles into an even rotation between the three percussionists outside of the circular seating arrangement (see **Figure 4-2**): that is, each half note moves a third around the circle clockwise. Beginning in m. 141, however, the distribution becomes irregular even as the pulse remains strict.

SE 4 is quick glissandi across a wide range—this occurs in both the strings and the sirens that all players sound in addition to their instruments. This category tends to serve as a point of formal articulation, as in m. 93 when it interrupts the opening gesture. Sometimes, the glissandi will move in opposite directions across the orchestral range, as in mm. 93-96, but often they move together. In m. 111, for instance, it interrupts the static chord of **SE 6** by traversing its pitch space in a quick set of glissandi from the extreme high to extreme low registers.

SE 5 is a hazy, multitudinous heterophony that takes place in the extreme registers, respectively. The instruments layer over one another, moving mostly by step in the same pitch space. The high register consists more of sustained notes, while the low heterophony is composed of individual melodic lines.

SE 6 is a sustained chord that spans the entire orchestral range. Sometimes individual parts will move within it, but it's often completely static in terms of pitch.

1. SUSTAINED CLUSTER ~ E	(mm.) 1-75 76-93 195-197 206-215
2. PERCUSSION "CLOUDS"	
-maracas	10-23 55-75 354-355 176-205
-woodblocks	~126-175 197-8 302-352 410-413
-slapsticks	48-49 99~126
-tom rolls (bag. Doucas?)	250-266
3. RHYTHMIC TOMS	120-170
4. QUICK GLISSANDI	
-strings	93-96 111-113 129-159 192-197 206-215
-sirens	258-268 313-356 404-414
5. HETEROPHONY	
-high	119~194 306-330 (hints 357-409, 428-433)
-low	158-330 (hints 357-409, 428-433)
6. SUSTAINED CHORD, WIDE RANGE	97-110 216-255 356-447

Table 4-1: "Sonic Entities" in *Terretektorh*

These textures are cohesive and easily recognized, despite their multiplicity. But how do they stand in for the melodic? How do they 'sing'? To answer these questions, it helps to return to the Rousseauian conception of melody as *unité de mélodie*. Recall how Nick Mansfield defines a Rousseauian subject as "a total and inclusive phenomenon, a sort of massive and

dynamic unity."[28] And recall how Jacqueline Waeber discusses Rousseau's hermeneutic leap into music by associating the unity of his subject with the unity of melody—its one-ness, its cohesiveness, its ability to be easily distinguished from other musical phenomena. I would like to suggest that although Xenakis' textures are multiple and amorphous—not melodic in the traditional sense—they too claim a certain unity and cohesiveness that allows them to stand in similarly for a musical subject. Because they are cohesive, they can move dynamically as a voice would, and their unity thus allows them to retain certain elements of vocality: the very sense of linearity that Xenakis found lacking in the complicated polyphony of Darmstadt serialists, and the very sense of lyricism that he claimed was dead within himself.[29]

A living music

Kundera finds comfort in the 'nonsentience' of Xenakis' music, its exteriority and resistance to subjectivity. He compares it to machines, to rain, and to other non-living entities. And this kind of interpretation of Xenakis' music as somehow inert, even dead, is often reflected in scholarship around the composer, such as in the following set of questions that frame Ivan Hewitt's discussion of Xenakis' anti-historicism:

> What drove this composer to work on our sensibilities in such a fiercely abstract way? Why the total absence of familiar aural and musical signposts, indeed any sign of the human—apart from here and there an echo of some atavistic folk-music or implacable ancient ritual?[30]

As discussed above, I agree with Hewitt that Xenakis wants to make music that exists outside of historical contingency. But I find his conflation of abstraction (read: structuralism)

[28] Nick Mansfield, *Subjectivity: Theories of the Self from Freud to Haraway* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 17.
[29] This brings Xenakis into dialogue with Ligeti and other composers using mass textures at the time. It's interesting to note that the foregoing discussion could apply almost equally well to Ligeti, but not to the spectralists, who have their own ethico-aesthetic agenda.
[30] Ivan Hewett, "Music Beyond Time," in *Iannis Xenakis: Composer, Architect, Visionary*, ed. Sharon E. Kanach and Carey Lovelace, vol. 88 (New York: Drawing Center, 2010), 17.

with inhumanity and nonsentience to be unsatisfying. In fact, this kind of mimetic transfer between musical and human movement is made possible by Xenakis' particular brand of structuralism, which synthesizes not only musical but also physical, 'emotional,' and mathematical laws; remember that Xenakis sees "emotions and intuition" as part of what he wishes to capture and express through compositional algorithms. Further, as I will show, the metaphors of living, animation, and even sentience actually play a foundational and generative role in how Xenakis conceives of his music and how he wants it to be heard. It is not so much that Xenakis draws a parallel between the animate and inanimate in his music as that its vitality is of primary concern.

Dead Voices, Living Music

This chapter is not about Xenakis' singing voices in the literal sense. But before I discuss the role of animation and sentience in his thinking, it is worth noting that his treatment of voices tends to display more of the kind of "objective" distance described by Kundera and Hewitt than does his treatment of instruments. The voice, which is so eminently capable of dynamicism, of line and lyricism, is largely denied these qualities in Xenakis' music. Most of the vocal works are on classical subjects and imitate an imagined classical style, with few of the vocal niceties one might hear in a nineteenth-century Lied, for instance vibrato, or hairpin dynamics on phrases. In *Oresteia*, for instance, he instructs that "the words should be spoken, not declaimed, without any sentiment or expression whatsoever, in a '*recto tono*' voice, and without any modulation of pitch or volume." Voices in Xenakis' works are allowed to yell and scream, as in *Oresteia*, or to cluster, as in *Nuits*, but rarely to sing melodies. Rachid Safir described how the composer asks singers to "'forget' their voices and consider themselves instruments"[31]—a project similar to

[31] Rachid Safir, "Some Vocal Techniques Used in Iannis Xenakis' *Nuits* and *Oresteia*," in *Performing Xenakis*, ed. Sharon E. Kanach, Iannis Xenakis Series: No. 2 (Hillsdale, New York: Pendragon Press, 2010), 273–96.

Steve Reich's. Even in the soloistic, virtuosic, and frankly exoticist *Kassandra*, "the interpretation must avoid any expression of feelings as the danger would be to inflict contemporary clichés on Aeschylus' text."[32] Although certain aspects of his music bring forth the idea of voice and melody, the voice itself is always treated at a distance, one imagines with the same suspicion Xenakis reserves for melody.

Causality and Sentience

For Xenakis, causality is definitional to music: "What, in fact, does a musical composition offer strictly on the construction level? It offers a collection of sequences which it wishes to be causal."[33] This is echoed in his discussion of "necessity" in a much later interview, where he describes how he wants each musical event to feel that it follows inevitably from the next—that the connection between musical events is "strong." This kind of connection reflects how humans move in the world: "If it's loose then it can take another path, and what drives the human being is the necessity from one situation into another one."[34] Although his stochastic operations might yield any number of different results at the local level, it's important that Xenakis' overall forms model—perform a mimetic transformation—of what might be called a human intelligence. And he does speak often and at length about the intelligence of his sounds. The ability to recognize causality and follow through on it implies a certain sentience: Steven Connor quotes Aristotle as defining a voice as a sound made with intelligence and intent.[35] And, pace Kundera, it is exactly this sentience that Xenakis seeks in his music.

[32] Ibid., 295.
[33] Xenakis, *Formalized Music*, 5.
[34] Nouritza Matossian, *Xenakis*, 2nd ed. (Lefkosia, Cyprus: Moufflon Publications, 2005), 308. Interview from 1990.
[35] Steven Connor, *Beyond Words: Sobs, Hums, Stutters and Other Vocalizations* (London: Reaktion Books, 2014), 8.

Dynamicism

Brandon LaBelle describes Xenakis' music as "reach[ing] for a condition that is *becoming*, in flux, alert, and alarming [emphasis his]."[36] It is a music that never settles, never holds still long enough to define itself. It seems that every conceivable parameter—rhythm, dynamics, timbre—is also in a state of transition, of restless mutability. When Varga asks about this phenomenon, Xenakis responds:

> The aim is to make the sound itself live. There are different ways of doing that: we change the timbre, employ tremolos and accents, repeat the sound and change dynamics…in this way the inner life of the sound is not only in the general line of the composition, of the thought, but is also within the tiniest details.

Xenakis' insistence on changeability resonates with Sciarrino's and Reich's search for the noumenal and *informelle*. His sounds refuse to settle into phenomena, into elements that can be coded or parsed; they continually resist being known. This search for the noumenal through dynamicism is captured in microcosm in his frequent and life-long use of glissandi, perhaps the Xenakis gesture *par excellence*. In fact, Xenakis' entrance onto the new music scene was heralded by the famous glissando gestures that open *Metastaseis*—a work whose title means "beyond stasis".[37] For the composer, the glissando is "one of the basic ways of playing…for me it represents the most usual behaviour of a sound, while a sustained note is something special because of the slope of the pitch versus time change is nil."[38] Again, Xenakis' concern with the "most usual behavior" of a note reflects a mimetic understanding of music—a note should do what a living being should do. And living beings move through the world fluidly and perpetually, in gestures more like a smooth glissando than a disjoint series of scalar resting

[36] Brandon LaBelle, *Background Noise: Perspectives on Sound Art*, 2nd edition (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 189.
[37] *Metastaseis* was premiered in 1955 at Donaueschingen, and the scandal it caused brought Xenakis to the attention of the composers who circulated around this festival and Darmstadt.
[38] Varga, *Conversations with Iannis Xenakis*, 69.

points. Each of the sonic entities I described in my initial account of *Terretektorh* evokes the 'inner life' Xenakis speaks of in its constant state of flux and transformation. They are not voices, but they do bring for vocalic bodies that pulse with life; the dynamicism Xenakis denies to his actual voices is fully present in his sonic entities.

SE 1, the sustained cluster around E, dominates the opening two and a half minutes of the piece (mm. 1-75). Although the pitch is stable during these opening gestures, its spatialization, timbre, and dynamics are highly unstable. The E is passed around the distributed ensemble in a spiral pattern that moves first clockwise and then counter-clockwise. This section uses only strings, but the different gestures distinguish themselves timbrally by the slightly different configuration of each group (group A has three violins, a cello, and a bass, for instance, while group C has one of each kind of string instrument) and their placement within the concert space. Each gesture performs a hairpin dynamic figure, never resting on a stable dynamic, and the high points of each hairpin are also in flux, moving from *f* down to *mp*, then back up to *sfff*, etc.[39] Each gesture also becomes shorter, leading to a compression of rhythm. All of these vectors operate individually and contribute to the sense of a music that is continually in a state of flux, despite its unchanging pitch. This effect becomes even more pronounced after the pitch begins to splinter outward in m. 76. *Terretektorh* never settles again on a single pitch, although a stable E-centered cluster is heard twice more in brief moments where Group 1 is only one of several layers present in the overall texture.

The percussive sounds of **SE 2** also fluctuate along a number of axes. First of all, the sound itself is at once singular and multiple—what is often experienced as a cohesive texture is in fact composed of countless individual attacks, carefully coordinated by sometimes dozens of performers. Xenakis also sometimes composes hairpin dynamics that relate across the ensemble

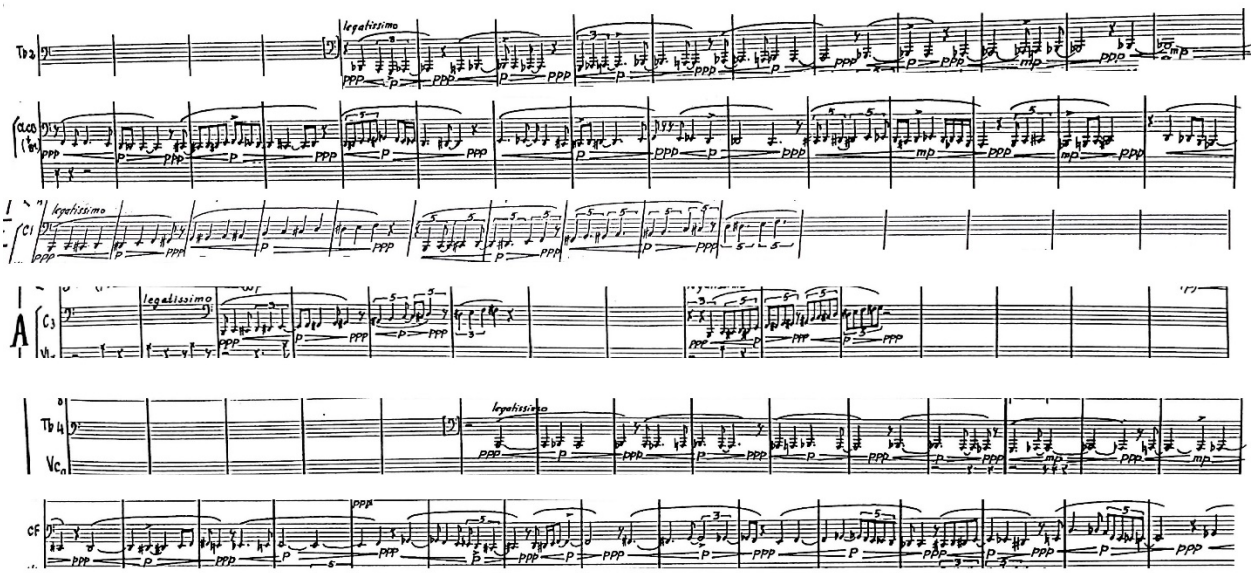
[39] Xenakis' hairpin gestures, then, are more similar to Reich's than to Sciarrino's in their evocation of breath.

in complex and complementary ways, as in the maraca texture that dominates mm. 176-197. Each measure in each part performs its own hairpin gesture, although the groups alternate such that groups A, C, E and G will be at the highest point of their crescendo when B, D, F, and H are at the lowest. Xenakis further creates a meta-crescendo by making the high point of each crescendo increasingly louder; the fact that each instrumental group begins staggered by a half note from the group before makes the meta-crescendo a cascade. Xenakis also at times controls the density and spatialization of these percussive sounds so that they ebb and flow, moving around the ensemble.

As previously discussed, **SE 3** begins with an even pattern of distribution of tom attacks around the ensemble; even this regular arrangement keeps the pulse in perpetual motion around the room. The regularity further dissolves into what seems to be an arbitrary distribution as the section progresses. The string and siren glissandi of **SE 4** are cohesive in timbre and characteristic motion, but extremely changeable in terms of pitch—as noted, they move through, around, and between the notes of the tempered scale rather than resting on set scalar nodes, and arranged in layers one atop the other. Especially interesting are the moments where the strings seem to move as one even as each part is different. In mm. 111-113, for instance, all of the strings move downward at different speeds and slightly different times—the overall effect is, once again, both singular and multiple.

SE 5 is especially interesting in its Ligeti-esque overlayering of distinctive melodies. **Example 4-1** shows the six bass lines that sound simultaneously in mm. 163-177. Note how even though they all move chromatically, each has an independent contour, dynamics, and rhythmic profile: each could stand as a melody in its own right, and depending upon where the audience member is positioned, each one may well be heard individually. Overall, these

individual lines fuse together into a mass with a generally upward trajectory from a generally low range. But again, within the singularity lives the multiple.



Example 4-1: Six bass lines, *Terretektorh* mm. 163-177

SE 6 is experienced more as a wall of sound than as an intelligible chord. It contains microtonal pitches that span the orchestral register, with very little duplication of pitch across the 88-person ensemble. Every time it appears, it is subject to shifts in individual dynamics, accents, and tremolo markings, such that individual instruments weave in and out of the chordal fabric.

Xenakis approaches even the smallest components of composition as dynamic, and this mindset is at the heart of what distinguishes him from Darmstadt structuralism as exemplified by Boulez. It precludes the fixity, objectivity, and stable definitions that are so important for serial structures, and the resulting possibilities are quite different: the number of tones changes from twelve to infinite, for instance, and terrace dynamics make way for hairpin shapes. On the other hand, exact relationality between these particular tones and dynamics becomes impossible—searching for the recurrence and transformation of intervallic structures is far less rewarding in

Xenakis' music than in Boulez's. Judging by his assessment of the gap between compositional method and heard reality in serial music, however, this is a sacrifice Xenakis is willing to make.

Spatialization

In her dissertation, Maria Anna Harley traces Xenakis' consistent interest in spatialization from his dispersal of sounds across the orchestra in *Pithoprakta* (1955-56), to his instructions for performer movement in *Eonta* (1963-64), to his distribution of the orchestra across the performance space in *Terretektorh* and *Nomos Gama* (1967-68), to the interaction of multiple instrumental ensembles in *Alax* (1985).[40] Although *Terretektorh* represents only one of many spatialization strategies, it does embody a number destabilizing effects that spatialization can impose upon a piece, chief among them the multiplicity of audience experience and the psychological effect proximity can have upon a listener.

Figure 4-1 shows an early sketch of the orchestral seating arrangement in *Terretektorh*. As the picture shows, the performers are seated among the audience members. **Figure 4-2** shows how Xenakis eventually organized the instruments into eight groups, labelled A-H. Although the exact make-up of each group varies, each one is a blend of strings, woodwinds, and brass that contains instruments from both high and low registers. The second figure also shows the three percussionists placed roughly equidistant around the perimeter of the ensemble.

[40] Maria Anna Harley, "Space and Spatialization in Contemporary Music: History and Analysis, Ideas and Implementations" (Ph.D. Dissertation, McGill University, School of Music, 1994), 279–300.

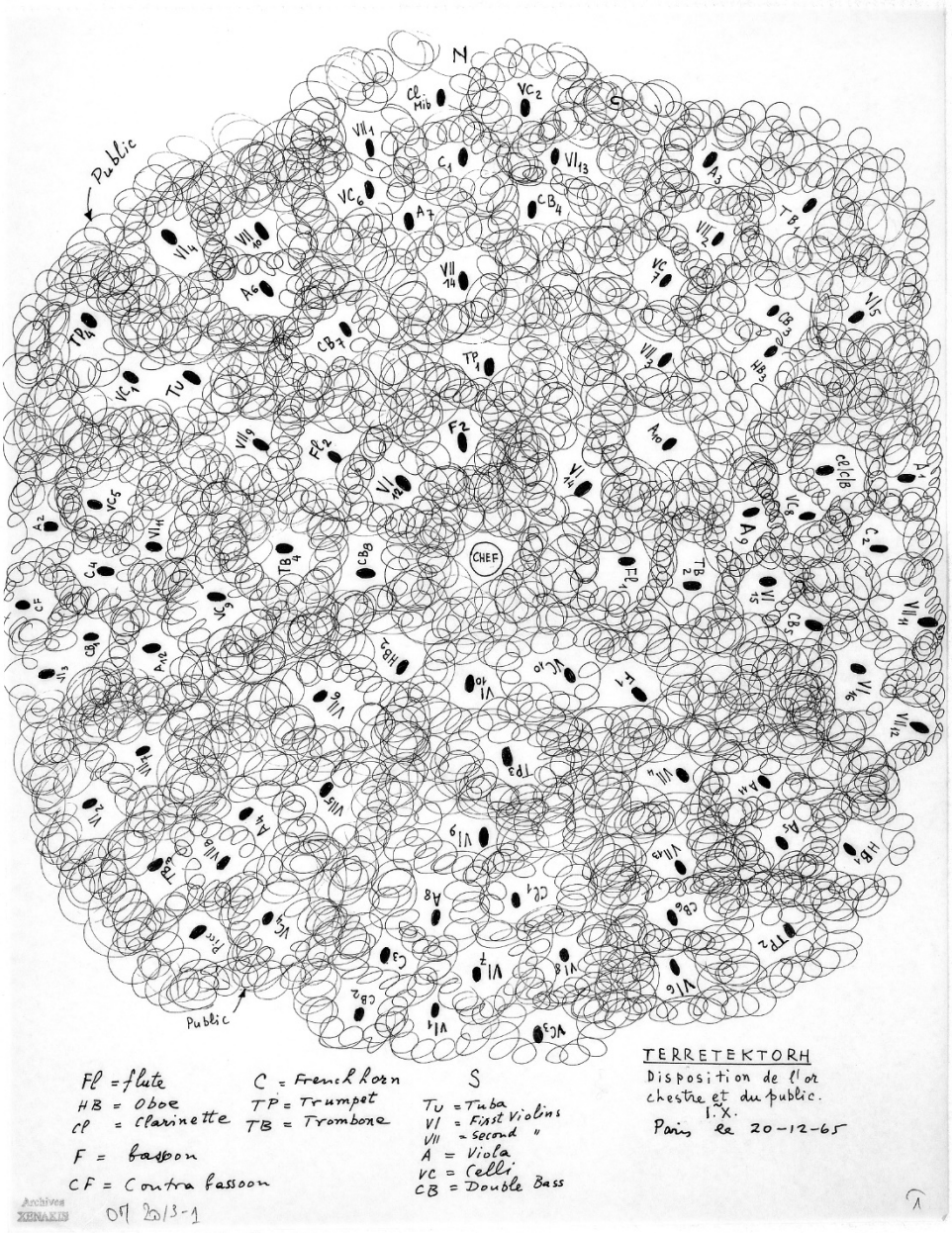


Figure 4-1: Xenakis' schematic of spatial distribution in *Terretektorh*

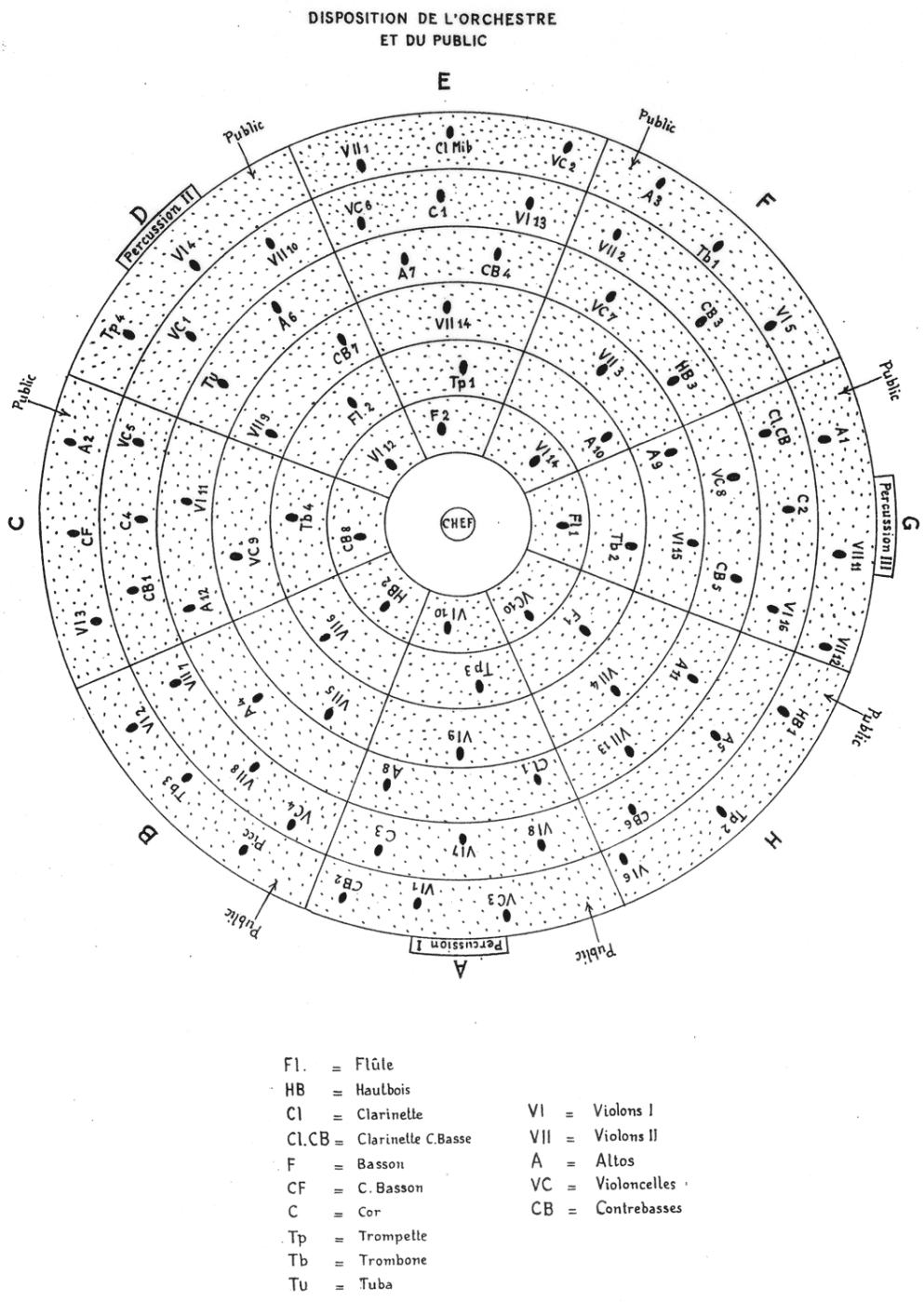


Figure 4-2: Orchestral positioning in *Terretektorh*

One effect of Xenakis' experimentation with spatialization in *Terretektorh* is the destabilization of the work. This is a piece that is certainly meant to be experienced live, but no

single live experience can provide a complete sense of it. The dispersal of performers throughout the audience makes it so that each audience member's sonic encounter will be different—sometimes, markedly so. Thus, just as *Terretektorh*'s gestures are in constant flux, so too is the auditor's experience of them.

One can illustrate this point by imagining oneself in different places in the given seating arrangement. In m. 146-162, for instance, there are three distinct sound layers in operation: high sustained notes in the winds, low stepwise motion in the contrabass clarinet and contrabassoon, and woodblock attacks from all of those in the ensemble not involved with the other two textures. **Figure 4-3** shows the high sustaining instruments circled in blue, and the low stepwise instruments in red. One can see how carefully Xenakis has distributed these sounds throughout the ensemble, and also how different it would be to experience this passage from, say, right next to the contrabass clarinet in section G (circled in red) versus near the Eb clarinet in section E (circled in blue). From the first vantage point, the melody of the contrabass clarinet would be distinct and well-defined, and fairly balanced with the oboe right next to it. From the second, the contrabass clarinet and contrabassoon would meld into a heterophonic composite and be completely overbalanced by the high clarinet.

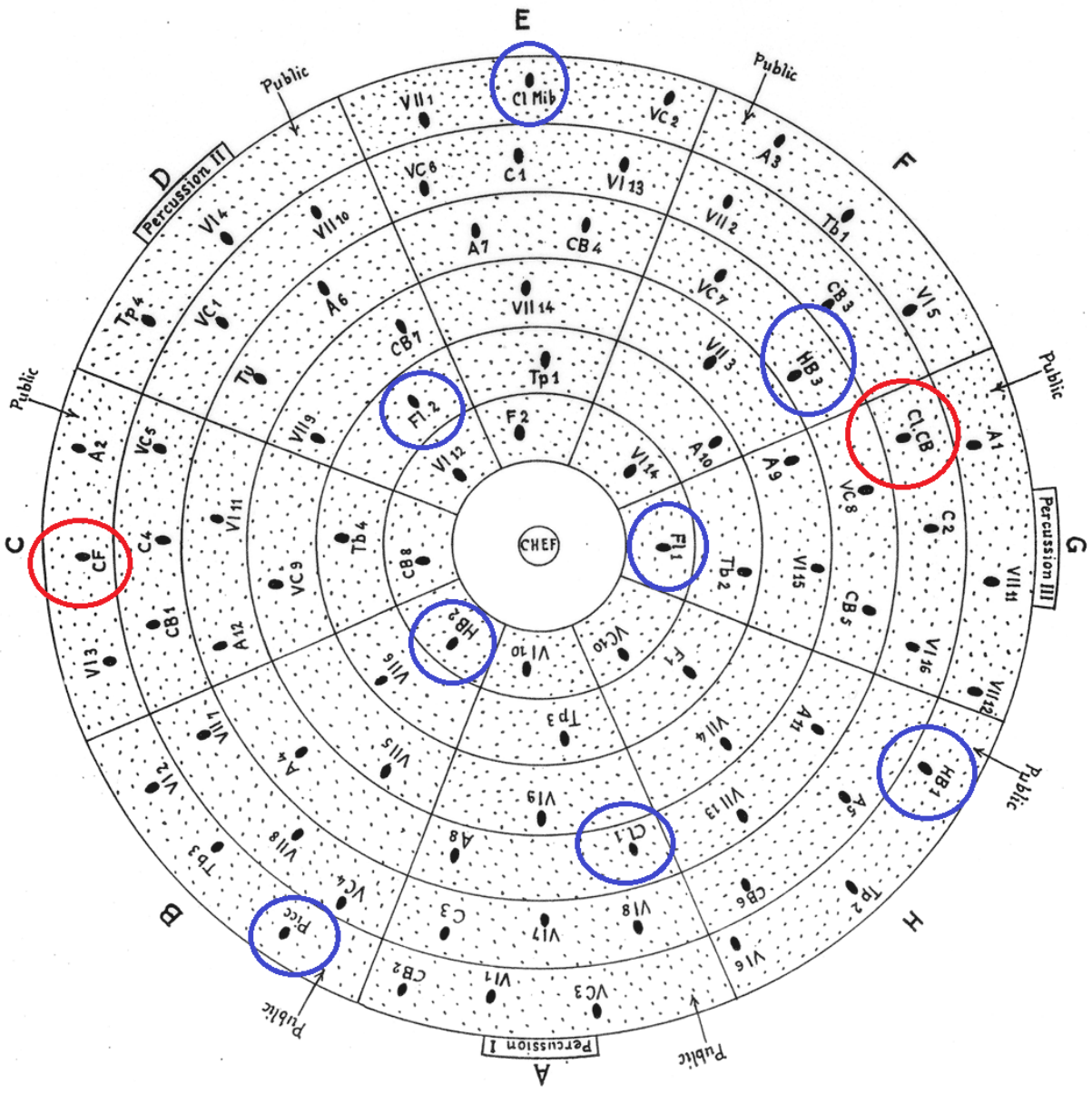


Figure 4-3: Spatialized listening in *Terretektorh*, mm. 146-162. Instruments sustaining high notes are circled in red, while those participating in a texture of low-register heterophony are circled in blue

Xenakis was well aware that different listeners will have a different aural perspective on *Terretektorh*, but he hoped that the piece would be played enough for an audience member to

hear it from multiple perspectives.[41] In fact, James Harley points out that it was "the impracticalities of deplacing orchestra members and requiring a nontraditional performance space, along with the resistance of performers and presenters"—in other words, the unlikelihood that a piece actually would be performed multiple times—that discouraged Xenakis from pursuing further the kind of spatialization found in this work.[42]

All of these aspects of spatialization contribute to the dynamicism and uncertainty of Xenakis' music, the very quality that makes it "live." The very proximity between audience members and instrumentalists can also have this effect; Xenakis claims that this proximity "tears down the psychological and auditive curtain that separates [the listener] from the players when positioned far off on a pedestal, itself frequently enough placed inside a box."[43] The result is "a radically new kinetic conception of music" where the sonorities of individual instruments are "much more alive"[44]—again, a mimetic sense that the piece functions in a way similar to a living being is central to Xenakis' thought and valuation.

Repetition

Xenakis often mentions Heraclitus's insight that it is impossible to step into the same river twice. To him, this story reflects the somewhat tragic ephemerality of experience in general, and presumably music as well:

> And yet, each event, like each individual on earth, is unique. But this uniqueness is the equivalent of death which lies in wait at every step, at every moment. Now, the repetition of an event, its reproduction as faithfully as possible, corresponds to this struggle against disappearance, against nothingness. As if the entire universe fought desperately to hang on to existence, to being, by its own tireless renewal at every instant, at every death. The union of Parmenides and of Heraclitus. Living species are an example of this struggle of life or death, in an inert Universe launched perhaps by the Big Bang (is it really inert, that is, without any changes

[41] Varga, *Conversations with Iannis Xenakis*, 98.
[42] Harley, *Xenakis*, 166.
[43] Xenakis, *Formalized Music*, 237.
[44] Varga, *Conversations with Iannis Xenakis*, 98.

> in its laws?). This same principle of dialectical combat is present everywhere, verifiable everywhere. Change—for there is no rest—the couple death and birth lead the Universe, by duplication, the copy being more or less exact.[45]

As Benoît Gibson has shown, the burden of constant self-renewal can be too great to bear: Xenakis reuses his own material far more often than this statement would suggest.[46] Nonetheless, theoretically at least, to live is to be denied repetition. And the dynamicism, the constant becoming, of Xenakis' music, reflects a mimetic transference of this belief.

Like much of Xenakis' music, *Terretektorh* does contain moments where distinctive, repetitive patterns emerge. But even these patterns are subtly changing, ephemeral, or both. One example is the increasingly random distribution of tom hits in mm. 119-170; despite the steady half-note pulse, the sound source is constantly shifting in unpredictable ways. Another example occurs in m. 93, where all of the strings perform an extended glissando. In m. 97, they arrive at a massive, register-spanning chord articulated in varying duple rhythms across the ensemble. This texture settles into a bar-long pattern that cuts in and out for the next 13 bars, all against a shifting backdrop of woodblock attacks. Here, the material is strictly repeated, but only for a very limited duration. In addition, the complexity of both the chord and its timbre render the music difficult to grasp even with repetition.

Form

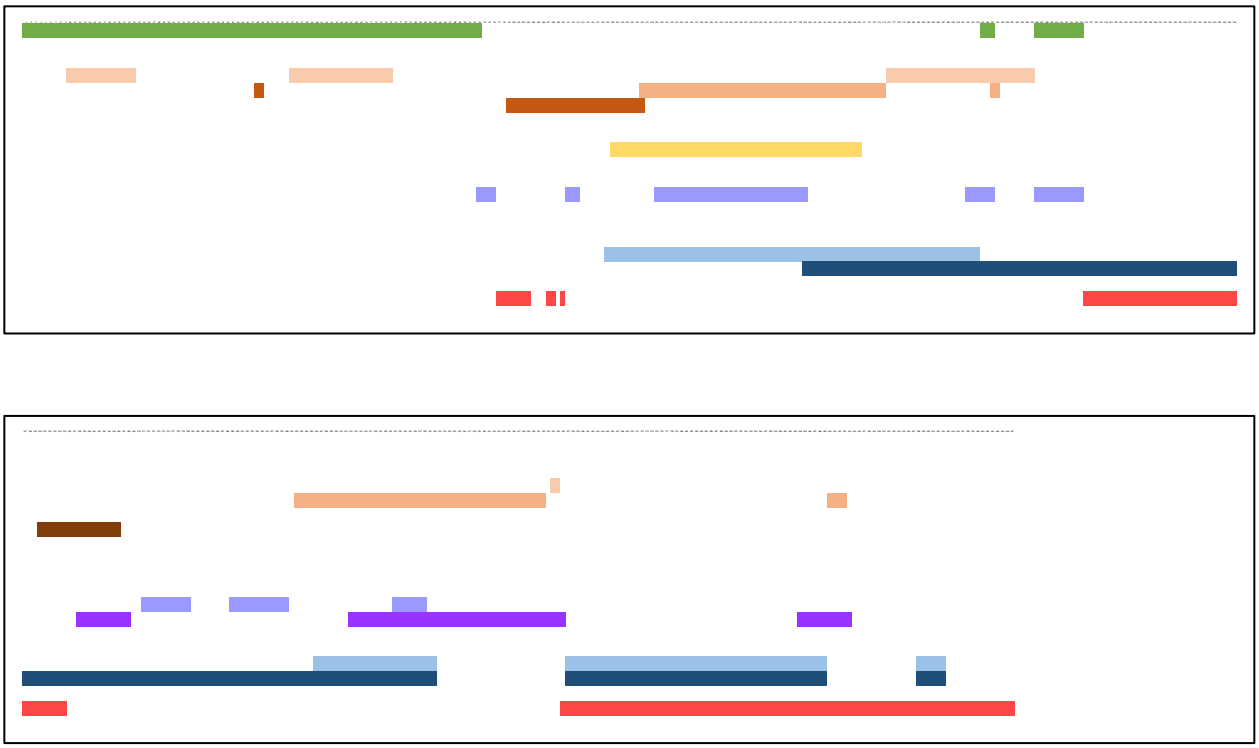
Xenakis' need for dynamic music and resulting ban on repetition results in a view toward form that is almost entirely intuitive, determined by immediate musical materials rather than *a priori* structure. In *Formalized Music*, he briefly distinguishes between "forms" and "schemes:" forms are pre-given structures that contain and determine musical material, whereas schemes are

[45] Xenakis, *Formalized Music*, 267.
[46] Benoît Gibson, *The Instrumental Music of Iannis Xenakis: Theory, Practice, Self-Borrowing*, Iannis Xenakis Series (Hillsdale, New York: Pendragon Press, 2011).

processes that are co-constitutive with musical material.[47] In terms of process, Xenakis is prone to think about macrostructures and to have a global form for a work before he begins to compose it, but he develops this form over time: "Music is a kind of organism, it's slow to take shape, like the gestation of babies. This is the best strategy, for it ensures that the music will be deep and alive and will conform to all your past experience… ."[48] Again, in this organicist metaphor, a mimetic transfer takes place between how music and living things "grow."

Although this is a description of Xenakis' compositional process, it also applies to the resulting forms. This is not to say that his music embodies a single process throughout. Much purer examples of this kind of construction can be found in the early minimalist pieces by Reich and Glass, or spectralist works like Saariaho's *Verblendungen*, for instance. In fact, Xenakis makes frequent use of disconnection and juxtaposition in his music—one example is the string glissandi in *Terretektorh*, which usually occur suddenly and mark a formal boundary. But overall, with many detours and byways, the piece does enact a trajectory toward a greater range and complexity of sound. It begins with relatively static sonorities (a single pitch and timbrally uniform percussion attacks); by the end, the single note has expanded to a chord that spans the entire orchestral range, with heterophonic textures in the extreme registers, glissandi, and intermittent percussion. **Figure 4-4** provides a formal overview of the piece based on the sonic entities I describe earlier in the chapter, and shows how the overall texture of the piece shifts over time.

[47] Xenakis, *Formalized Music*, 133.
[48] Varga, *Conversations with Iannis Xenakis*, 203. For more on Xenakis' approach to global form, see Matossian, *Xenakis*, 81.



Key:

SE 1: CLUSTER AROUND E
SE 2: PERCUSSION CLOUDS
-maracas
-woodblocks
-slapsticks
-tom rolls
SE 3: RHYTHMIC TOMS
SE 4: GLISSANDI
-strings
-sirens
SE 5: HETEROPHONY
-high
-low
SE 6: SUSTAINED CHORD, WIDE RANGE

Figure 4-4: *Terretektorh* form (graphic)

Xenakis and the political

Xenakis claims that his music isn't political. When Anders Beyer asked in the mid-nineties whether Xenakis' political engagement had any impact on his work as an artist, for instance, the composer's response was unequivocal: "No. My music has always been

independent of my political and sociological ideas."[49] But an oft-told origin story of the mass textures that define his compositional style must bring this assertion into question. In *Formalized Music,* he claims that the sounds of the Greek Resistance are what inspired the soundscape of *Metastaseis*, a piece composed almost entirely of mass textures which is often referred to as his first mature composition;[50] the story recurs several times in interviews thereafter.[51] In one of his more intriguing accounts of the Resistance, Xenakis describes the process of aestheticizing his wartime experiences:

> Just before the war, in my cycling tours in Attica, I listened to cicadas, the wind in the pines, the sound of the waves, hail on my tent and during the Nazi occupation, the wonderful sounds of crowds marching on the enemy in the center of the city demanding bread, oil, or rebelling against forced labor in Germany.
>
> The main arteries of Athens then filled with these chants at a strong pace. Then, when demonstrators (I was often at the head with my comrades from the Polytechnic, which was a bastion of resistance) approached the center, the Nazis were waiting with tanks and fired into the crowd. Shouts of anger, pain, fear, death suddenly replace the rhythmic scansions, and are transformed into a fantastic chaos of hundreds of thousands of voices that fill the entire city, in the

[49] Anders Beyer, *The Voice of Music: Conversation with Composers of Our Time*, ed. Jean Christensen (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 300.

[50] Xenakis, *Formalized Music*, 61. The events that transpired during Xenakis' last years in Greece were not widely known until Nouritza Matossian's penetrating biography of 1981; even Matossian, the most sympathetic of Xenakis biographers, was able to get him to open up about his wartime experiences only at the end of their extended time together. This reversed chronology in the interview process probably accounts for why the intriguing narrative thread of Xenakis' politics is dropped after the first chapter, which was written last. In brief, the story is as follows: Xenakis joined the popular resistance against Italy, Germany, and Bulgaria, who held a triple occupation of Greece by 1941. Eventually, due partly to the miserable conditions of the war and subsequent occupation, he was drawn to the Communist Party. He became one of the top members of the Communist network in Athens, and organized mass demonstrations, the goal of which were to defeat fascism and unite the free countries into an international world government. By 1944, Italy, Germany and Bulgaria had all evacuated Greece, and the British occupation began shortly thereafter. Due to political ineptitude, the powerful communist party was induced to lay down its weapons and submit to British martial law. While the communists awaited word from Stalin that never came, protests against the British erupted into violence. It was in this conflict that Xenakis sustained his famed injury when a building he occupied was bombed by the British; for the rest of his life, the left side of his face exhibited a glass eye and pronounced scar. During his recuperation, the communist leaders in Greece capitulated, bargaining their own amnesty for that of lower ranked fighters such as Xenakis who were subsequently subject to prosecution. Xenakis remained involved in the Resistance even after his injury, but eventually, conditions became so dangerous that he was forced to flee for his life. He eventually settled in Paris, arriving on Armistice Day in 1947, and for almost three decades would be unable to return to Greece because of a death sentence placed *in absentia*. Matossian, *Xenakis*, 28–43.

[51] See Matossian, *Xenakis*, 68; Xenakis, *Formalized Music*, 61; Varga, *Conversations with Iannis Xenakis*, 52. The function of this story brings to mind Ligeti's description of the dream that inspired *Atmosphères*—in both cases, an overwhelming and frightening experience inspired the composition of mass textures.

smoke, dust, and blood, to which were added the punctuation of machine guns and explosions.

Yet natural or human phenomena that I first listened to in the course of action, I also and at the same time listened with an analytic-synthetic detachment—external observation.

I didn't dare to classify these sounds as music since such structures had not been integrated into music at that time. It was not until Paris, years later, that these reminiscences themselves, stripped of their emotional content, left me with the abstract question: how was the structure and evolution over time made?

This is where my previous studies suddenly provided assistance. It was macroscopic phenomena from a profusion of small isolated phenomena. What I heard in my trips to the countryside, or in the demonstrations, was actually the result of hundreds of these sound molecules. Therefore, what explained the kinetic theory of gases was bound to explain the effects of these sound masses of cicadas or demonstrators.

Conclusion first: our senses and our brains behave in a statistical manner. They perform statistical analysis without knowing.

...We recognize densities, average movement, timbre, intensity, height, etc. in a jumble of sound…[52]

Note the way that Xenakis' subject position changes throughout this excerpt. He begins as an objective observer, analyzing cicadas, wind, waves and hail alongside the sounds of human

[52] Iannis Xenakis, Ralph Fassey, and Madeleine RoyB, *Transformation d'un combat physique ou politique en lutte d'idées* (La Souterraine: Main courante, 2006), 19–21. Drawn from a conference paper Xenakis gave in 1980. Thanks to Brian Kane for help with the translation. "Juste avant la guerre, j'écoutais dans mes excursions à vélo en Attique, les cigales, le vent dans les pins, le bruit des vagues, la grêle sur ma tente, puis pendant l'occupation nazie, les formidables sonorités de foules marchant sur l'ennemi au centre de la ville en réclamant du pain, de l'huile, ou s'insurgeant contre le travail forcé en Allemagne.

Les artères principales d'Athènes se remplissaient alors de ces slogans scandés avec un rythme fort. Puis lorsque les manifestants (j'étais souvent en tête comme la plupart de mes camarades de lutte de l'école Polytechnique qui était un bastion de résistance) s'approchaient du centre, les nazis les attendaient avec des chars qui tiraient alors dans la foule. Des cris de colère, de douleur, de peur, de mort remplaçaient soudainement les scansions bien rythmées qui se trouvaient transformées en un fantastique chaos de centaines de milliers de voix qui remplissaient la ville entière, dans la fumée, la poussière et le sang, auxquelles s'ajoutaient les ponctuations des mitrailleuses et des explosions.

Or ces phénomènes naturels ou humains, je les écoutais d'abord dans l'action mais aussi et en même temps je les écoutais avec un détachement analytico-synthétique d'observation extérieure.

Je n'osais les classer dans la musique car leurs structures n'en faisaient partie alors. Ce n'est qu'à Paris, des années plus tard que ces réminiscences se sont dénudées de leur contenu émotionnel pour ne laisser en moi que la question abstraite : comment était faite leur structure et leur évolution dans le temps?

C'est ici que tout à coup mes études antérieures ont apporté leur secours. Il s'agissait de phénomènes macroscopiques issus d'une profusion de petits phénomènes isolés. Ce que j'entendais dans mes excursions à la campagne, ou dans les manifestations était en fait le résultat de centaines de ces molécules sonores. Par conséquent, ce qui expliquait la théorie cinétique des gaz devait forcément expliquer les effets de ces masses sonores des cigales ou des manifestants.

Conclusion première: nos sens et notre cerveau se comportent d'une manière statistique. Ils font de l'analyse statistique sans le savoir.

...Nous reconnaissons dans un magma sonore, des densités, des moyennes de mouvement, de timbres, d'intensité, de hauteurs etc... "

protest. Next, he moves into the role of active, traumatized victim, experiencing and almost certainly participating in the sonic landscape of warfare and human anguish. Finally, after the dust clears and Xenakis is safe in Paris, he is able to move himself back into the position of observer by performing an acousmatic reduction on the horrifying experience of war. "Shouts of anger, pain, fear, death" lose the signification of their source and become once again equivalent to the sound of a swarm of cicadas: capable of being parsed, analyzed, and ultimately reproduced in his music. This reduction was only possible with a change of subject position; rather than being among the protestors experiencing anger, pain, fear, death, chaos, smoke, dust and blood, Xenakis at some point "stripped" these sensations of their "emotional content" and displaced them onto a vocalic body separate from his own. The sounds of a crowd became just one of many examples Xenakis could (and often did) list when he talked about the universality of mass textures. For instance, to Varga:

> When you say cloud—all right, but a cloud of what? Of mosquitoes—that's one example. Or a cloud of vapour in the sky. Or a cloud of people—that is, a crowd. Or a flock of sheep. The cloud, then, is a form that occurs in many places.[53]

Although the sound of a crowd is buried between other items on this list, it is worth remembering that the ability to liken a wartime soundscape to a swarm of mosquitos was the result of a long process. Capturing the sound of voices, of people, was not only an aesthetic interest for Xenakis, but an ethical imperative. This is evinced by a post-war diary entry: "September 1951: How to introduce voices, cries of pain, sobs, into music?"[54] The kind of 'objective' distance achieved in the course of Xenakis' wartime account above is exactly the kind of distance he can't get from melody, which (remember) moves him to tears despite his best

[53] Varga, *Conversations with Iannis Xenakis*, 207.
[54] Mâkhi Xenakis, "Meteorites," in *Iannis Xenakis: Composer, Architect, Visionary*, ed. Sharon E. Kanach and Carey Lovelace, vol. 88, Drawing Papers ; (New York: Drawing Center, 2010), 130.

intentions. But through his approach to mass textures, through their very aliveness, he can achieve something that serves the same function of signifying human presence in his music.

Following Foucault, Brian Kane has identified the influence of "biopolitics" in Xenakis' approach to music. A biopolitical approach is one geared toward a large population rather than individuals; a biopolitician looks at statistics to inform action. It "is addressed to a multiplicity of men, not to the extent that they are nothing more than their individual bodies, but to the extent that they form, on the contrary, a global mass affected by overall processes characteristic of birth, death, production, illness, and so on…"[55] But for Xenakis, the biopolitical, the statistical, the calculated, the multiple always exists in tension with the singular, the organic, the dynamic: the vocal. It is the same tension that he identifies between the "individual hero-king" and "the multiplicity and the fragmentation of the kingdoms that contest each other interminably."[56] Perhaps Xenakis' politics are best expressed through the unresolvable dialectic between the chaos and conflict of his musical surface and the stark simplicity of its large-scale kinetics.

Kundera would reject Xenakis' claim of a hard separation between his music and politics, instead suggesting that it is in the very evacuation of humanity that Xenakis' music purports to become human and in the evacuation of politics that it becomes political. He describes it as "the noise of the world…[that] comes to us from the outside," but I find this assessment to be lacking in light of the composer's consistent mimeticism, his imperative that his music live and behave in a manner akin to a sentient being. As this chapter has shown, the boundaries between inside and outside, political and apolitical, are not so clear as Kundera or even Xenakis would have us

[55] Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76*, ed. Mauro Bertani, Alessandro Fontana, and François Ewald, trans. David Macey, 1st ed. (New York: Picador, 2003), 242–43. Cited in Brian Kane, "Iannis Xenakis: The First Composer of Biopolitics?," in *Xenakis Matters: Contexts, Processes, Applications*, ed. Sharon E Kanach (Hillsdale, N.Y.: Pendragon Press, 2012), 95.

[56] Iannis Xenakis and Sharon E. Kanach, *Music and Architecture: Architectural Projects, Texts, and Realizations*, The Iannis Xenakis Series: No. 1 (Hillsdale, New York: Pendragon Press, 2008), 239–240. Cited in Olga Touloumi, "The Politics of Totality: Iannis Xenakis' Polytope de Mycènes," in *Xenakis Matters: Contexts, Processes, Applications*, ed. Sharon E. Kanach (Hillsdale, N.Y.: Pendragon Press, 2012), 110.

believe. Rather than being the objective sound of machines, Xenakis' masses are alive, distinctly human, and inspired by an urgent set of political ethics.

Chapter 5 - Lachenmann's Lied

In a conversation centering on his 1996 opera *Das Mädchen mit den Schwefelhölzern*, Lachenmann posed to himself what amounts to a musical *Gretchenfrage*.[1] "*Wie hältst Du's mit dem Gesang?*" (What think'st thou of song?), he asked himself, replying: "To this day, that question has remained traumatic to me. A musical understanding that eludes the voice, or even excludes singing is somehow not quite right. I knew that, it was gnawing at me. When we speak of the girl's genesis, then, there is also the fact that this opera came to be thanks to my—still unfinished—struggle with the singing voice."[2] Like Sciarrino, Reich and Xenakis, Lachenmann has taken on the voice as a problem, a decades-long challenge that has produced results both rich and varied. From his earliest works to his recent "Lied" (*GOT LOST*, 2008), singing and melody are pervasive concerns of an oeuvre that remains, directly or indirectly, preoccupied with vocality.

In 1986, well before the composition of his opera and Lied, Lachenmann provided more insight into what the voice means to him:

> Because the encounter between creative will and sounding matter, what is it but an encounter, however complicated, with what you love: marked by fascination, passion, mutual penetration, happiness, despair, and, connected with all this, a new experience of the existential self?
>
> Above all this, however, is the vision of freedom. My dream as a composer is the dream of "free setting," the dream of the "lucky hand," the dream of unbroken composing. I would like to "sing as the bird sings that lives in the branches" (Uhland); we live, however, in the branches of a broken forest.[3]

---

[1] In *Faust I*, Margarete asks Faust, "What think'st thou of religion?" (Verse 3425 in "Martha's Garden"). Lachenmann uses the same construction here in a way that is almost certainly deliberate.

[2] Elizabeth Keusch et al., *Das Mädchen Mit Den Schwefelhölzern: Musik in Bildern* (Vienna, Austria: Kairos, 2002). Liner notes, 33. "Wie hältst Du's mit dem Gesang?' Bis heute ist für mich diese Frage traumatisch geblieben. Ein Musikbegriff, der der Stimme ausweicht, gar den Gesang aussperrt, bei dem stimmt irgend etwas nicht. Das war mir bewußt, nagte an mir. Wenn wir über die Genese des Mädchens sprechen, dann gehört dazu, daß diese Oper sich nicht zuletzt der – noch nicht beendeten – Auseinandersetzung mit der singenden Stimme verdankt."

[3] Helmut Lachenmann, "Über das Komponieren," in *Musik als existentielle Erfahrung: Schriften 1966-1995*, ed. Josef Häusler (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1996), 82. "Denn die Begegnung zwischen kreativem Willen und

This passage describes an "encounter" with the singing voice wherein Lachenmann's love for it—his desire to "sing as the bird sings"—is brought into conflict with his ethics—the broken forest he must acknowledge. Singing represents the dream of allowing the composing pencil to fly across the page at will, and had Lachenmann's pencil been allowed this freedom he would doubtless have written more works that contained traditional forms of melody and song. It is a thought as enticing for him as it is unacceptable; he must intervene in his own process, reminding himself of the condition of modernity: the broken forest of a broken capitalist system. Lachenmann's attitude toward the voice is typical of his negational poetics; after all, he has written repeatedly about a number of musical "taboos" that include tonality and genres such as the string quartet that he considers pretentious or overly reified. But it also represents a special case, not least because of its association in Lachenmann's imagination and memory with his teacher Luigi Nono.

Lachenmann's most influential mentor, Nono is a constant presence in his pupil's work, and one needn't read many pages of Lachenmann's writings before encountering it. But it is particularly remarkable how often Lachenmann's discussions of voice invoke Nono, and vice versa; each term becomes a predictor of the other, and their consistent entanglement suggests that they are intertwined in Lachenmann's memory and imagination. Given the strange, estranged place of the vocal in Lachenmann's oeuvre, it comes as little surprise that the proper name "Nono" is also a signal of difficulty and ambivalence, at once a designator of marked discomfort and great admiration—not least Nono's own treatment of the voice. But as much as

---

klingender Materie, was ist sie anderes als eine Begegnung, wie kompliziert auch immer, mit dem, was man liebt: geprägt von Faszination, Leidenschaft, gegenseitigem Durchdringen, Glück, Verzweiflung und, mit all dem verbunden, von existentieller Neuerfahrung des eigenen Selbst.

Über all dem aber steht die Vision von Freiheit. Mein Traum als Komponist ist der Traum der "freien Setzung", der Traum von der ‚glücklichen Hand', der Traum vom ungebrochenen Komponieren. Ich möchte ‚singen, wie der Vogel singt, der in den Zweigen wohnet' (Uhland), indes wohnen wir auf Zweigen eines kaputten Waldes."

Nono may have himself been a problem for Lachenmann, he also provided the younger composer with a means of working through just such a problem, an ethical orientation toward history (musical and otherwise) which is as deeply engaged as it is deeply critical.

The point of departure for this chapter, then, is Lachenmann's relationship with Nono, which is both formative to and indicative of his relationship with the voice. It brings the dissertation full circle by showing how Lachenmann was shaped by the kinds of conversations Nono was having with Stockhausen in 1950s Darmstadt. But the preceding chapters of this dissertation have also shown that voice is likely an issue Lachenmann would have grappled with even without Nono's mentorship, simply by virtue of his predilection toward the aesthetic perspective provided by modernism. I begin by examining the role voice played in the relationship between teacher and student, paying special attention to Lachenmann's conflicted reception of *Il canto sospeso*. Drawing out three aspects of the work that Lachenmann identifies as particularly problematic, I argue that he has focused on addressing different aspects during different phases of his career: first tone, then melody, and finally the speaking subject.

A "new kind of melos"

Rainer Nonnenmann, who recently published a history of Nono and Lachenmann's relationship as told mainly through their correspondence, construes it as unfolding in four distinct phases. First is the period encompassing the two's first meeting at Darmstadt and Lachenmann's subsequent studies with Nono in Venice, 1957-1960. The second phase begins with Lachenmann's departure from Venice in 1960 and ends with a quarrel between teacher and student in 1964 over Lachenmann's participation in a music festival organized by Stockhausen in Fall 1963. The two composers didn't speak again until 1970, but this rapprochement (which constitutes the third phase of their relationship) only lasted until the following year, when they

clashed over the role of politics in music after a joint concert in Munich in November 1971. In the winter of 1982-83, Nono broke the long silence and in this last phase of their relationship the two composers remained close until Nono's death in 1991.[4]

As this intricate history shows, Lachenmann and Nono's relationship was not an easy one; Nonnenmann draws the name of his monograph, "the way through the cliffs," from Lachenmann's own description of it. Even in a compositional scene absolutely suffused with *agon,* Nono was an exceptionally divisive figure who demanded ideological purity from those close to him, even as his ideologies changed. Lachenmann was attracted to this fractious individuality, but it also pushed teacher and pupil apart as Lachenmann struggled to learn from Nono without surrendering his own compositional and philosophical identity. Lachenmann describes the atmosphere leading to their extended estrangement from 1971-83:

> Conflict flared constantly over our unreflecting idleness, over any hint of what is suppressed in day-to-day bourgeois existence [...] I had come to him as a student, and such attacks seemed to be part and parcel of what I expected a teacher to offer me. Thus it was that the obligatory conflict in our relationship only built up slowly, in harmless stages, more or less parallel to my own process of establishing my autonomy as a composer, until it finally flared up in 1971.[5]

Despite Lachenmann's eventual need to escape Nono's influence, the older composer had a profound and lasting impact on his musical ethics and aesthetics. Lachenmann describes a very specific experience of compositional "freedom" that intrigued him enough to move to Venice in order to study with Nono, even going so far as to rent a flat in the same building. With Nono's insistence on the importance of recognizing and honoring historical reality in musical composition, Lachenmann felt that he could exist in dialogue with, rather than in open rebellion

[4] Rainer Nonnenmann, *Der Gang durch die Klippen: Helmut Lachenmanns Begegnung mit Luigi Nono anhand ihres Briefwechsels und anderer Quellen, 1957-1990* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf et Härtel, 2013), 28.
[5] Helmut Lachenmann, "Touched by Nono," *Contemporary Music Review* 18, no. 1 (1999): 24.

against, "old models."[6] Nono represented for Lachenmann an approach fundamentally different from the "tabula rasa" perspective advocated by Boulez and Stockhausen; in contrast, Nono insisted that a new work and its aesthetic apparatus would emerge only through direct, sometimes confrontational engagement with the conventions of the classical tradition.

During the late 1950s, Lachenmann and Nono gave a number of co-written speeches that criticized certain trends in new music as "inhuman."[7] The most famous of these speeches is the one entitled "The Past and Present in the Music of Today," delivered by Nono at Darmstadt in 1959. This talk effectively dissolved the "Darmstadt School" that Nono himself had nominalized by accusing practitioners of both aleatoricism and serialism of indulging in a "lack of history," of attempting to "escape from the responsibility and paralysis of freedom."[8] From Nono, Lachenmann gained a conviction that music must look backward, but it must do so critically. But the source of their longest period of estrangement was a disagreement about how it should do so. In 1969, Nono claimed a complete union between music and politics: "It became clear to me that it makes no difference whether I write a score or help organize a strike. These are just two sides of the same thing. For me, there is no difference anymore between music and politics."[9] Three years later, Lachenmann disagreed completely: "Composing music in order to change society: this is hypocrisy, or, more sympathetically, a quixotic quest. Music seems reactionary to the extent that it is oriented toward the goal of proclaiming something or engaging listeners—even the masses— politically."[10] Nono wanted to intervene in mass politics, but Lachenmann sees his

[6] Ibid., 18.
[7] Nonnenmann, *Der Gang durch die Klippen*, 120.
[8] Ibid., 131.
[9] Ibid., 305. "Mir wurde klar, daß es keinen Unterschied macht, ob ich eine Partitur schreibe oder einen Streik organisieren helfe. Das sind nur zwei Seiten einer einzigen Sache. Es gibt für mich keinen Unterschied mehr zwischen Musik und Politik."
[10] Ibid., 292. "Musik komponieren, um 'die Gesellschaft zu verändern': Das ist eine Heuchelei, oder—sympathischer—eine Donquichotterie. In dem Maße, wie sie sich an dem Ziel orientiert, den Hörern—gar den Massen—etwas zu verkünden oder sie politisch zu aktivieren, wirkt Musik reaktionär."

most effective intervention on a much more personal level: music should force both listener and composer to confront their own privilege and prejudice, should take them out of their comfort zone. This is formulated eloquently in his note to *Accanto*, which insists upon "a destructive relationship with the thing one loves, in order to preserve its truth."[11] It plays out in Lachenmann's need to contend with Nono's legacy as well.

In 1991, less than a year after Nono's death, Lachenmann wrote an emotional tribute to his teacher. "Touched by Nono" reveals a great deal about both their personal relationship and Nono's relationship with Darmstadt in the 1950s and 1960s. Lachenmann began studying with Nono just after the composition of *Il canto sospeso*, and as Chapter 1 attests, this work served as a lightning rod for debates about voice and vocality in 1950s Darmstadt. But it also served as a kind of lightning rod in Lachenmann's own work, or at the least a divining rod through which one can trace his relationship with both Nono and voice in his frequent discussions of the work. In his first letter to Nono after their meeting at Darmstadt, Lachenmann is effusive about the piece:

> I cannot say what the experience of *Canto Sospeso* as a phenomenon of today's serial music means for me: it maintained my moral equilibrium in Darmstadt despite Stockhausen (whereby I say nothing against Stockhausen's musical significance, but instead against the easily ambiguous, suggestive manner of his apologetics). Those two tape presentations [of *Il canto sospeso* in Stockhausen's analysis seminar] have given me more than all of the many premieres, more than all of my experiences in Darmstadt, and I promise you that I do not exaggerate.[12]

[11] Helmut Lachenmann, "Werkkommentare," in *Musik als existentielle Erfahrung: Schriften 1966-1995*, ed. Josef Häusler (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1996), 389. "Zerstörerischer Umgang mit dem, was man liebt, um sich dessen Wahrheit zu bewahren."

[12] Nonnenmann, *Der Gang durch die Klippen*, 51. "Was das Erlebnis des 'Canto sospeso' als Phänomen in der seriellen Musik von heute für mich bedeutet, kann ich gar nicht sagen: es hat mir in Darmstadt mein moralisches Gleichgewicht erhalten, trotz Stockhausen (wobei ich nichts gegen Stockhausens musikalische Bedeutung sage, sondern gegen die leicht mißverständliche, suggestive Art seine Apologetik). Jene beiden Tonbandvorführungen [des Il canto sospeso in Stockhausens Analyseseminar] haben mir mehr gegeben als alle die vielen Ur- und Erstaufführungen, mehr als alles in Darmstadt Erlebte, und ich verspreche Ihnen, daß ich nicht übertreibe."

And in his tribute essay after Nono's death, Lachenmann confirms the importance of the piece in Nono's legacy. He describes Nono's increasing alienation from the Darmstadt scene in the late 1950s in relation to the piece; the passage is worth quoting at length:

> Nono's ideas on composition at the time permitted no figurative—and basically also no melodic—elements. He replaced the linear gesture with an abstract constellation of acoustically defined sounds. Music as the tension between individual points in time. [...] It was a starting point from which to further differentiate and extend a way of listening which had now liberated itself from any traces of traditional tonality. Such a radical, newly-encoded morphology focused on a new kind of *melos* as the all-embracing result of a constantly changing myriad of sounds in a defined space: harp notes, string pizzicato, marimba strokes, vibraphone, celeste etc., reduced in the seventh piece of *Il canto sospeso* to individual combinations, thus combine as elements in a characteristic, at times almost purified field of sound and expression at one and the same time. [...] Only at certain expressive peaks do the individual points of sound, the syllables, come together to form a melodic, almost artificially expressive gesture. An example of this can be found in the above-mentioned seventh piece when the girl Ljubka, faced with death, calls "*Addio Mama*." It is particularly in a work like *Il canto sospeso* that one can see the beginnings of the gap—now a gulf—between composers like Stockhausen and Nono. At the same time—and this is, as it were, the "complementary" irritation in Nono's music for his environment—he is the only one to have taken up and preserved the traditional 'big' expressive tone, the gesture full of pathos, lyricism, drama and emotion such as has been handed down from Monteverdi, Beethoven or Schönberg.[13]

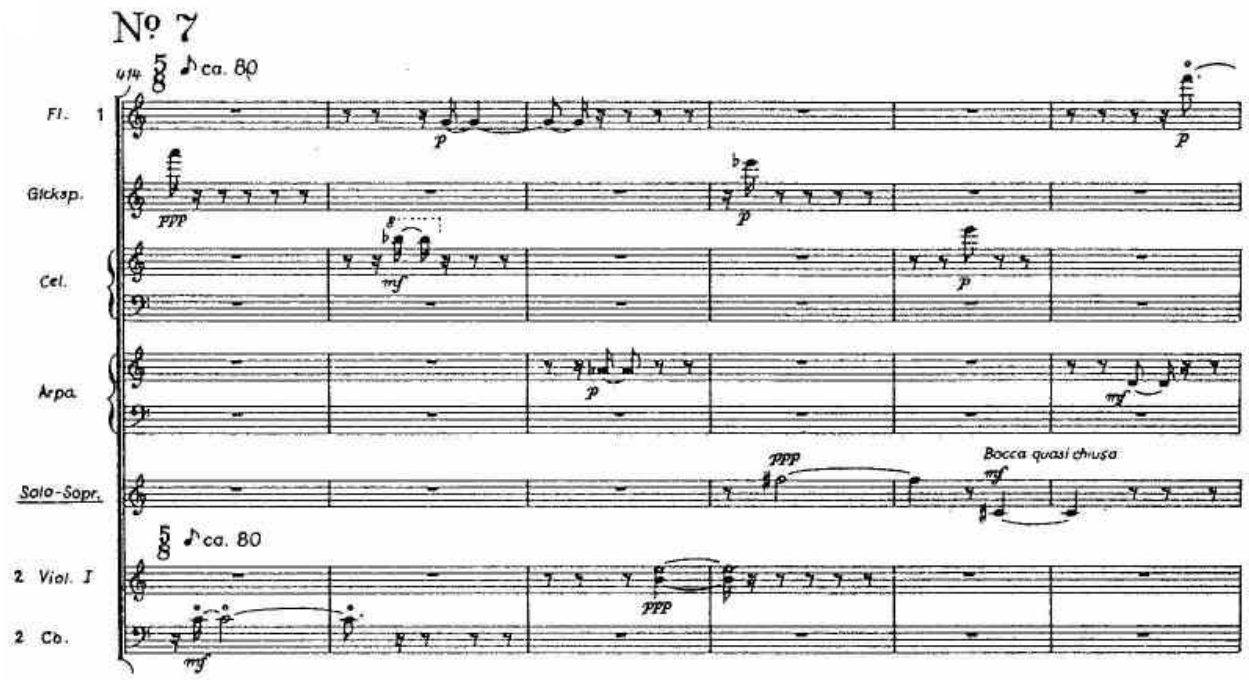
In this passage, Lachenmann describes three aspects of vocality in *Il canto sospeso* that recur as problems in his own work commentaries. Focusing on these terms provides insight into his ethics of the voice, and they will shape my discussion of these ethics in the rest of this chapter. The first is a "traditional 'big' expressive **tone**." As MJ Grant points out, Nono extends syllables with an emphasis on vowel sounds in *Il canto sospeso*, and uses percussion instruments sparingly;[14] it is a piece bursting with the warmth of vocal timbre, even in its instrumental parts.

The second is **melody**, interpreted two ways. The instrumental construction of *Il canto sospeso* exemplifies Lachenmann's "new kind of *melos*," which replaces "linear gesture" with a

[13] Lachenmann, "Touched by Nono," 19–20.
[14] M. J Grant, *Serial Music, Serial Aesthetics: Compositional Theory in Post-War Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 205–06.

"constellation" of "individual points in time." **Example 5-1** is consistent with the treatment of instruments throughout No. 7, as they envelope the soloist and her accompanying chorus of *tutti* female voices in a high-register cloud of overlapping, single-note gestures. As Kathryn Bailey has observed, the movement contains only five instances of multi-note gestures within the part of a single instrument.[15] Thus, the serial row (A C Bb G Ab B Eb F# E C# D F) can be visually traced through each subsequent entrance in the example below, but Nono's machinations create a rupture between each pitch, both timbrally and spatially; any sense of melody in the traditional sense flickers faintly in and out of existence, receiving only the meager sustenance of one note at a time. This kind of melody is underdefined, in a state of becoming: noumenal. Alongside the new *melos*, however, there exists the very linear gesture that was meant to be replaced: a "melodic, almost artificially expressive gesture" that preserves the "traditional 'big' expressive tone, the gesture full of pathos, lyricism, drama and emotion" of Nono's predecessors. A comparison between **Example 5-1** and **Example 5-2**, which shows only the soprano part for the entire movement**,** reveals the contrast. The melody develops slowly, beginning with isolated notes or pairs of notes and expanding to full-length phrases. These two kinds of melody sit uneasily together in Lachenmann's account. The former is heralded as innovative, visionary, while the latter is commendable in its ability to annoy Nono's colleagues but also—almost?—artificial and phenomenal.

[15] Kathryn Bailey, "'Work in Progress': Analysing Nono's '*Il Canto Sospeso*,'" *Music Analysis* 11, no. 2/3 (July 1, 1992): 314–315.



Example 5-1: Nono, *Il canto sospeso*, No. 7, mm. 1-6. Presentation of the row, distributed across the ensemble

This kind of "linear gesture" is certainly part of the problem Lachenmann evinces with the movement, but he also appears to take issue with the vocalic body, the **speaking subject**, that develops alongside it. In the course of the first 18 measures (mm. 414-431 in the full score), the soprano begins with wordless tones that change in timbre between open, half-closed, and closed-mouth; these timbral shifts increase the sense of disjunction already present through the wide registral leaps and long time-intervals between events. The unfurling of four consecutive tones in mm. 422-25 coalesces into a phrase, despite the continuing change of timbre, and in m. 427, the voice begins to shift from a closed position to the clearly enunciated phrase "*addio mamma*."[16]

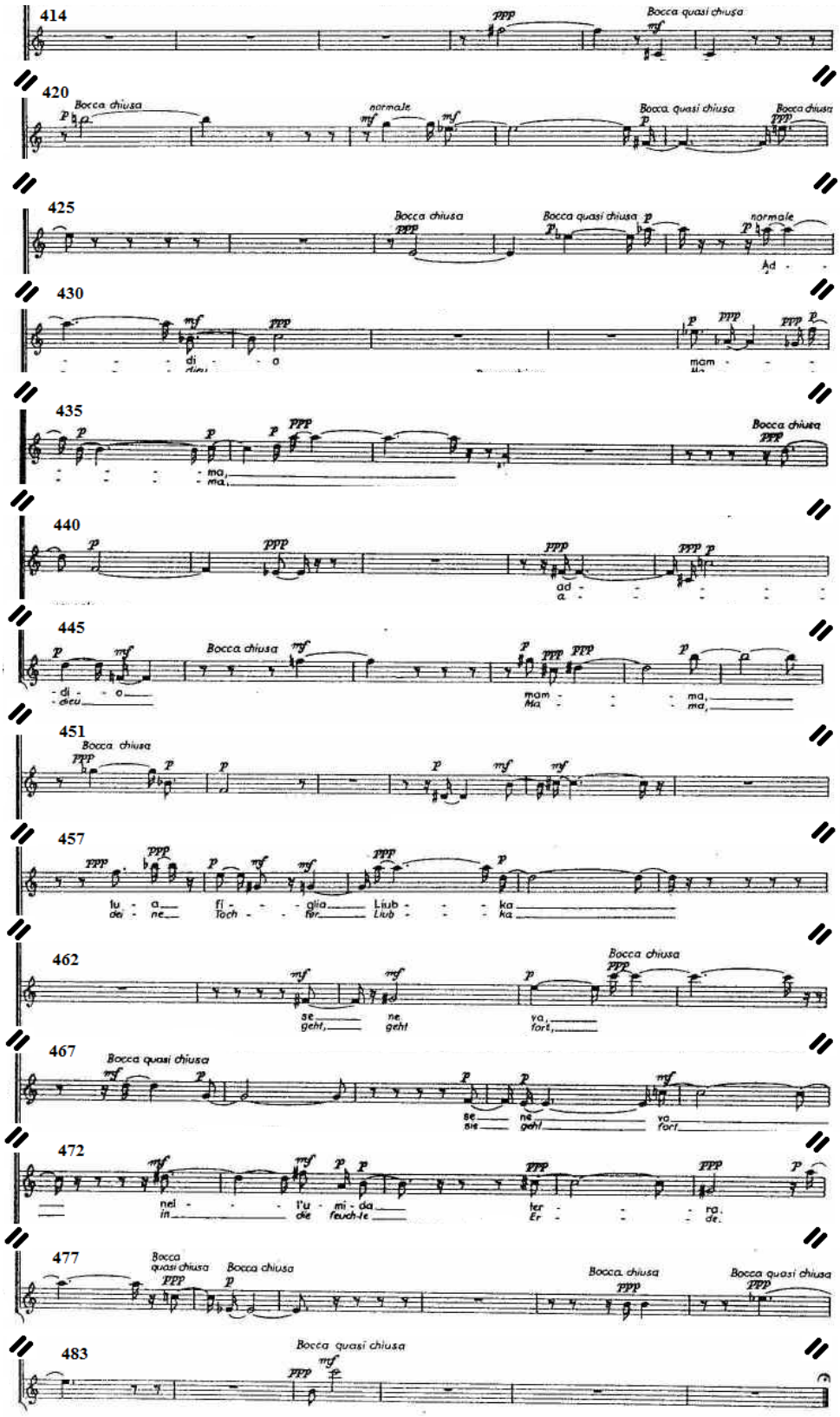
[16] According to Bailey's account of serial practices in the piece, the soprano's mouth positions do not seem to be dictated by serial parameters.

The full text of the movement is excerpted from a letter by Liubka Shevzova, a member of the Russian resistance who was captured, tortured, and beaten to death for helping 75 prisoners escape German concentration camps:[17]

> *...addio mamma, tua figlia Liubka se ne va nell'umida terra...*
> ... Farewell mother, your daughter Liubka is going to the damp soil...

The utterance of "*addio*" is a special moment, a revelation of a fully emergent vocal subject—Liubka Shevzova—that comes at the end of a minute-long exposition. As the movement goes on, the subject comes into sharper focus as the melodic and textual phrases become longer:

[17] Carola Nielinger, "'The Song Unsung': Luigi Nono's '*Il Canto Sospeso*,'" *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 131, no. 1 (January 1, 2006): 86.



Example 5-2: *Il canto sospeso*, No. 7, bars 1-43, soprano part only

addio
mamma
addio
mamma
tua figlia Liubka
se ne va
se ne va nell'umida terra

At the end of the movement, the process reverses itself and the vocal subject once again dissolves into a disjunct series of timbrally distinct tones. Lachenmann pinpoints the utterance of "*addio mama,*" the very moment where the speaking subject forms, as a moment of phenomenon, of "artificial expression." Carola Nielinger's discussion of *Il canto sospeso*'s contentious reception shows that Lachenmann was not the only one made uncomfortable by the movement's melodiousness and its commitment to a speaking subject. According to Nielinger, the composers and critics of late-fifties Darmstadt tended to regard the Webernian fifth movement as representing "the emotional and idealistic content of these texts" far better than the "Dallapicolan" seventh.[18] Italian music critic Massimo Mila, one of *Il canto sospeso*'s most outspoken advocates, responded to these detractors:

> [The seventh movement's] long and truly free-floating female vocal line transmits such excruciating pathos that it is not surprising that it was felt by some to be embarrassing. It is not easy to find the courage to express one's emotions today. Heinz Joachim regards this piece as less successful than the preceding movements and describes it as "a very long soprano solo which gives way too much to lyrical expression." What a fortunate mistake in today's musical climate! In reality parts V, VI and VII, together with the third, represent the climax of this rediscovery of communication to which *Il canto sospeso* owes its high esteem.[19]

The vocal imaginary is certainly at work in Mila's assessment of Nono's expressivity: a vocal line (melody) yields pathos, emotions and a noumenal "rediscovery of communication." He lauds this rediscovery, and the opening measures do act as a recovery of specifically vocal

[18] Ibid., 133.
[19] Massimo Mila, "La linea Nono," *La Rassegna Musicale* 30 (1960): 308. Translated and cited in Nielinger, "'The Song Unsung,'" 133.

enunciation both in the face of the tragedy of the Holocaust and within the environment of 1950s Darmstadt. The (re)emergence of Liubka Shevzova as a vocalic body is an important moment of articulation for Lachenmann and his fellow Darmstadt-goers, and the subject of much debate.

In an essay written in 1971—the year that Nono and Lachenmann broke off relations for over a decade—the latter argues that serialism was a means of canceling out tonality not only in terms of pitch, but also in terms of "expressive clichés" such as "the use of pure tones, the use of traditional instrumental playing categories...a crescendo, a *sforzato*, a linear shape development, a tremolo, a cymbal crash, an ostinato figure, a break, etc."[20] This was in fact an idea inherited from Nono; Nonnenmann describes how "in Lachenmann's composition sketches Nono relentlessly criticized every trace of melodic progression or other figurative forms, to the point of simple trills as 'tonal cells.'"[21] But in this essay, Lachenmann struggles with the aspects of *Il canto sospeso* that are "tonal" by this definition. He turns again to the seventh movement, but this time in an almost apologetic tone. In fact, his analysis constitutes a radical repositioning in order to provide a justification for Nono's melody:

> In the beginning of the seventh movement of Nono's *Canto sospeso*, a sequence of single tones and later a polyphony of three sequences, which vary all features with each deployment, is projected into the sound space. Each of the so-called parameters (pitch, tone duration, color, and dynamics) is differentiated independently from the others within the respectively available scale. From the original linear tone row emerges an acoustic room; tonal hearing as linear hearing makes way for a selective, divided, structural hearing, which must be ready to go in all directions. Every moment changes the experience of the whole and they complement one another, without, however, standing themselves in linear-causal relationship with their environment.[22]

---

[20] Helmut Lachenmann, "Zur Analyse Neuer Musik," in *Musik als existentielle Erfahrung: Schriften 1966-1995*, ed. Josef Häusler (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1996), 26. "die Verwendung von reinen Tönen, die Benutzung der traditionellen instrumentalen Spielkategorien, daß ein Crescendo, ein Sforzato, eine lineare Formentwicklung, ein Tremolo, ein Beckenschlag, eine Ostinato-Figur, eine Pause usw."

[21] Nonnenmann, *Der Gang durch die Klippen*, 103.

[22] Lachenmann, "Zur Analyse Neuer Musik," 26. "Im siebten Stück des Canto sospeso von Nono wird am Anfang eine Sequenz aus Einzeltönen und später eine Polyphonie aus drei Sequenzen so in den Klangraum projiziert, daß sich mit jedem Einsatz alle Eigenschaften ändern. Jeder der sogenannten Parameter Tonhöhe, Tondauer, Farbe und Lautstärke wird innerhalb der jeweils verfügbaren Skala unabhängig von den anderen differenziert. Aus der

There are up to three serial rows happening simultaneously; therefore this movement cannot be conceived as a melody, but instead as an "acoustic room"—space rather than line. Hearing becomes "divided" as it wanders between the row forms, and Nono's melody becomes noumenal just like his instrumental writing. Note that Lachenmann locates the noumenal in the fragmentation of vocal utterance rather than following Mila's reasoning, which places it in the cohesion of vocal utterance. In this essay, as well as others, Lachenmann often suggests some notion of space as replacement for line, whether it be an "abstract constellation," an "acoustic room," or some other formulation. Lachenmann reinforces the role of *Il canto sospeso*'s listener in the following paragraph:

> The attempt to force events to be heard melodically is thereby confused, as a different linearity puts itself forward with each note: shared volume might create a bond among them that would, however, contradict the possibility of a connection among neighboring pitches or another similar tone color, or related durations, etc.[23]

This is exactly the kind of thinking Xenakis criticized in his "Crisis of Serial Music" essay (discussed in Chapter 4). Lachenmann seems to be experiencing a moment of structuralist discomfort with political engagement, and his attempt to justify Nono's music through structural means resonates with Stockhausen's search for serial control of vowel sounds in *Il canto sospeso* as described in Chapter 1. Lachenmann does so by shifting the burden from Nono to the listener—it is the listener that mustn't become "confused" and seek "linear gesture," even though Nono seems to be offering exactly that in the solo soprano line. Lachenmann goes so far as to

---

ursprünglich linearen Tonreihe wird ein akustischer Raum, tonales Hören als lineares Hören wird abgelöst durch ein punktuell zerspaltenes strukturelles Hören, das sich sozusagen nach allen Richtungen bereithalten muß. Jeder Moment verändert die Erfahrung des Ganzen und ergänzt sie, ohne selbst jedoch in linear-kausalem Zusammenhang mit seiner Umgebung zu stehen."

[23] Ibid., 27. "Der Versuch, mit Gewalt das Geschehen melodisch zurechtzuhören, wird dadurch verwirrt, daß sich mit jedem Ton eine andere Linearität anbietet: Gemeinsame Lautstärken mögen eine Verbindung untereinander schaffen, dem aber widerspräche die Möglichkeit einer Verbindung unter benachbarten Tonhöhen oder eine weitere unter verwandten Klangfarben oder verwandten Dauern usw."

characterize a mode of listening in which one follows a melody as "forced," suggesting that connecting nonadjacent musical events through similarity in volume or related durations is equally intuitive as is following a melody.

Lachenmann insists that this mode of listening, which thwarts the subjectivity suggested by the melodic line, is truer to Nono's own intentions, but this is certainly open for debate. According to Carola Nielinger, the text for the seventh movement is the first to appear in Nono's sketches, suggesting that it played a formative role in his conception of the piece.[24] In this movement, what Nielinger calls the "lyrical apotheosis" of *Il canto sospeso*, Nono seriously considered deviating from integral serial practice by separating dynamics from pitch, to the point of composing a version with loosened parameters. Although he eventually recomposed the movement serially, Nielinger notes that it is probably significant that Nono contemplated such a divergence only in this most overtly expressive movement: it would have afforded him considerably more freedom in terms of compositional decisions. Assuming, as Lachenmann does, that Nono's melody was a chance occurrence seems absurd: even leaving aside the fact that he gave serious consideration to sidestepping certain aspects of serial structuring altogether in the seventh movement, Nono knew exactly what he was doing. His form of serialism was a flexible tool that left many important decisions up to the composer, and to characterize the moment of Liubka Shevzova's emergence as a product of chance is to misunderstand Nono's project in *Il canto sospeso*.

[24] Nielinger, "'The Song Unsung,'" 86.

Tone

Souvenir

Lachenmann's preoccupation with the seventh movement of *Il canto sospeso* and his attempts to come to terms with its melodiousness resonate with some of the tensions operating in *Souvenir* (large ensemble, 1959), which was composed at the end of Lachenmann's time under Nono's tutelage in Italy. The work itself was an enormous undertaking, to the point where Lachenmann almost gave up several times and was treated for exhaustion at another; serially controlled parameters include duration, pitch, dynamics, instrumentation, spatialization, and timbre.[25] The music of *Souvenir* and Lachenmann's written commentaries about it also reflect the intensity of his struggle with the status of a Nonoian "gesture full of pathos, lyricism, drama and emotion." These tensions yield a complex result. Lachenmann wrote two work commentaries—one in 1962, and the other in 1979—and reading these two commentaries alongside one another highlights the uncertain and contradictory nature of his reception of Nono. In the first, he understands the form of the piece to be driven by a melodic voice, a unified linear gesture, which is repeatedly constructed and dissolved:

> The implementation of a principle of multiply overlapping sounds that in themselves are differentiated in various ways (different vibration speeds, change in dynamics and color, movement and distribution in space) creates an expressiveness that reacts to the principle itself, and it eventually changes so that many layers finally shoot together into a sound (Score p. 27 forward), which stands, as it were, as a whole, with all musical gestures being performed within this sound. At the same time, these sounds change gradually and crumble into individual further differentiated tones (Score pp. 33 forward), which are linked instead to different groups. These in turn crystallize into sounds. The circle seems closed (Score p.47), the principle of differentiated overlaying sounds restored; it is performed anew, yet this time in such a radical manner that it dissolves into a movement of many entrances in whose stasis it becomes lost. [26]

[25] Nonnenmann, *Der Gang durch die Klippen*, 135.
[26] Lachenmann, "Werkkommentare," 368. "Die Durchführung eines Prinzips von vielfach sich überlagernden Klängen, die in sich auf verschiedene Weise differenziert wurden (verschiedene Vibrationsgeschwindigkeiten,

This 1962 description does in fact capture the audible form of *Souvenir*. The score is grounded in a repeated cycle of coalescence and dispersal; again and again, the ensemble gathers around a given pitch only to make an immediate move toward destabilization. In a way, it performs the appearance of a tone, a line, of "a melodic, almost artificially expressive gesture"—of a musical subject like Liubka Shevzova. The second work commentary, written in 1979 during their period of estrangement, denies Nono's influence on this formal device and paradoxically confirms it in doing so. The "crystallization" of the melodic voice described in his earlier commentary is now cast as a coincidence, not the driving force behind the piece:

> *Souvenir* originated in Venice during my apprenticeship with Luigi Nono. The title signals a departure from this phase of my development as a composer. My treatment of notes and durations is similar to the pointilistic practices of my teacher at that time. The completely different objectives and accordingly divergent construction is nevertheless clear. Instead of Nono's expressively speaking structures, a single large-scale, quasi-vegetative process arises in my piece, a complex of shapes whose contours are modified and transformed through a permanent shift in the sound space and at the same time altered or transformed through different, densely organized exchanges of the individual tones between instruments or instrumental colors. So what emerges as shapes and expressive moments is and should be understood as the indirect product of permanent transitions. The material observes its own crystallization into speech.[27]

Veränderung in Dynamik und Farbe, Bewegung und Verteilung im Raum), schafft eine Emotion des Ausdrucks, die auf das Prinzip selbst zurückwirkt und es schließlich verändert, so dass viele Überlagerungen endlich in einen Klang (Partitur S. 27 ff.) zusammenschießen, der als ganzer gleichsam dasteht, wobei alle musikalischen Bewegungen sich innerhalb dieses Klangs vollziehen. Zugleich verändert sich dieser Klang allmählich und zerbröckelt bis zu einzelnen, in sich nicht weiter differenzierten Tönen (Partitur S. 33 ff.), die sich dafür zu verschiedenen Gruppen verbinden. Diese wiederum kristallisieren sich zu Klängen. Der Kreis scheint geschlossen (Partitur S.47), das Prinzip differenzierter Klangüberlagerungen wieder hergestellt; es wird erneut durchgeführt, dabei aber diesmal so radikalisiert, dass es sich auflöst in eine Bewegung von vielen Einsätzen und sich in deren Statik verliert."

[27] Ibid., 369. "Souvenir ist in Venedig während meiner Lehrzeit bei Luigi Nono entstanden. Der Titel signalisiert den Abschied von dieser Phase meiner kompositorischen Entwicklung. Im Umgang mit den Tönen und Dauern lehnt sich das Stück an damalige punktuelle Praktiken meines Lehrers an. Die völlig anders gerichtete Zielsetzung und entsprechend abweichende Faktur ist dennoch deutlich. Anstelle der expressiv sprechenden Strukturgebilde Nonos ergibt sich in meinem Stück ein einziger großzügig angelegter, quasi vegetativer Prozeß, ein Gestaltkomplex, dessen Konturen durch permanente Verschiebung im Klangraum und gleichzeitig durch verschieden dicht organisierten Abtausch der Einzeltöne zwischen den Instrumenten beziehungsweise Instrumentalfarben ab- und umgewandelt werden. Was also an Gestalten und expressiven Momenten entsteht, ist und versteht sich als indirektes Produkt permanenter Übergänge. Das Material beobachtet seine eigene Kristallisation zur Sprache."

By the time of his 1979 commentary, Lachenmann had become uncomfortable enough with *Souvenir*'s coalesced gestures to insist upon a difference in the intentionality of the compositional act—there is necessarily an implicit subject behind Nono's kind of gesture, a being who has communicative intention. An "expressive speaking structure" is an utterance. By way of contrast, Lachenmann characterizes the melodic voices that emerge from *Souvenir* as accidental, the product of chance convergences. He puts his music in the passive position of coming into existence while observing its crystallization into speaking structures. In so doing, he absolves himself of responsibility for any resemblance to speech that the music may bear, putting himself, as composer, in the role of a mere observer as well. In this late act of self-interpretation, Lachenmann voids *Souvenir* of both its **melody** and **speaking subject** in one fell swoop. His reinterpretation does much of the same work as his characterization of *Il canto sospeso* No. 7 as "an acoustic room" rather than a work featuring a linear vocal gesture.

Lachenmann sounds more than a little defensive here. He acknowledges that the piece might sound like Nono's music, but insists that similarities in texture are an unplanned result of radically different intentions. In essence, he dismisses as an accidental by-product the very element that he deemed most important in the first work commentary. He has reason to worry; what he cannot explain away in a work commentary is that *Souvenir* does bear the overwhelming mark of Nono's compositional voice in terms of **tone**. It is unique among Lachenmann's output in its heavy reliance on pitch relationships. Like the instrumental parts of the seventh movement of *Il canto sospeso* (**Example 5-1**), *Souvenir* is composed of single-pitch gestures propelled around the ensemble. Moreover, he used a serial structure based on the all-interval "wedge" series for which *Il canto sospeso* is so well-known, but with each tone picked up and continued by two or more instruments in a form of dovetailing. **Figure 5-1** shows a pitch reduction with

lines connecting repeated tones, and in the lower staff the new pitches are compressed into a single octave to clarify the wedge structure. Especially given the second work commentary, its texture resembles nothing so much as the seventh movement of *Il canto sospeso* stripped of Liubka Shevzova's voice.

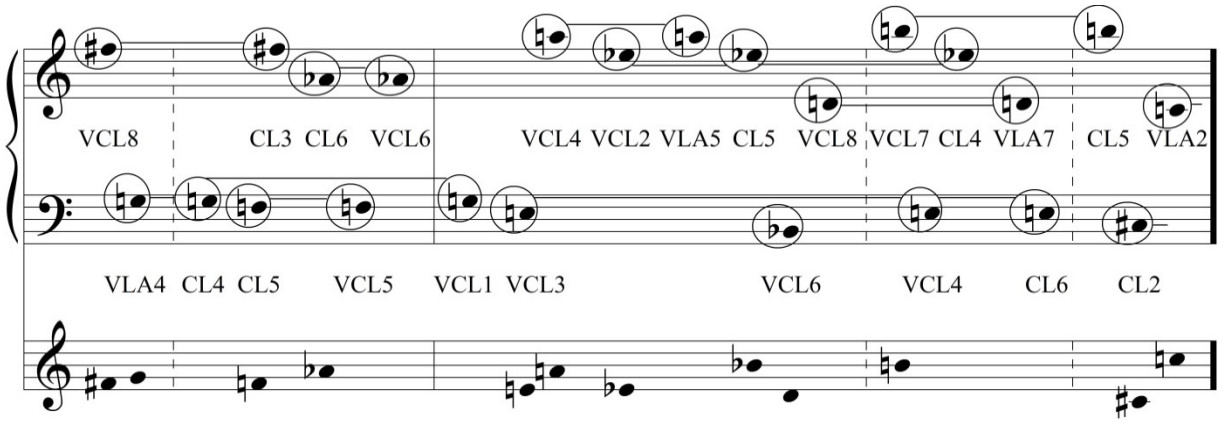


Figure 5-1: *Souvenir*, mm. 1-2 pitch reduction showing Nono's famous "wedge" row. Lines between circled pitches indicate prolonged pitch events. Letters below indicate which instrument is responsible for each event: VCL6 = cello 6, etc.

The Early Piano Pieces

Souvenir is Lachenmann's most toneful piece. Directly thereafter his treatment of tone changes dramatically, and its careful deployment is a theme that pervades Lachenmann's compositions and compositional thought throughout the rest of the sixties and beyond. In *Echo Andante* (1962) and *Wiegenmusik* (1963), for instance, he attempted to produce vocal tone as best he could on an instrument that he saw as fundamentally hostile toward it: the piano. In many ways, these works represent an intermediate stage between pieces like *Souvenir* and the following *musique concrète instrumentale* phase, but they are united by Lachenmann's careful treatment of tone. In both *Wiegenmusik* and *Echo andante*, Lachenmann explores the resonance of the piano, asking the pianist to control the lifting of her fingers individually, as well as to hold down certain keys that are activated by played tones. In the notes for the latter, which were

written in 1979 well after its composition, he compares the ever-receding sound of the piano to the sustaining power of the voice:

> I was influenced and fascinated by the purity and rigor of the nonfigurative vocal style of my teacher Nono, where sustained notes approach one another in their duration as flowing interval relationships whereby these relationships obtain an even greater inner articulation and hierarchical gradation through flexible dynamics and tonal and vocal timbre.
>
> My project of starting with such a practice to develop a style for piano (at the time Nono very wisely wrote nothing for piano and hardly anything for solo instruments) was a conscious attempt to undertake an recalcitrant object, since the sound of the piano constantly melts away under the player's fingers... such a struggle with Nono's model led, at the same time, away from his idiom and toward a conception of sound in which structure was not a means to expressive ends, but expressivity as a pre-given, already inherent in the means, became the point of departure for structural adventures.[28]

Once again, Nono appears in tandem with thoughts about vocality. This time, however, Lachenmann has created a structure so inhospitable to the voice that the result must necessarily be unlike Nono's music—he thus has no need to differentiate himself in terms of intention, which he characterizes as a good-faith effort to produce Nono's "sustained notes." The quixotic nature of the quest to create a vocal tone on the piano is entirely calculated: failure is a predetermined and necessary condition of the exercise. Lachenmann puts himself in a position where it is impossible to produce the "pure," "non-figurative vocal style" that he so admired in Nono's music. The result will inevitably be a kind of "echo," as per the title; a piece that clearly distinguishes itself from Nono's influence at the same time that it stands as tribute.

---

[28] Ibid., 370. "Ich war geprägt und fasziniert von der Reinheit und Konsequenz des damaligen nonfigurativen Vokalsatzes meines Lehrers Nono, bei welchem die Töne als gehaltene während ihrer Dauer in fließende Intervallbeziehungen zueinander treten, wobei diese über flexible Dynamik und Klang- beziehungsweise Vokalfarben noch weiter innerlich artikuliert und hierarchisch abgestuft werden.

Mein Vorhaben, von solcher Praxis bei der Entwicklung eines Klaviersatzes auszugehen (Nono hat damals wohlweislich nichts für Klavier, überhaupt kaum etwas für Soloinstrumente geschrieben), war bewußt ein Versuch am widerspenstigen Objekt, wo doch der KIavierklang permanent unter den Händen zerrinnt... führte solche Auseinandersetzung mit dem Vorbild Nono zugleich von dessen Idiom weg zu einem Klangdenken, in dem Struktur nicht Mittel zu expressiven Zwecken, sondern Expressivität als vorweg Gegebenes, den Mitteln bereits Anhaftendes, zum Ausgangspunkt für strukturelle Abenteuer wurde."

Musique concrète instrumentale

In some ways, *Echo Andante* and *Wiegenmusik* begin a project that is fully realized in the concept of *musique concrète instrumentale*, which informs Lachenmann's subsequent works. *Musique concrète instrumentale* involves an open-ended exploration of the potential sound world of standard instruments. In his program note to the solo cello showcase *Pression* (1970), Lachenmann defines the concept:

> [*musique concrète instrumentale*] refers to a music in which the sound events are chosen and organized so that the manner of their production is at least as important as the resulting acoustic properties. These properties such as timbre, volume, etc. do not sound so for their own sake, but they describe, that is, signal the specific situation: you hear from them, under what conditions, with what materials, with which energies and against what resistance a sound- or noise-action is being carried out.[29]

The concept of *musique concrète instrumentale* radically reshaped Lachenmann's sound. In a way, it finishes the work that *Echo Andante* began. Gone is tone, the "pure" timbre associated with traditional playing techniques. Instead, Lachenmann calls for extended techniques—the scratches, screeches, clicks and taps that have been trained out of classical music performance. These are sounds similar to those resulting from Sciarrino's mandate to entrust the voice to silence, but ostensibly used to a different end, namely to call attention to the labor of performance. In Chapter 2, I claimed that lurking behind Sciarrino's extended techniques is the presence of an instrument capable of rendering a lyrical cantabile at full tone. I think that this is also true of Lachenmann's *musique concrète instrumentale* works. In all of them, vocal timbre and instrumental timbres that bear resemblance to the singing voice are

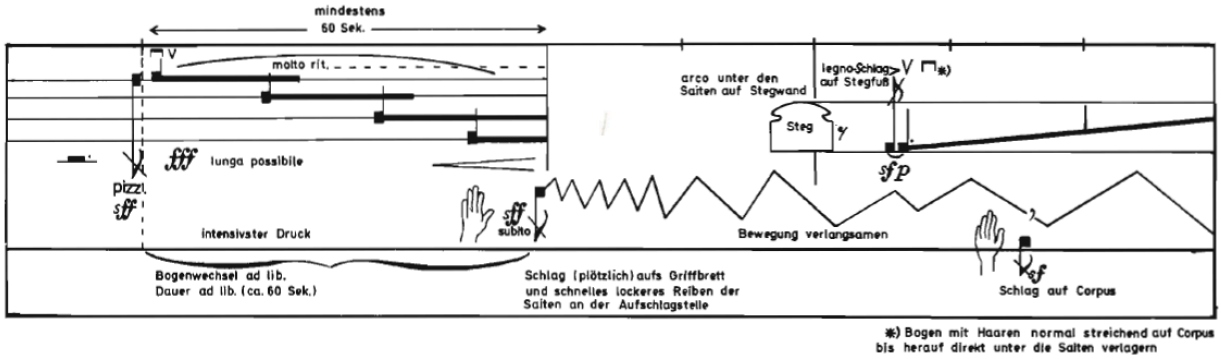
[29] Ibid., 381. "Gemeint ist damit eine Musik, in welcher die Schallereignisse so gewählt und organisiert sind, daß man die Art ihrer Entstehung mindestens so wichtig nimmt wie die resultierenden akustischen Eigenschaften selbst. Diese Eigenschaften wie Klangfarbe, Lautstärke usw. klingen also nicht um ihrer selbst willen, sondern sie beschreiben beziehungsweise signalisieren die konkrete Situation: Man hört ihnen an, unter welchen Bedingungen, mit welchen Materialien, mit welchen Energien und gegen welche Widerstände eine Klang- oder Geräusch-Aktion ausgeführt wird."

introduced deliberately yet incompletely. Lachenmann's work commentary for *Pression* is especially revealing:

> Pure, "beautiful full" cello tone is therefore only one special case of different possibilities of bow pressure, bow position, bow manipulation on a particular alignment, with special preparation of this setting by the left hand of the player, etc., all of these circumstances that work together here can be modified individually. In the case of the beautiful, professional cello tone—as with all "beautiful" sounds according to our society—the relationship between action and result is especially balanced concerning effort and resistance.[30]

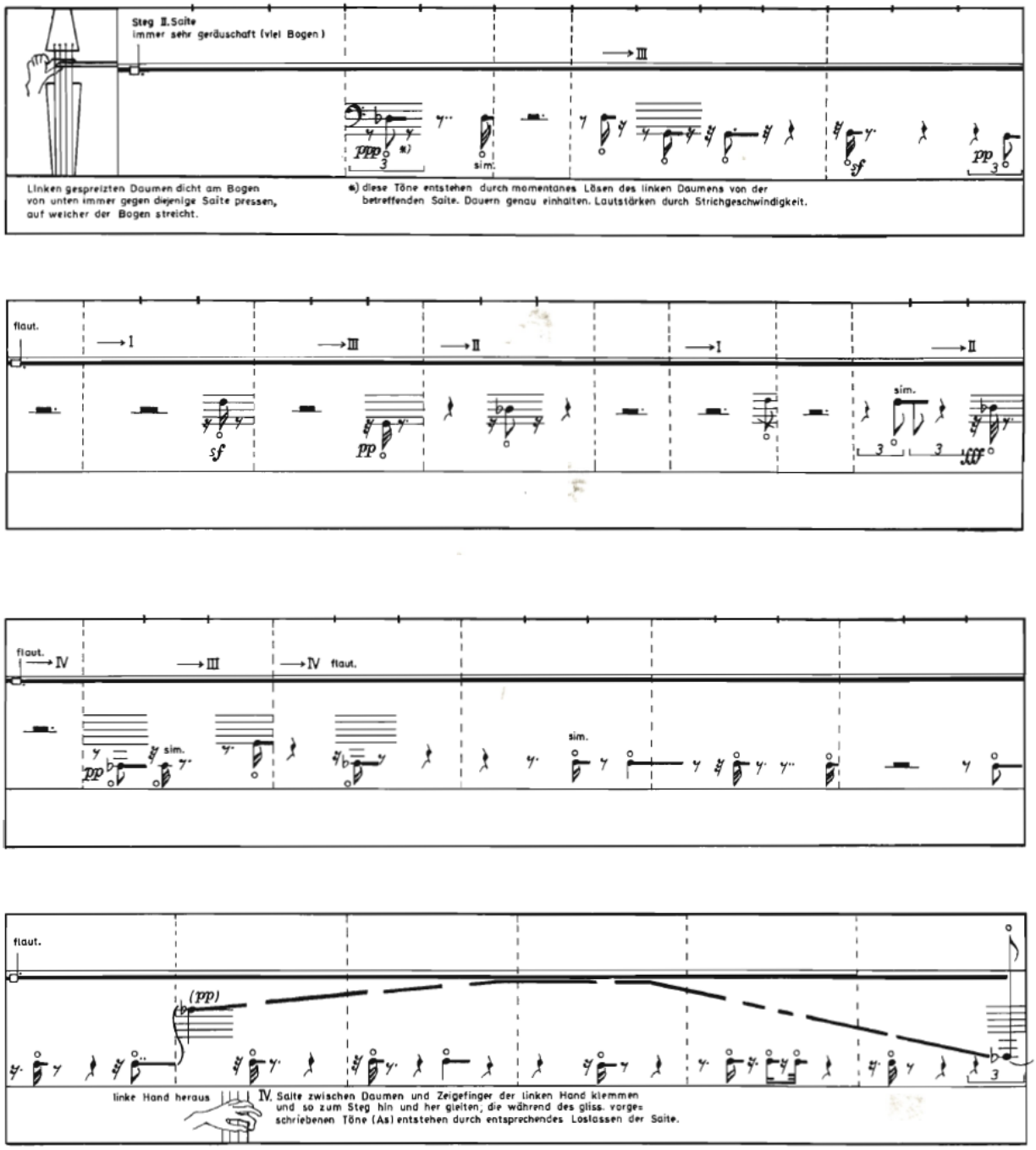
In this passage, Lachenmann defines the sound world of *Pression* in relation to the "*schöne volle*" sound of traditional "professional" cello playing, dismissing the latter as only one possibility, and a possibility loaded with the phenomenal baggage of being "professional" and societally determined. A crisis of the noumenal lurks in the background here—traditional cello timbre is known, culturally constructed, and thus undesirable. *Pression*'s unique notation reflects this new set of priorities, emphasizing information about timbre at the direct expense of information about pitch and rhythm, the two main determinants of melody. **Example 5-3** shows one line of the score, and even this brief excerpt demonstrates the imprecise notation of time and pitch: the hash marks on the second part of the line indicate a quarter note at ♩=ca. 66, with events falling in a loose proportional space therein, and Lachenmann chooses to notate positioning on the body of the instrument rather than exact pitch.

[30] Ibid. "Der reine, ‚schöne volle' Celloton ist darin also nur ein Sonderfall unter verschiedenen Möglichkeiten des Bogendrucks, der Bogenhaltung, der Bogenführung an einer bestimmten Strichstelle, bei besonderer Präparierung dieser Stelle durch die linke Hand des Spielers usw., wobei alle diese Gegebenheiten, die hier zusammenwirken, einzeln für sich abgewandelt werden können. Im Fall des schönen, professionellen Cellotons ist - wie bei allen für unsere Gesellschaft "schönen" Klängen - das Verhältnis von Aktion und Resultat besonders ausgewogen, was Anstrengung und Widerstand betrifft."



Example 5-3: Lachenmann, *Pression*, pg. 4 line 3. The tick marks at the top denote seconds, and Lachenmann notates position of the body rather than pitch

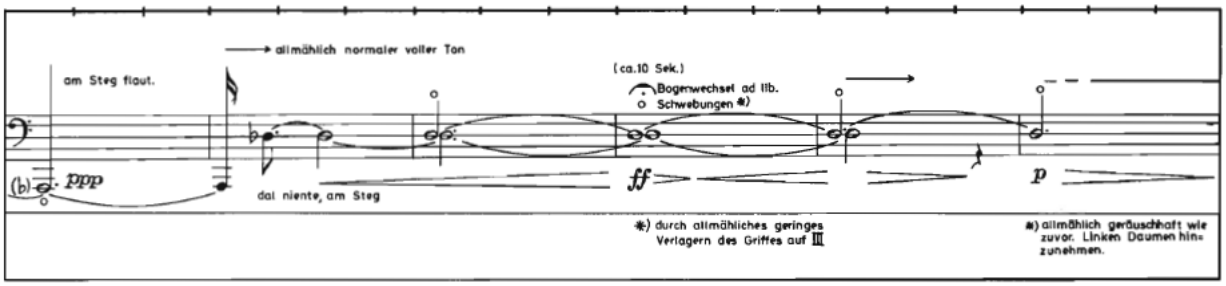
The five-line staff returns with the first pitch-determinate sound in the piece, a striking moment that occurs just over halfway through. **Example 5-4** shows how, after several minutes of whispery tremolos and screeching overpressure, pitched material makes a tentative entrance. These pitches are unevenly spaced, almost accidents, "caused by a momentary loosening of the left thumb of the respective string," which is bowed from below.



Example 5-4: Lachenmann, *Pression*, pg. 7. Pitched material is unevenly spaced, almost accidental, "caused by a momentary loosening of the left thumb of the respective string"

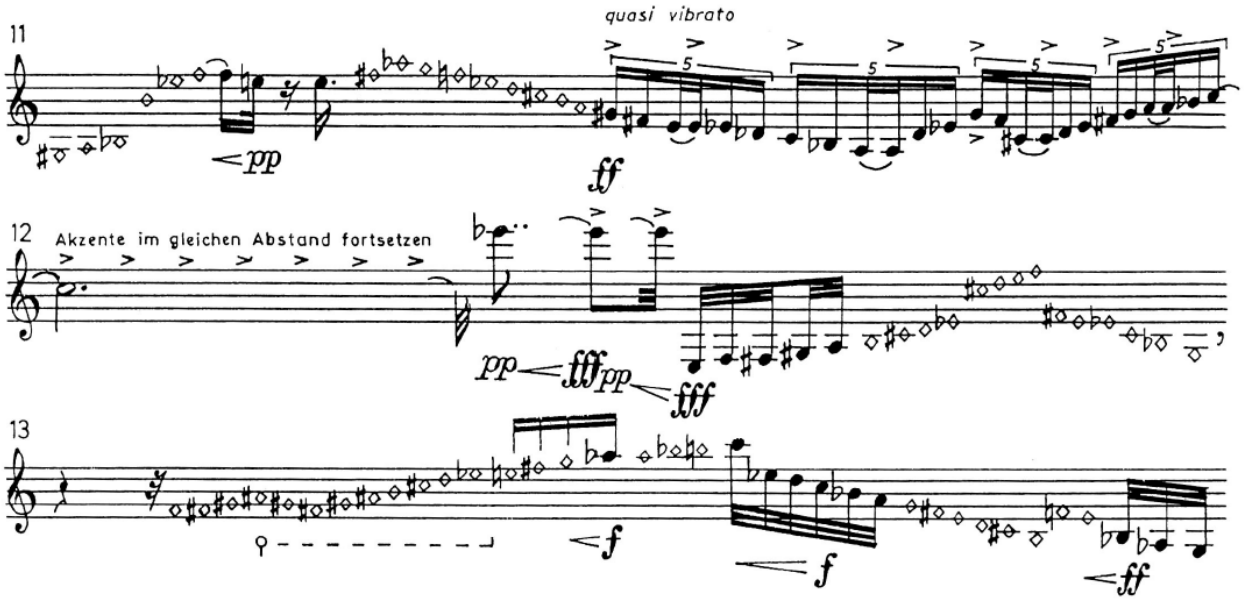
Directly after this section, pitch assumes center stage for the first time, aggressively, as the cellist holds a unison double stop at *ff* for 10 seconds (**Example 5-5**). Even this moment, the "pitchiest" part of the piece, exhibits only the barest trace of the *schöne volle* tone; tone is

present, but the flat sound of the open string and doubleness of the unison chord discourage comparison to the human voice.



Example 5-5: Lachenmann, *Pression*, pg. 8 line 1. Pitch aggressively takes center stage

The development of pitched material in *dal niente* is similarly gradual, culminating in a loud, stubbornly awkward, "quasi vibrato" outburst that feels overblown, even mocking (**Example 5-6**). In both cases, the pendulum seems to have swung in favor of pitch, but overreached its mark; both passages have an air of excess, of exaggeration, of *too much pitch*. In a strikingly similar way, both pieces wrestle with the specter of tone, allowing it to show itself in order to exorcise it.



Example 5-6: Lachenmann, *dal niente*, lines 11-13. A loud, stubbornly awkward outburst of pitch that feels overblown, even mocking

Melody

The considerations of *musique concrète instrumentale* are still very much at play from the later 1970s through the early 1990s, even as Lachenmann's pieces from this period tend to be grander in terms of both scale and complexity. He continues to deploy tone carefully but increasingly adds elements of melody as well. Remember that Lachenmann's description of *Il canto sospeso* contained two contradictory conceptions of melody: the first new and fragmented (noumenal), the second old and potentially artificial (phenomenal). This is melody in the latter sense. In almost all of his work commentaries from this period, he refers to "secrets," hidden melodic objects that are imported but then somehow hidden or compromised. For instance, *Fassade*'s (1973) "marching melody" is "overrun" by "sound fields;" *Accanto* (1975/6) features a "secret unfolding" of the Mozart Clarinet Concerto; "familiar…dancing figures and musical formulae…songs and…fragments of Bach's music" constantly recrystallize in *Tanzsuite mit Deutschlandlied* (1979/80); a children's song "regulates" the action of *Harmonica* (1981/3) without being heard in and of itself; *Ausklang* (1984/5) presents a "filtered cantilena" and "perforated, monstrous cantabile"; *Staub*'s (1985/7) "Largo-cantibile" is "soundless, breathy ('dusty'); *Allegro Sostenuto* (1987/8) offers a "legato-cantilena" that is "'false' as it were" and a "deflated hymn." Even though these secrets serve a generative function, they never emerge intact—in fact, they rarely emerge at all in any legible form.

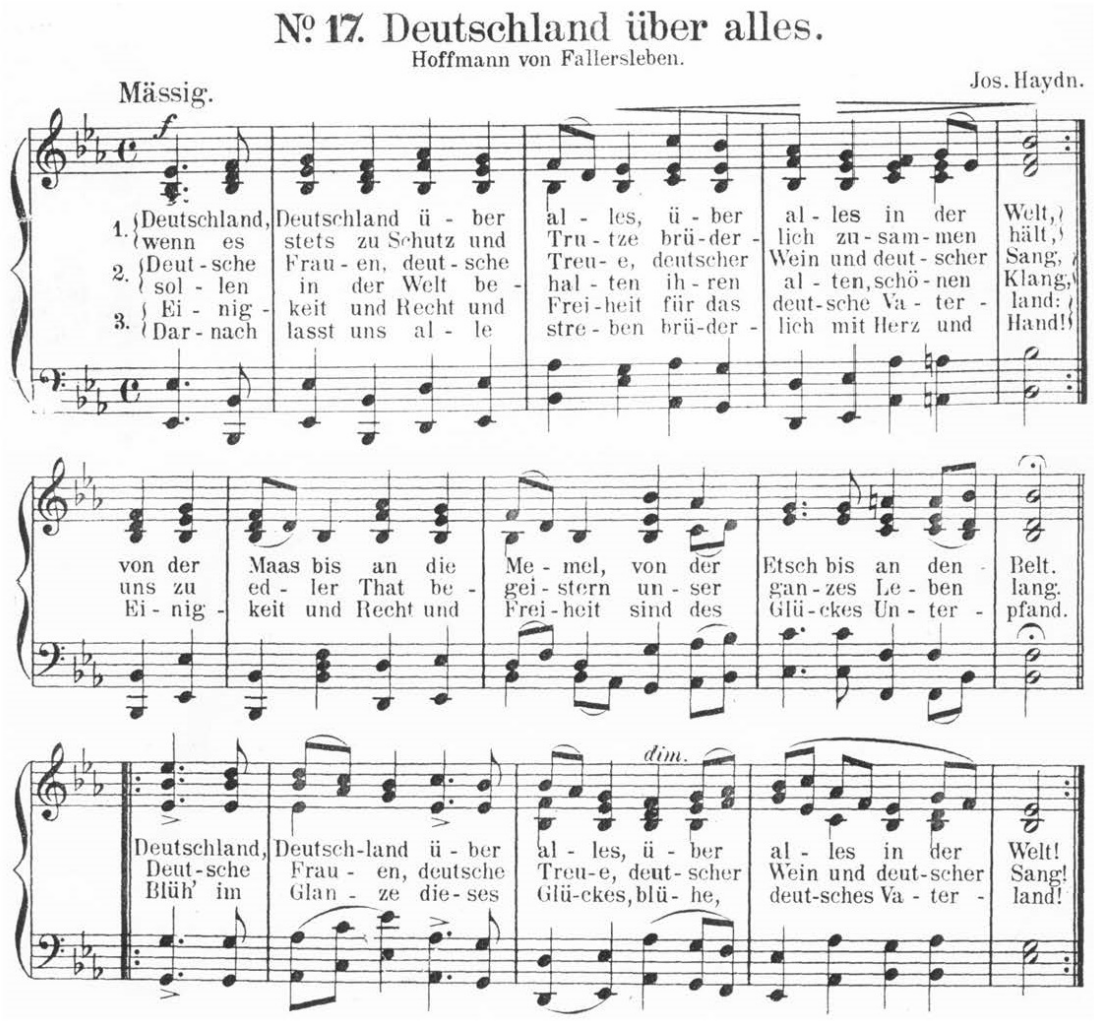
In several of these works, Lachenmann takes a pre-given melody that he associates with familiarity and comfort (certainly his own, but also presumably his audience's) and sublimates it into the musical texture such that it becomes unfamiliar again. His work commentary to *Fassade* lends insight into these decisions:

> …so, this isn't affect-music; instead, expression communicates as "aspect," as composerly attitude, as speechless action in a fatally hasty articulate situation of thoughtless affect-comfort, as is true in our cultural landscape.[31]

For Lachenmann, acts of articulation must be thoughtful, lest they be fatally hasty and fall into the habit of phenomenal conventions. "Affect"—singing as a bird, communication that takes its own form as given, is eschewed in favor of the more dissociated "aspect." Apparent here is a method of affective mapping whereby Lachenmann distances himself from the vocal act in order to make what he sees as a crisis of communication interesting and aesthetically productive. And all of the melodies he chooses exist separately from the piece in which they operate, even if Lachenmann himself also composed the melody. They are never fully metabolized, but instead brought into these works as foreign material, as a grain of sand in the oyster's shell, which then generates and limits what surrounds it. They are as integral as they are alien.

Tanzsuite mit Deutschlandlied (orchestra and string quartet, 1979/80), with its sublimation of several familiar German melodies, is one of Lachenmann's most overtly political pieces and demonstrates his entanglement of the vocal and the ethical. The titular quotation, a version of the German national anthem, is the most pointed: in his treatment of the melody, Lachenmann mounts a critique of both Germany's fascist past and its bourgeois present. The original tune was written by Joseph Haydn in 1797 to honor Emperor Francis II of the Holy Roman Empire, while the lyrics were penned in 1847 by August Heinrich Hoffman (**Example 5-7** shows melody and lyrics, and **Table 5-1** offers a translation of the first verse).

[31] Ibid., 388. "Keine Affekt-Musik also, vielmehr teilt sich Ausdruck mit als "Aspekt", als kompositorische Haltung, als sprachloses Handeln in einer auf fatale Weise vorschnell sprachfertigen Situation gedankenloser Affekt-Behaglichkeit, wie sie in unserer Kulturlandschaft zum guten Ton gehört."



Example 5-7: *Deutschland über alles*. Melody by Haydn, lyrics by Hoffman

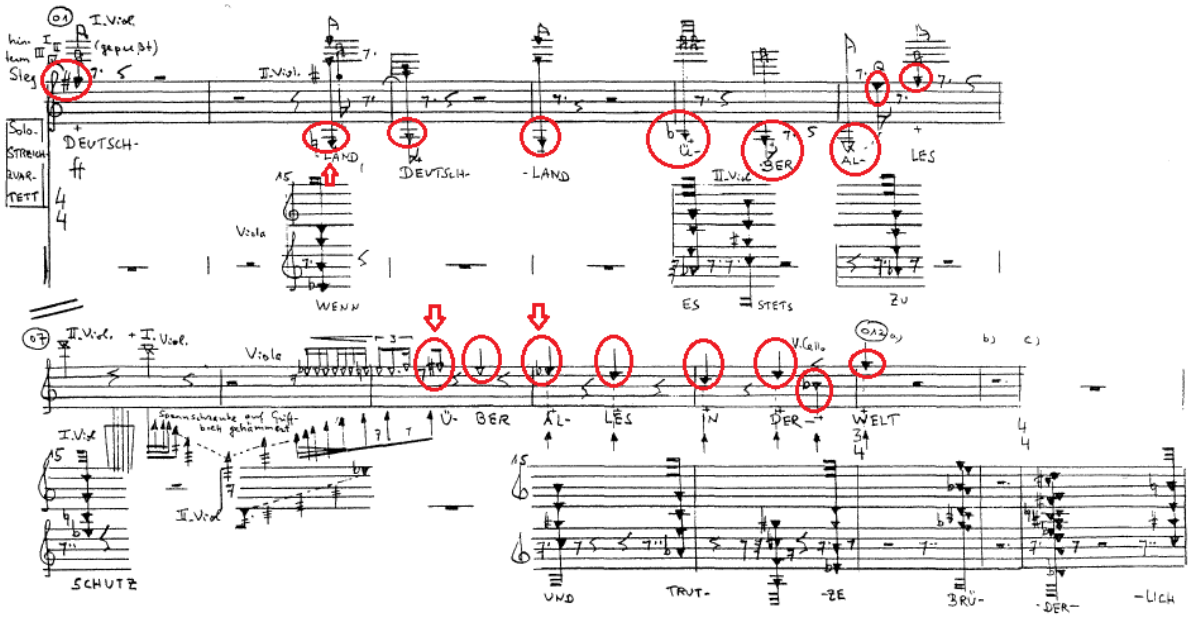
Deutschland, Deutschland über alles,	Germany, Germany above everything
Über alles in der Welt,	Above everything in the world
Wenn es stets zu Schutz und Trutze	When it comes to protection and defense
Brüderlich zusammenhält.	Fraternally together
Von der Maas bis an die Memel,	From the Meuse to the Memel
Von der Etsch bis an den Belt,	From the Adige to the Belt
Deutschland, Deutschland über alles,	Germany, Germany above everything
Über alles in der Welt!	Above everything in the world!

Table 5-1: *Deutschland über alles*, translation, first verse

The opening of *Tanzsuite* features a highly altered version of the anthem melody performed by the solo string quartet. The rhythm, determined by a *Zeitnetz*,[32] is augmented and distorted such that each bar contains only 1-2 syllables, and the first verse is overlaid on the second. In a later essay, Lachenmann inserts the words of the anthem underneath a score reduction. The first layer, which is in actuality spread among the four instruments, is circled in red in **Example 5-8**; when compared to **Example 5-7**, it becomes apparent that the melody is slipping steadily downward—red arrows specify the three instances where its tonic re-centers itself on a lower key. Distorting timbres such as snap *pizzicati* and overpressure provide further disguise. The second layer also contains timbre distortion and rhythmic displacement; in addition, the anthem is performed on a scale that widens as it descends, "so that the original pitch of the song is accordingly transformed, quasi dented."[33] At this point, only the contour is discernible.

[32] Lachenmann often uses *Zeitnetze* in order to take certain elements of composition out of his control—this is clear from his pre-compositional sketches. Lachenmann makes no claim, however, that *Zeitnetz* themselves generate organizational unity. They seem to be more of a heuristic, another way of alienating himself from his compositional materials.

[33] Helmut Lachenmann, "Hören ist wehrlos - ohne Hören: Über Möglichkeiten und Schwierigkeiten," in *Musik als existentielle Erfahrung: Schriften 1966-1995*, ed. Josef Häusler (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1996), 129. "Die überlagernde zweite Zeile erscheint noch weiter gespreizt auf einer zweiten imaginären Tastatur von Pizzicato-Vierklängen (Reihe I), deren Stufenskala aus nach unten sich erweiternden Intervallabständen besteht, so daß der ursprüngliche Tonhöhenverlauf des Liedes entsprechend umgeformt, quasi verbeult wird."



Example 5-8: Lachenmann, *Tanzsuite mit Deutschlandlied*, opening reduction.[34] The melody of the anthem is circled in red

Haydn's melody has a long and unhappy past in Germany. It underlaid the anthem of the Austrian Empire before being paired with Hoffman's words in 1922 to form the German anthem. The first verse became closely associated with Hitler and the Nazi regime; for instance, Hitler entered the 1936 Olympic Games accompanied by thousands of voices singing the anthem in unison. The song was banned from 1945-1952, but both East and West Germany repurposed the melody during the Cold War; West Germany authorized only the third verse of Hoffman's lyrics, while East Germany attached new lyrics altogether ("Auferstanden aus Ruinen"/ Risen from Ruins). In writing Hoffman's lyrics from the first, highly charged, stanza in his score, Lachenmann ensures that he is drawing forth the anthem's troubled history.[35]

National anthems bring to light how song can play two very different roles: on the one hand, a soloistic performance can represent the most individual expression of a self, the grain of a particular voice (think of Jimi Hendrix's famous performance of "The Star Spangled Banner"

[34] Ibid., 131.
[35] For more on the anthem's history, see Josef Hanson, "German National Song in the Third Reich: A Tale of Two Anthems," *Music and Politics* 7, no. 1 (Winter 2013).

at Woodstock 1969); on the other hand, a *tutti* performance can represent community, a site of synchrony and conformity.[36] When we sing an anthem together, we are usually doing our best to say exactly the same thing in the same way at the same time—this represents, and perhaps even creates, the idealistic sense of unity and shared purpose promoted by the lyrics of *Deutschland über alles*. Only the spectre of such frictionless collectivity is to be found in *Tanzsuite*.

The anthem returns in the final section of *Tanzsuite* along with "*Schlaf, kindlein, schlaf*" (Sleep, child, sleep), an old German lullaby; this time, Lachenmann marks the syllables of the lullaby in the original score. It is even more spread out than in the earlier iteration, with an average of one syllable every few bars. The words are written near the piano and harp parts, but never spoken aloud. Nonetheless, their secret narrative, driven by these instruments, does determine this section's structure. Each attack corresponding to a syllable is performed at *fortissimo* or louder with a rapid echo in other instruments, such that a listener unaware of the text would still perceive these irregularly spaced moments as outbursts of some kind.

According to his program note, Lachenmann's intention in using pre-existing material was to deconstruct the "playfully gathered memories of impressions that to me—consciously or unconsciously—embody the collective feeling of security in whose shelter bourgeois thinking and feeling, magically protected, grow up and emerge from one another."[37] The *Deutschlandlied*, the lullaby with which it is paired at the end of the piece, and the category of melody in general seem to have the same status in Lachenmann's mind—familiar, phenomenal, and dangerously unexamined. He exposes the underbelly of the anthem by using its original verses and leaves it to

[36] For more on the relationship between choral singing and community building in the nineteenth century, John Butt, "Choral Music," in *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music*, ed. Jim Samson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 213–36; Ryan Minor, *Choral Fantasies: Music, Festivity, and Nationhood in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[37] Lachenmann, "Werkkommentare," 392. "Spielerisch zusammengetragene Erinnerungen an Eindrücke, in welchen sich mir—bewußt und unbewußt—jene kollektive Geborgenheit verkörpert, in deren Schutz bürgerliches Denken und Empfinden, magisch behütet, heranwachsen und auseinander hervorgehen."

the audience to do the same for the lullaby. The presence of these tunes in *Tanzsuite* is conspicuous, but they are also distorted to the point that it is virtually impossible for an audience member to entrain, to sing along, to cohere around them: the only way to navigate this piece is alone.

The speaking subject

Beginning in 1977, with *Salut für Caudwell*, Lachenmann begins to evince a new interest in, and tolerance for, the speaking subject. He had written two vocal works before this: the *Consolations* (mixed choir and percussion, 1967-68), and *temA* (voice, flute, and clarinet, 1968). The *Consolations* represent a transition from vocal writing like that in *Il canto sospeso* to vocal writing more consistent with *musique concrète instrumentale* such as that found in *temA*.[38] Its text-setting, a heterogeneous mix between melodic textures and extended techniques, represents a significant step away from pitch-centered compositional structures. The vocalists are asked to sing, but also to produce percussive sounds ranging from sustained "s" sounds to the rapid repetition of isolated words or phrases. Indeed, they are more often asked to emulate the percussionists' sound world than the other way around. Extended vocal techniques such as these were hardly unheard of at the time—to give just one important example, Berio's S*equenza III* for solo voice was premiered in 1965. But they are new to Lachenmann's music, and constitute a major difference between the *Consolations* and *Il canto sospeso*. My analysis here begins with *temA*, one of the first pieces in his oeuvre to fully take on the characteristics of *musique concrète instrumentale*.

[38] It's also worth noting that many of Lachenmann's earlier pieces are *theatrical* even if they don't have a speaking subject—think of the physical choreography of pieces like *Guero, Pression*, and *Salut für Caudwell*.

temA

temA is a composition in which Lachenmann's understanding of music as fundamentally vocal and the principles of *musique concrète instrumentale* are allowed to clash. Can we think of the vocalist as an acousmatic source, (only) a device that directs air through vocal cords, albeit an extremely sophisticated one? The existence of text in *temA* complicates this question considerably, as text tends to suggest a speaking subject. Lachenmann's performance directions for the vocal part show him walking a fine line, providing instructions that seem contradictory:

> The texts (in quotation marks) do not have to be understood by the listeners since they serve to modify the exhalation in a specially conceived manner. They should always be spoken, whispered or murmured a little too quickly. However, the respective characteristic tones or consonants encountered throughout as well as the typical speaking rhythm should be stressed as much as possible.
> [...]
> All the vocal distortions should be conceived instrumentally and never emotionally (which damages the voice ...).

The last sentence of these instructions seems to ask the singer to think of her voice as an instrument separate from her body, but what comes before demands the opposite. Linguistic meaning is not the first priority, but the performance should still maintain traces of "typical speaking rhythm," of the sound of speaking, even as the text is "whispered or murmured a little too quickly." In other words, the singer should hint at linguistic expression but also withhold it, occupying a grey area between voice and instrument, between subject and device. There are, in fact, moments where snippets of vocalizations from a coherent speaking subject seem to come to the fore in *temA,* but the text itself, which consists of a combination of quotidian locutions ("*wie bitte*?," "*warum denn nicht*?") and short self-referential phrases that refer to the act of playing an instrument *(*"*beim ein(a)tmen da*," "*doch so können Flötentöne*," "*wissen Sie, diese Texte ließen sich*"), resists meaning even as it invokes expression. Lachenmann invites the listener to speculate about what this piece would sound like, would feel like, were the cause of the vocal

and instrumental gestures not expression, but the pleasing arrangement of sounds. This is a thought experiment familiar from Pierre Schaefer's notion of acousmatic listening, where a sound is stripped of its origin: a vocalist producing tones through her own body. Instead, it must be assumed to emanate from some kind of music-making mechanism.

Salut für Caudwell and *…Zwei Gefühle…*

Like *temA*, *Salut für Caudwell* puts its speaking subject under adverse conditions. But these conditions are quite different, and *Salut* ultimately allows its speaking subject to exist more fully and consistently than that of *temA*. The piece includes a lengthy section toward the beginning (mm. 55-171) where both guitarists intone text excerpted from Christopher Caudwell's seminal Marxist manifesto *Illusion and Reality* in a rhythmically precise unison monotone.[39] The content of this excerpt, and of Caudwell's *Illusion and Reality* as a whole, is a Marxist argument about the relationship between art and society that will be familiar to anyone who has read Lachenmann's writings. It is drawn from a part of the work that imagines a proletariat addressing directly an imagined bourgeois—this section is set off from the main text in quotes. *Salut für Caudwell* is thus technically a performed monologue rather than the reading of a text; when the guitarists speak, they are sounding the vocalic body of Caudwell's ideal proletariat. The text is delivered in German, and is shown in **Table 5-2** with its original English alongside. Bracketed ellipses indicate omitted text—note that since Caudwell's text continues past the excerpt Lachenmann chose, the last ellipsis is the composer's. In addition to the Caudwell, Lachenmann inserts a short exclamation from "*Das trunkene Lied*" of Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*, which is bolded: **Example 5-9** shows the advent of text in m. 55:

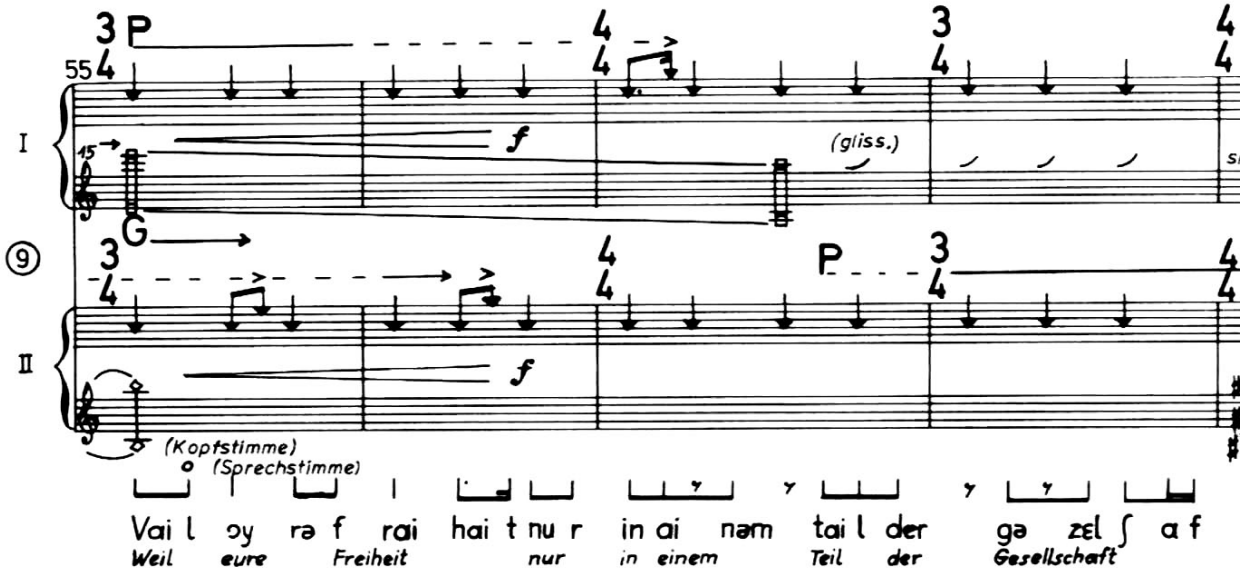
[39] Christopher Caudwell was the pseudonym taken by British Marxist Christopher St. John Sprigge (1907-37).

Weil eure Freiheit nur in einem Teil der Gesellschaft wurzelt, ist sie unvollständig. Alles Bewußtsein wird von der Gesellschaft mit geprägt. Aber weil ihr davon nicht wißt, bildet ihr euch ein, ihr wäret frei. Diese von euch so stolz zur Schau getragene Illusion ist das Kennzeichen eurer Sklaverei.	Your conception of freedom, because it is rooted in a part of society, is also partial. All consciousness is determined by the society which produces it, but because you are ignorant of this mode of determination, you imagine your consciousness to be free […] this illusion you exhibit so proudly is the badge of your slavery […].
Ihr hofft das Denken vom Leben abzusondern und damit einen Teil der menschlichen Freiheit zu bewahren. Freiheit ist jedoch keine Substanz zum Aufbewahren, sondern eine im aktiven Kampf mit den konkreten Problemen des Lebens geschaffene Kraft.	You hope to segregate thought from life, and so, by surrendering everything but this, in some way preserve a part of man's freedom […] However, freedom is not a substance to be preserved and isolated but a force generated in an active struggle with the concrete problems of living […].
Es gibt keine neutrale Kunstwelt. Ihr müßt wählen zwischen Kunst die sich ihrer nicht bewußt und unfree und unwahr ist, und Kunst die ihre Bedingungen kennt und ausdrückt.	There is no neutral world of art […] You must choose between class art which is unconscious of its causality and is therefore to that extent false and unfree, and […] art which is becoming conscious of its causality […]
Wir wenden nicht aufhören den bürgerlichen Inhalt eurer Kunst zu kritisieren. Wir stellen die einfache Forderung an Euch, das Leben mit der Kunst und die Kunst mit dem Leben in Einklang zu bringen, damit eure Kunst lebendig wird.	We shall not cease to criticise the bourgeois content of your art […]Ours is simply a demand that you should square life with art and art with life, that you should make art living [...]
Wir verlangen, daß Ihr wirklich in der neuen Welt lebt und eure Seele nicht in der Vergangenheit zurücklasst.	We ask that you should *really* live in the new world and not leave your soul behind in the past [...]

Table 5-2: Lachenmann's translation of Christopher Caudwell, *Illusion and Reality*, alongside the original English. The interpolation of Nietzsche's text is bolded.

[Oh Mensch gib acht Ihr seid noch gespalten solange ihr es nicht lassen könnt,] abgenutzte Kategorien der bürgerlichen Kunst mechanisch durcheinanderzumischen oder Kategorien andere Proletarische Bereiche mechanisch zu übernehmen. Ihr müßt den schwierigen schöpferischen Weg gehen, die Gesetze und die Technik der Kunst neu gestalten, so daß sie die entstehende Welt ausdrückt und ein Teil ihrer Verwirklichung ist. Dann werden wir sagen…	[**O Man, take heed, you will remain divided so long as you are**] mechanically shuffling the outworn categories of bourgeois art or mechanically importing the categories of other proletarian spheres. You must take the difficult creative road—that of refashioning the categories and technique of art so that it expresses the new world coming into being and is part of its realisation. Then we shall say…[40]

Table 5-2 (continued)



Example 5-9: Lachenmann, *Salut für Caudwell,* mm. 55-58. M. 55 marks the advent of text.

This excerpt is representative of the consistent texture between mm. 55-171. The proletariat's words are presented in a linear sequence but broken arbitrarily into phonemes. These phonemes are then distributed, with no regard for the natural cadence of speech, into a rigid metrical structure; nonetheless, Lachenmann's transcription of the text below the phonetic rendering ensures that the performers can keep track of the semantic meaning of the text. The

[40] Christopher Caudwell, *Illusion and Reality: A Study of the Sources of Poetry* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1946), 287–298.

metrical structure is strongly enforced by sharp percussive attacks in one or both of the guitars on every quarter note.[41] In his performance notes, Lachenmann directs the guitarists to perform the spoken and instrumental parts at the same volume, increasing the blend between the guitar and voice. He also instructs them to deliver the phonemes "with a completely neutral expression, practically as if one were 'reading aloud'… [while aiming] at a comprehensible delivery of the text."

In both *temA* and *Salut*, words are uttered with a strange rhythm— "spoken, whispered or murmured a little too quickly" in the former and delivered with mechanical prosody, non-soloistic dynamics, and a doggedly neutral affect in the latter. But unlike *temA*, where utterance exists only liminally, *Salut*'s text is conceived and delivered as a monologue. Given that the text is presented as an utterance, the abruptly placed ellipsis at its end implies that the rest of the piece constitutes what Lachenmann is actually saying, having taken the "difficult, creative road" prescribed by Caudwell. Lachenmann's work commentary does seem to suggest that he conceives of the non-texted music (m. 172 on) as dependent on the Caudwell text and his imposed ellipsis for its meaning:

> …when designing and specifying the sound and movement relationships, I always had the feeling that this music "accompanies" something, if not a text, perhaps single words or thoughts…; things, in any case, that are worth keeping in mind but things that cannot be spoken aloud because we live in a largely voiceless society that has made its most sophisticated means of understanding useless through overexploitation by the media through the ruthless manipulation of emotions.[42]

[41] Although these attacks change in timbre, the relentless march of quarter notes is only interrupted once, with an added eighth note in m. 68.

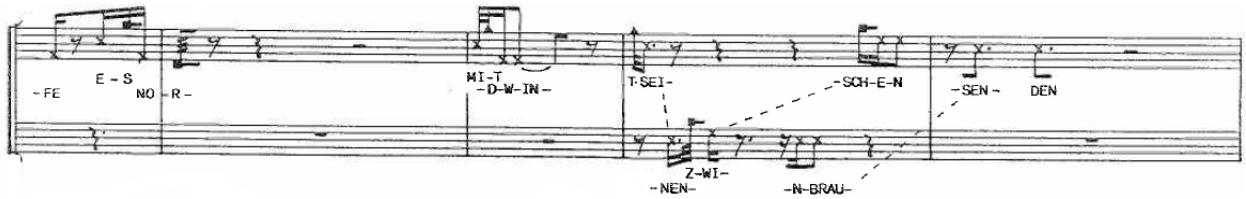
[42] Lachenmann, "Werkkommentare," 390. "…beim Entwerfen und Präzisieren der Klang- und Bewegungszusammenhänge, hatte ich stets das Gefühl, daß diese Musik irgend etwas "begleite", wenn nicht einen Text, so doch einzelne Wörter oder Gedanken; Dinge jedenfalls, die es zu bedenken gelte, die sich aber nicht aussprechen lassen, weil wir in einer weithin sprachlosen Gesellschaft leben, die durch Raubbau der Medien und durch rücksichtslose Manipulation der Emotionen ihr differenziertestes Verständigungsmittel untauglich gemacht hat."

At m. 468, pulsed material makes an unassuming return; the guitarists brush their hands rhythmically across the strings, creating a hazy timbre that can only be perceived as a whisper. The ending of the piece several minutes later, which is without *ritard* or interruption of pulse, is unceremonious enough to imply that the piece continues unheard, just as the text continues unspoken after m. 171. It is almost as though Lachenmann has aligned himself with formalists such as Hanslick, who insisted that music's meaning exists outside of the grammar of language and is more profound for it. But not quite, for in this piece and the ones discussed in the following, he increasingly takes on the voice and speaking subject as a problem he works through *via the voice*. This passage echoes his call for a renewal of communication in *Fassade*'s commentary, and explicitly connects Lachenmann's musical use of the voice to his ethical agenda: speech, society's "most sophisticated means of understanding," has been rendered phenomenal by the exploitation of the culture industry, forcing him into a crisis of communication. Nonetheless, he must try.

Luigi Nono died in 1991, and by his own account Lachenmann mourned this loss deeply. In fact, large parts of *...zwei Gefühle...* (two speakers and large ensemble, 1992) was written in Nono's empty house in Sardinia; he begins his work commentary with this contextualization, acknowledging that there is "no question that the memory of [Nono] influenced my ideas at that time."[43] The text is drawn from Leonardo da Vinci's notebooks—in the selected passages, he recounts the experience of walking up to a recently erupted volcano and feeling both fear and fascination (the "two feelings" referenced in the title). The treatment of text in *...zwei Gefühle...* brings forth a speaking subject in a manner similar to that in *Salut für Caudwell*; the difference lies in the way the text is overlaid and divided between the two speakers, rather than performed in unison. **Example 5-10** shows the entanglement between the two parts, as part of the phrase

[43] Ibid., 401. ‹‹Keine Frage, daß die Erinnerung an ihn meine Vorstellungen damals mitbestimmt hat.››

"*So donnernd brüllt nicht das stürmische Meer, wenn der scharfe Nordwind es mit seinen brausenden Wogen zwischen Scylla und Charybdis hin und her wirft*,"[44] is blown apart and partially reconstructed.



Example 5-10: Lachenmann, *…zwei Gefühle…*, mm. 12-16, speakers 1 and 2. The text is distributed between two speaking parts

Lachenmann's description of his approach to language in *...zwei Gefühle...* is tinged with sadness and loss:

> In a sense, the two speakers of the Leonardo text in *...Zwei Gefühle...* are complementary halves of the consciousness of an imaginary wanderer and quietly marveling reader. They function unconsciously like the clasped hands of a blind man feeling each text like a precious inscription by picking up each of the particles of language and arranging them in a rough and ready sequence in his mind: concentrated and sober, 'absorbed,' but at the same time 'affected and concerned,' for what is revealed through semantics conjures up the situation of restless searching 'in the feeling of ignorance,' in which the blindly groping man comes to recognize himself once more…Mediterranean soundscape in inhospitable altitude, a 'Pastoral', written with thoughts of what connected me with the composer of *Hay que caminar*.[45]

In *...zwei Gefühle...* as well as *Salut für Caudwell*, Lachenmann attempts to remember Nono by remembering speech; his mourning for Nono becomes intertwined with a melancholia about modernity, and he finds a way to transform these other "two feelings" into something

[44] "The raging sea, whipped by the north wind, does not make such a roar with its tumultuous waters between Charybdis and Scylla." English translation from the Breitkopf & Härtel website: "Lachenmann: '... Zwei Gefühle...' · Breitkopf & Härtel," accessed October 2, 2015, https://www.breitkopf.com/work/3849/zwei-gefuehle.

[45] Lachenmann, "Werkkommentare," 401. "Die beiden Sprecher des Leonardo-Textes in ... *Zwei Gefühle* ... sind quasi sich ergänzende Bewußtseins-Hälften eines imaginären Wanderers und still staunenden Lesers. Sie selbst fungieren gleichsam bewußtlos wie die ineinander arbeitenden Hände eines am Sehen Gehinderten, der jenen Text wie eine kostbare Inschrift ertastet, indem er deren Sprachpartikel einzeln ergreift und schlecht und recht vor seinem Gedächtnis zusammenfügt: konzentriert und nüchtern, 'versunken', aber zugleich 'betroffen' im doppelten Sinn des Wortes, denn was sich semantisch erschließt, beschwört eben jene Situation des unruhigen Suchens 'im Gefühl der Unwissenheit', in welcher der blind Tastende sich wiedererkennt...Mediterrane Klanglandschaft in unwirtlicher Höhe; eine ‚Pastorale', geschrieben im Gedanken an das, was mich mit dem Komponisten des *Hay que caminar* verbunden hat."

constructive. He wishes to rediscover musical language anew through a process of "restless searching," and this project is closely tied with the need to rediscover the role of the voice in music—as bearer of expression and melody, as a basis from which material can be "derived and transformed," as part of the compositional voice that constitutes the inescapable legacy of his most important teacher.[46]

Das Mädchen mit den Schwefelhölzern

Das Mädchen mit den Schwefelhölzern (*The Little Matchstick Girl*, for two solo sopranos, chorus, and large ensemble, 1990-96) is arguably Lachenmann's masterwork, unparalleled in scope among his oeuvre. He had begun thinking about an opera based on the eponymous Hans Christian Anderson tale decades before, even as early as the *Consolations*, but began to pursue it in earnest just before Nono's death in 1991. *Das Mädchen* takes on tone, melody and voice, but the statement it makes about them seems to be quite different than the one made by the works discussed so far in this chapter. For one thing, the opera contains indulgent, even ravishing passages for the singing voice: melody in the second, phenomenal sense he identified in *Il canto sospeso*. Lachenmann is a remarkably consistent composer—he tends to develop ideas and techniques continuously from piece to piece—but the opera constitutes a rare swerve, a breach of Lachenmann's compositional ethic until this point. The conspicuous, full-throated emergence of the singing voice under specific dramatic circumstances recontextualizes and destabilizes the identity of Lachenmann's sound world, and specifically the role of extended techniques as established in his *musique concrète instrumentale* phase.

[46] The work commentary for *Tableau* (1988/9) also makes reference to rediscovering speech, describing a situation "where the eloquence of the retrieved expressive elements recognizes their speechlessness: a first step, again and again anew, in the search for forms of illusionless communication."

In Anderson's *Märchen*, a little girl is exiled into the cold street until she sells a certain number of matches, of which she has sold not one. Exhausted and shivering, she peeks in warmly lit windows and dreams of her mother and grandmother; eventually, she begins to light the matches in order to warm herself. After the last match is lit, her grandmother, a God figure also known as the Grand Mother, takes her into her arms and carries her up to heaven, where she finally escapes the cold.[47] The protagonist's outsider status in Anderson's tale resonates with Lachenmann's treatment of the singing voice in *Das Mädchen*. The matchstick girl is a lonely, tragic figure—she is left in the cold both literally and figuratively.

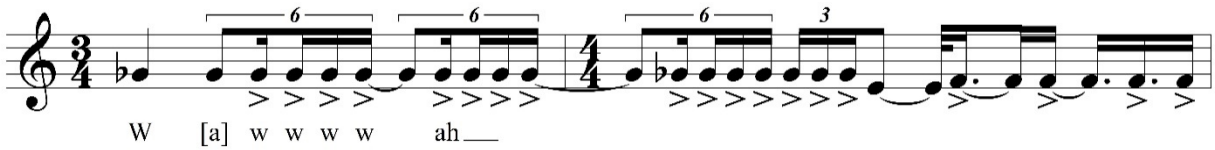
TONE. Although Lachenmann is no stranger to dark subject matter, the way that he chooses to represent this isolation in the score does raise serious questions: he associates it with a battery of dry, noisy sounds familiar from his works since the late 1960s, and in so doing radically recontextualizes these sounds. Frigidity becomes a kind of mimetic engine for a vast, meticulously varied array of 'cold'—toneless—timbres. Sonic complexes and performance techniques heard in decades of Lachenmann's music as relatively abstract phenomena are made concrete by the theater and libretto; they now become programmatic, almost Straussian. The "Frier-Arie" (frozen aria) of the third movement, for instance, is uncomfortably visceral. As Lachenmann describes it,

> The musical situation at the beginning of the opera is characterised by "cold" sounds, almost soundless strings, airy, also "frosty" shattering noises. The girl, em-"bodied" not only by the two soloists, but also by the orchestra and the "recounting" vocalists, is miserably cold, shivering, jittering, gasping for air, blows into her hands, rubs them against her body: desperate attempts to fight off the cold.[48]

[47] The opera also contains two interpolations: the first is a letter from Gudrun Ensslin, a founder of The Red Army Faction, while the second is the wholesale insertion of *...Zwei Gefühle...* about 70 minutes into the two-hour production.

[48] Unless otherwise indicated, translations of Lachenmann's description of *Das Mädchen* come from the liner notes of Keusch et al., *Das Mädchen mit den Schwefelhölzern: Musik in Bildern*.

The sounds of shivering and rubbing hands that Lachenmann describes are composed out mimetically in the score. The soprano soloists' teeth chatter on a stuttered "V" (**Example 5-11**), while the accompanying voices and instruments produce dry rubbing sounds either through air or friction. This soundscape is consistent with the representations of cold, isolation, and alienation in the rest of the score.



Example 5-11: Lachenmann, *Das Mädchen mit den Schwefelhölzern*, mm. 167-8, solo voice 1

"Toneless" sounds occur frequently in Lachenmann's works—they are, in fact, the norm after the mid-1960s. But in *Das Mädchen*, these "cold" sounds exist in tension with a very different set of timbres that accompany moments of escapism, comfort, warmth, and love in the opera. These moments are associated with sounds till now virtually unheard in Lachenmann's oeuvre: resonant, pure-toned sounds, and especially the female singing voice. Lachenmann brings in a corps of female voices, a kind of "celestial choir," during times when his protagonist experiences physical and emotional warmth. Although astonishingly present, *Das Mädchen*'s celestial choir is also carefully contained, framed within the frigidity of the plot. The girl may find solace in happy memories, but each time, the cold will vanquish the warmth, driving it inexorably away.

The first entrance of the celestial choir occurs at the beginning of the fourth movement ("Trio and Reprise") as the girl remembers her dead mother, whose slippers warm her feet. Even in this short passage, Lachenmann choreographs a beautiful but tragic metamorphosis from warmth to frigidity, tone to noise, living voice to inanimate object. It commences with longer phrases of sustained, wordless singing by female voices that begin almost immediately to

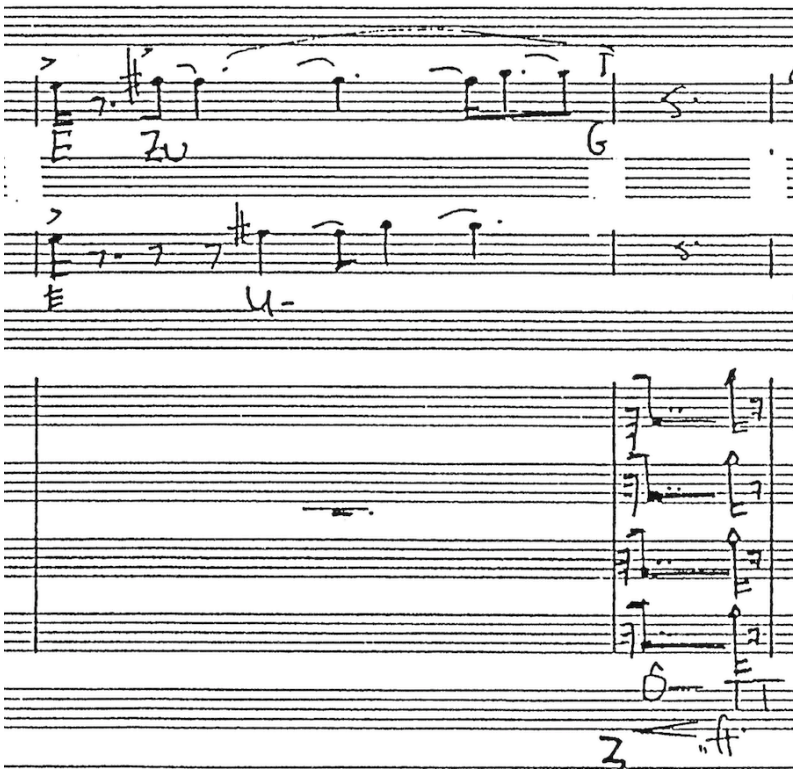
crumble into fragments; vocal phrases become shorter and more isolated, emerging seamlessly into a texture grounded in the high strings' perpetual F#. Lachenmann characterizes this texture as "pedalled interval sounds, utopian expanses of reverberation."[49] Gradually, both voices and instruments are overcome by distorting articulations such as flutter-tonguing and sustained consonant sounds; for instance, the F# pedal is replaced by a continual "F" fricative blown through the wind instruments.

The celestial choir appears at four other significant moments throughout the opera, always associated with emotional and physical warmth. It makes its next three entrances when the girl lights her matches in order to stay warm. The first two enact a trajectory from warmth to frigidity similar to that in the "Trio und Reprise." The quiet scratch of the first match produces ripple effects, as waves of sound swell again and again, becoming increasingly powerful with each gesture. A sustained "ch" sound in the voices grows into a rolled cymbal, which develops into brass swells that are eventually accompanied by male voices, and then, finally, the female voices enter. The match goes out, and the music likewise subsides, leaving only the echoing resonance of sustained strings as they move toward a "toneless" sound that blends with the dry rubbing of Styrofoam throughout the ensemble.

When the girl lights her second match, she is transported into an idyllic Christmas scene featuring a toy shop and an enormous tree. The celestial choir returns once again with wordless sustained tones. The girl fantasizes about her Grand Mother, and "sings—or 'sings'—as the 'evening blessing' what she had once told her: '*When a star falls from the sky, a soul ascends to God.*'"[50] In fact, it is the celestial choir that actually enunciates these words, slowly and carefully. At the same time, it enacts the soul's ascent through ascending pitch—yet another

[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.

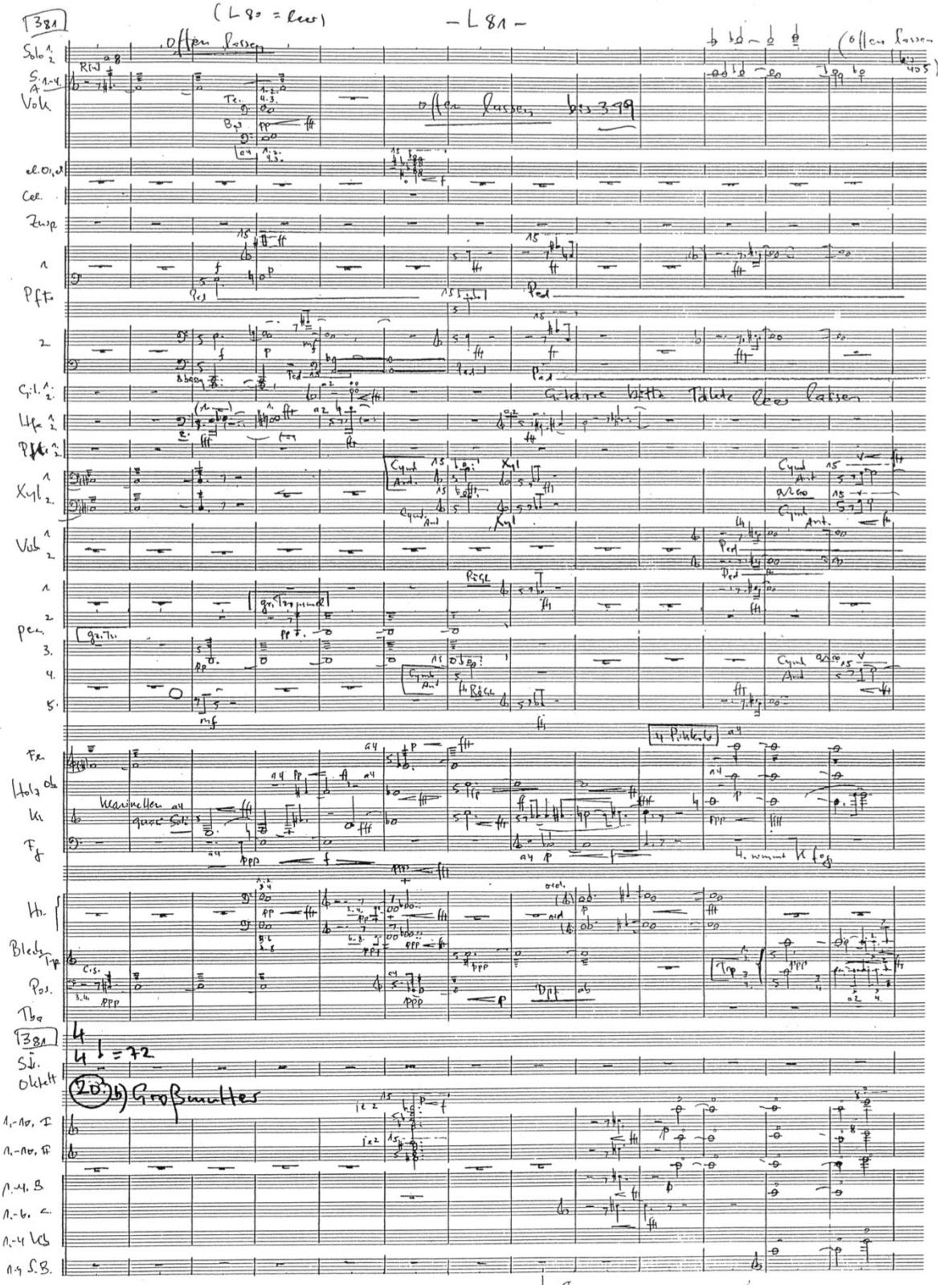
moment of text-painting. The section culminates when the celestial choir achieves and sustains a high unison G on the word "Gott" (**Example 5-12**).



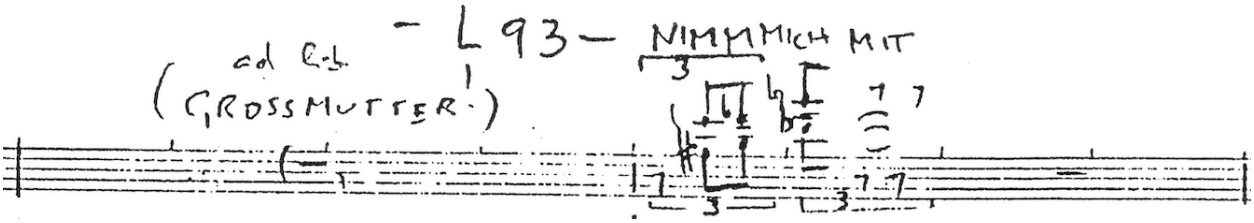
Example 5-12: Lachenmann, *Das Mädchen*, "Abendsegen," mm. 386-87, vocal lines. In m. 387, the sopranos arrive at the word "Gott" on a high G.

When the girl lights her third and final match, these reverberant landscapes are finally allowed to burst into being rather than to fade away, to apotheosize along with the girl. The scratching sound of ignition is extended and stylized compared to the earlier matches—Lachenmann represents it by overlaying a myriad of skittering gestures including glissandi on the harp, xylophone and piano interior. A whisper of pitch suggests the approach of the Grand Mother, but her arrival is still a surprise. As she appears, "her giant contours [are] sketched in one voice by the orchestra as quasi pedalled unisono line:" yet another "utopian expanse of reverberation" (**Example 5-13**).

The Grand Mother's entrance is enormous, imposing, and resonant; bass-heavy triadic chords doubled across a range of instruments change at the pace of a slow march. The homophonic, sustained, and richly toned orchestration of this section brings to mind a massive, potent voice. After the seven measures shown in **Example 5-13**, the celestial choir makes a triumphant return, demonstrating the Grand Mother's otherworldliness even as the chords below continue to reinforce her power. The girl, after experiencing considerable inner turmoil illustrated by the roiling gestures of the ensemble, utters a plea: "Grandmother! Take me with you!" (**Example 5-14**).



Example 5-13: Lachenmann, *Das Mädchen*, "Großmutter," mm. 383-90. A "utopian expanse of reverberation"



Example 5-14: Lachenmann, *Das Mädchen*, "Nimm mich mit!," mm. 448-9, vocal soloists

The Grand Mother enfolds the girl in her arms and takes her up to heaven, wherein the celestial choir is transmuted, or perhaps transubstantiated, into the sound of the Shō—a traditional Japanese instrument that Lachenmann deems a "medium of transcendence."[51] Lachenmann has certainly opened himself to accusations of musical tourism with his use of the Shō as portal to another world, but it does blend seamlessly with the soundscape of *Das Mädchen*. It is in roughly the same range as the female voices, and its intervallic language is consistent with the vocal harmonies in the piece. As opposed to the voices that always seem to be in a state of formation or decay, though, it is placid—any changes in dynamics or pitch happen in a slow and measured fashion. Its timbre is full of tone but also eerily pure, stripped of its grain. The Shō is the ultimate instantiation of the resonant sounds that have signified warmth, comfort and love in *Das Mädchen*—a purification of the celestial choir that has appeared at moments of consolation and contentment throughout the work.

Although Lachenmann occasionally used mimetic sounds in works before *Das Mädchen* (for instance, *temA* features the sound of snoring) it was never in the service of a larger dramatic narrative. In fact, the use of Lachenmann's familiar soundscape to represent negative affect seems to directly contradict, and even undermine, his *musique concrète instrumentale* aesthetic. In 1976, he wrote an article discussing the category of "beautiful" in contemporary music. He

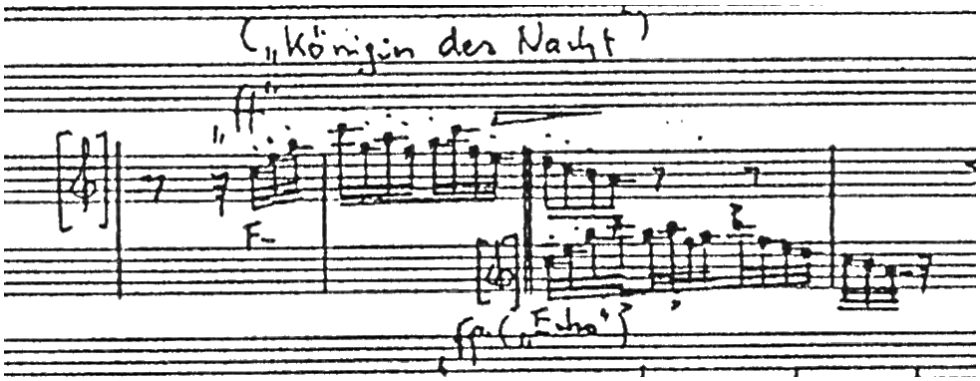
[51] Ibid.

summarizes two positions on the musically beautiful before advocating for a third. The first is represented by 1950s Boulez, who eschewed beauty as a consideration altogether in favor of "a world centered on the organization of sound material."[52] The second is a regressive definition of beauty that associates it with the "comfortable and familiar,"[53] i.e. the phenomenal—it is most often seen in the continual presence of tonality and its reemergence under various banners of modernism. In contrast to both of these definitions, Lachenmann wants to see beauty as a reflection of reality and a commitment to make it better through this recognition: "The experience of the Beautiful is indissolubly connected with making perceptible the social contradictions in our reality; because to make them perceptible is to make them surmountable."[54] This is what the extended techniques of *musique concrète instrumentale* were meant to accomplish—they were meant to liberate sounds from conventional playing styles, from what Nono taught him was "tonal" in a broader definition. Rather than representing a new kind of beauty, "noise" in *Das Mädchen* is now drawn back into association with a reality that is mundane at best and miserable at worst and full tone is conversely associated with all that is good. In this respect, the opera takes a step in a direction continued by *GOT LOST*.

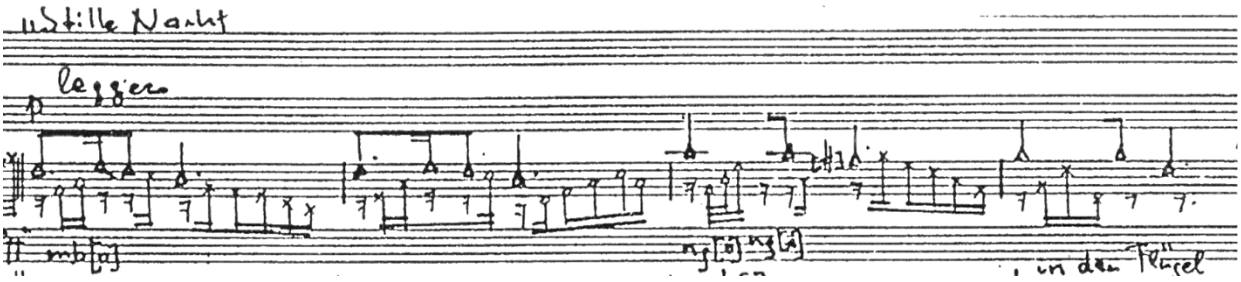
MELODY. Lachenmann's evocation of full-throated tone in the preceding passages represents a stylistic departure, but in at least two sections of the opera he treats pre-existent melodies in ways familiar from his works from the 70s and 80s. The first occurs shortly after the celestial choir's first appearance (and disappearance) in the "Trio und Reprise." When the girl loses hold of her mother's memory, she attempts to distract herself through two familiar songs that Lachenmann most likely associates with bourgeois culture: Mozart's "Queen of the Night" aria from Act I of *The Magic Flute* has become a chestnut of the Western Classical tradition, and

[52] Helmut Lachenmann, "The 'Beautiful' in Music Today," *Tempo*, 1980, 20.
[53] Ibid., 21.
[54] Ibid., 23.

"Stille Nacht" is sung around Christmas trees in homes across the world. The girl's attempts to own these songs, to participate in their warm associations, are minimally successful as both are brought into the frigid sonic landscape of the piece. The rhythms of the songs survive, but their timbre is taken out of the realm of the voice, reduced to rustles and taps. A few measures from Mozart's aria are repeated, but whispered rather than sung (**Example 5-15**); "Stille Nacht" is performed in tongue clicks and truncated before the final phrase (**Example 5-16**).



Example 5-15: Lachenmann, *Das Mädchen*, mm. 298-301, voices 1-2. "Queen of the Night" quotation

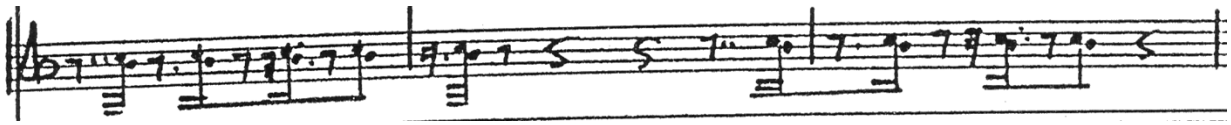


Example 5-16: Lachenmann, *Das Mädchen*, mm. 400-403, voice 1. "Stille Nacht" quotation

The second instance of hollowed-out melodies in *Das Mädchen* occurs during and after the unhurried transition back to "the cold morning hour" at the very end of the opera. The girl's soul has joined her Grand Mother in heaven, but the action of the opera returns gradually to her body, which continues to lie in the street. It is almost as though Lachenmann attempts to do the

equivalent of unringing the bell, as though the long scratching sounds that enter toward the end of the penultimate movement were the ignition of a match in reverse. Eventually, the Shō breathes its last, to be replaced by a "solemnly dance-like *terzet* of smothered, beaten ghost melodies on the pianos, quasi-cantabile breathy trumpet in pedal-tone range, and spacious, swinging, wiping movements in the strings with bow stick applied on top of the string."[55]

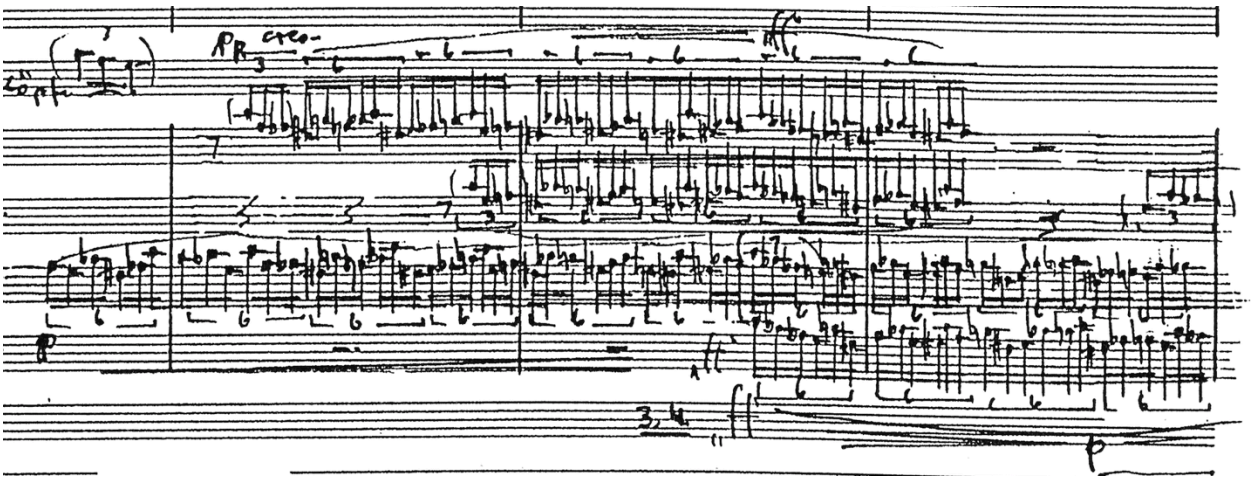
Once again, Lachenmann evacuates pitch from these quasi-melodic gestures. The piano's "smothered, beaten ghost melodies" take the form of rhythmic knocking on the side of the piano (**Example 5-17**), and the trumpets play passages that are as virtuosic as they are husky and quiet (**Example 5-18**). The opera's ending is hushed and reverent while maintaining the fragmented and noisy textures associated with frigidity; along with the girl's body, the audience is left in the cold.[56]



Example 5-17: Lachenmann, *Das Mädchen*, mm. 640-42, piano 2

[55] Keusch et al., *Das Mädchen Mit Den Schwefelhölzern: Musik in Bildern*. Translation my own: "feierlich-tänzerisches Terzett aus erstickt geschlagenen Geistermelodien der Klaviere, quasi cantabile gehauchten Trompeten im Pedaltonbereich und großräumig hin- und zurückschwingenden Wischbewegungen der Streicher mit auf der Saitenoberfläche aufgelegter Bogenstange."

[56] This kind of percussive gesture occurs at the end of many of Lachenmann's pieces, including the string quartets and …*Zwei Gefühle*….



Example 5-18: Lachenmann, *Das Mädchen*, mm. 662-65, trumpets

In *Das Mädchen*, melodies are presented as empty of warmth and tone. In each case, they manifest as an unfulfilled wish—either the girl's wish to find her mother, or, in the case of the ending, Lachemann's own wish to join the girl in an edenic place where one can sing freely.

THE SPEAKING SUBJECT. *Das Mädchen* has a clear protagonist, but her representation is less than straightforward. The matchstick girl's vocalic body is formed by a combination of two soprano soloists and sometimes the entire chorus, and during the first staging it included the image of a voiceless avatar onstage (**Figure 5-2**).[57] In addition, there is very little "dialogue" in the sense that in the rare cases where the text is comprehensible, it is almost never an oration. Instead, it is letters from Gudrun Ensslin or Leonardo da Vinci, or snippets from radios. The moments where a character uses her speaking voice directly are thus marked as extraordinary. One such moment has already been discussed: the matchstick girl's desperate entreaty to the Grand Mother (shown in **Example 5-14**), which answers Nono's phrase of "*addio mamma*" with "*Hallo Oma*."

[57] In the 2012 David Hermann production in Berlin, the two sopranos were actually onstage; in the 2013 Robert Wilson production, the orchestra, choir, and soprano soloists were placed around the stage and audience but the actress onstage performed the vocal part of *...Zwei Gefühle...* These are simply the performances I have seen—a more rigorous accounting of the opera's different stagings has yet to be undertaken.

Figure 5-2: *Das Mädchen*, first staging (1997)

Even before she lights her first match, however, there is a moment of birth—a bringing forth of the girl as a speaking subject—that occurs in the transition between the opera's two acts. At this point, the two female soloists that loosely represent the girl have not yet communicated

through the lips of the heroine, although they have been active since the first movement. This changes now as the girl "speaks" for the first time. Her first word is "ich!"—it is repeated five times in the course of 14 measures (mm. 706-719), amid a terrifying mélange of *tutti* chords:

> Strawinsky's dance finale out of SACRE DU PRINTEMPS ("Danse de l'élue"), Beethoven's CORIOLAN overture, Schoenberg's finale of ORCHESTRAL VARIATIONS op. 31, Boulez' beginning of PLI SELON PLI, the final A minor chord of Mahler's SIXTH, the *fff* chord of six notes in Alban Berg's WOZZECK and others: all these entries, unchanged yet still alienated beyond recognition by their removal from their original environs and their forcible vicinage and mutual confrontation.[58]

The birth of the girl's speaking voice is violent, an attempt to gain shape and substance in the midst of a perfect storm. Tone forces its way out of the texture in the *musique concrète instrumentale* pieces, and melody has its moment in the works in the 70s, but the extent to which Lachenmann has recreated the conditions of Liubka Shevzova's emergence in *Il canto sospeso* in a texture saturated with voice, tone, and melody is unprecedented. It is notable that this occurred after Nono's death: along with his protagonist, Lachenmann is finally able to go to an imaginary place where composing is easy, where he can write music with tone, melody and speaking subjects with impunity and without the weight of his principles and musical ethics; this escape is made possible by the limited lifespan of a match, the inevitable death of a flame that must follow its ignition.

GOT LOST

Given Lachenmann's well-known predilection for taking on reified genres such as operas and string quartets and his conflicted feelings about the singing voice, it seems that he has been on a collision course with the genre of Lied since the beginning of his career. *GOT LOST* (soprano and piano), Lachenmann's only attempt at a Lied thus far, was premiered in Munich in

[58] Ibid.

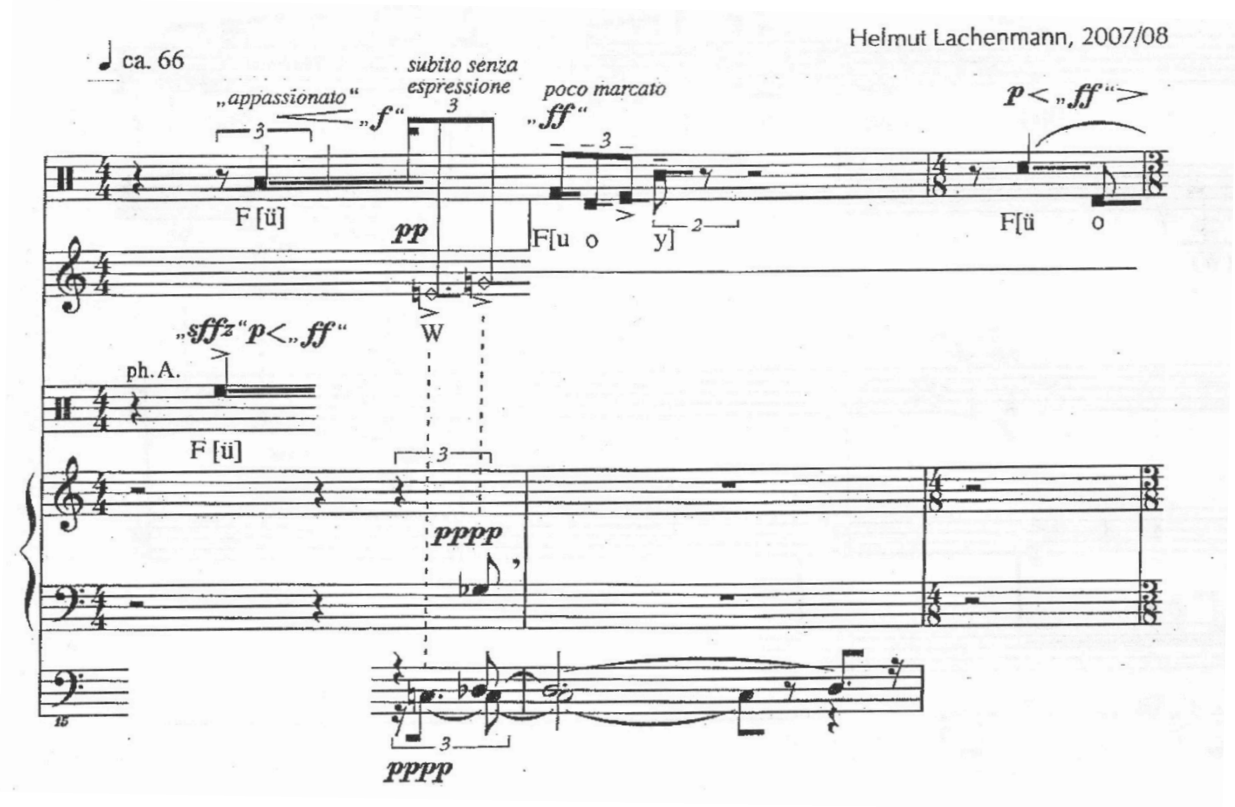
2007, although it had been in development since at least the time of *Das Mädchen mit den Schwefelhölzern* ten years earlier. In contrast to its careful framing in *Das Mädchen*, the singing voice is allowed free rein in *GOT LOST* such that the texture is absolutely saturated with song; the twenty-five minute piece is by far the most melodic in Lachenmann's oeuvre. Rather than oscillating between the singing voice and "noisier" sounds, the Lied incorporates both into a single texture—gone is the pretense of a dramatic moment of fantasy or escape to justify singing. Lachenmann's work commentary reflects the thaw in his attitude, displaying far less ambivalence about the voice than his earlier writings:

> *GOT LOST (Sarah's Song)* sets three apparently unrelated texts, stripped of the pathos, poetry and profanity of their diction and emanating from a single musical source: the soprano voice, which presents them in an almost casual traversal of constantly shifting fields of sound and movement, by turns playfully trilling, lamenting, calling, each replacing and interrupting the other, finally giving way to a kind of disorienting space in which the music itself binds the texts through a deadpan, transcendent declaration of self-conscious, self-reflective hilarity.[59]

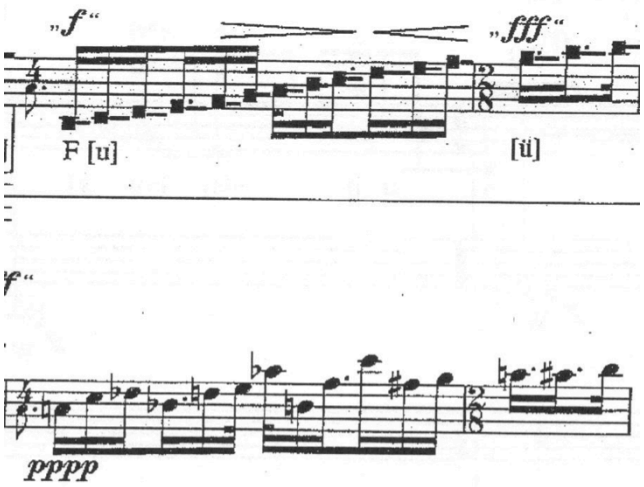
According to Lachenmann, the sound of the voice serves as a "single source," a fundamental tone from which the piece arises. He has often used vocalisms such as melody as a generative source, especially in his pieces from the seventies onward, but the normal barriers to legibility are not in place: the "voice" is not an instrument, tone is present in both piano and voice, and melodies of his own construction emerge as fully developed entities. All this is true of the opera as well, but *GOT LOST* lacks the dramatic framing of *Das Mädchen*: rather than being ghettoized into moments of escapism, the vocal elements of Lachenmann's *Lied* exist throughout, with no particular dramatic justification. Moreover, tone, melody and voice mutually support and reinforce one another. It would appear that Lachenmann has forged some kind of truce with the voice.

[59] "SICPP: Ives, Lachenmann," *New England Conservatory*, accessed October 2, 2015, http://necmusic.edu/sicpp-ives-lachenmann.

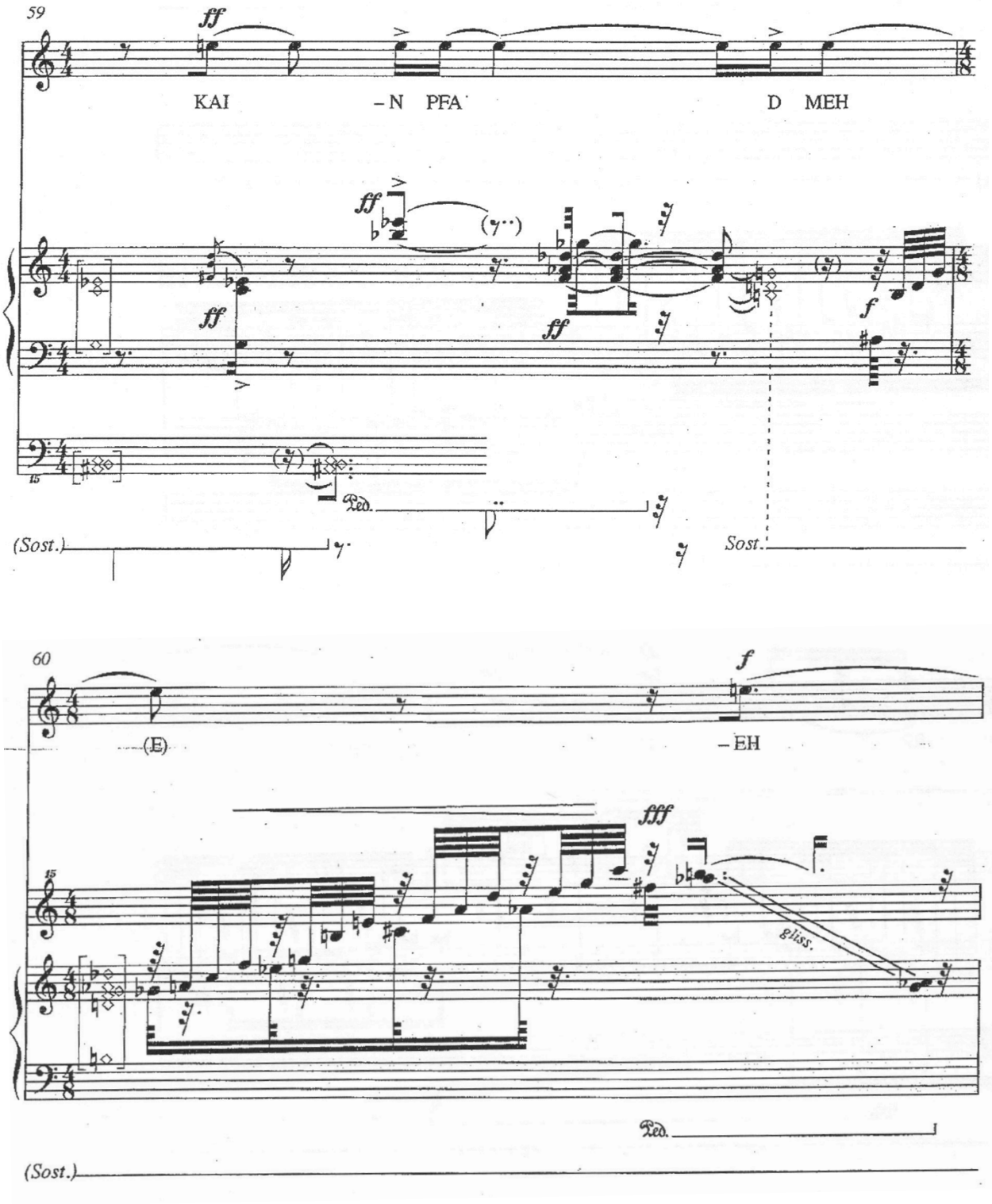
In the first three minutes, the vocalist utters only isolated phonemes in a texture similar to *temA*. This opening sequence also brings the beginnings of *Pression* and *dal niente* to mind in its careful introduction of pitched material amidst a sea of unpitched material. It begins with isolated phrases of one or two pitches on the German "v," awash in a sea of contoured breathing sounds (**Example 5-19**). As is the case in this short excerpt, almost all of the pitched events in the voice correspond with an attack in the piano. The piano also occasionally adds pitch to contoured breathing noises, as in **Example 5-20**. Over the course of the first 57 measures of the piece, the pitched material gradually becomes more expansive, coming to dominate the texture; Lachenmann introduces open-mouthed vowel sounds along the way. Pitched material in the voice continues to be accompanied by the piano—as the vocal lines become more sustained, the piano begins to fill the time with quick, nervous passagework. The melodic voice develops in tandem with the expressive voice; the singer begins to form the word "*kein*" slowly and painstakingly. Eventually, the first section of the piece culminates in a forceful statement, intoned at *fortissimo* on a single pitch: "*Kein Pfad mehr!*" (**Example 5-21**).



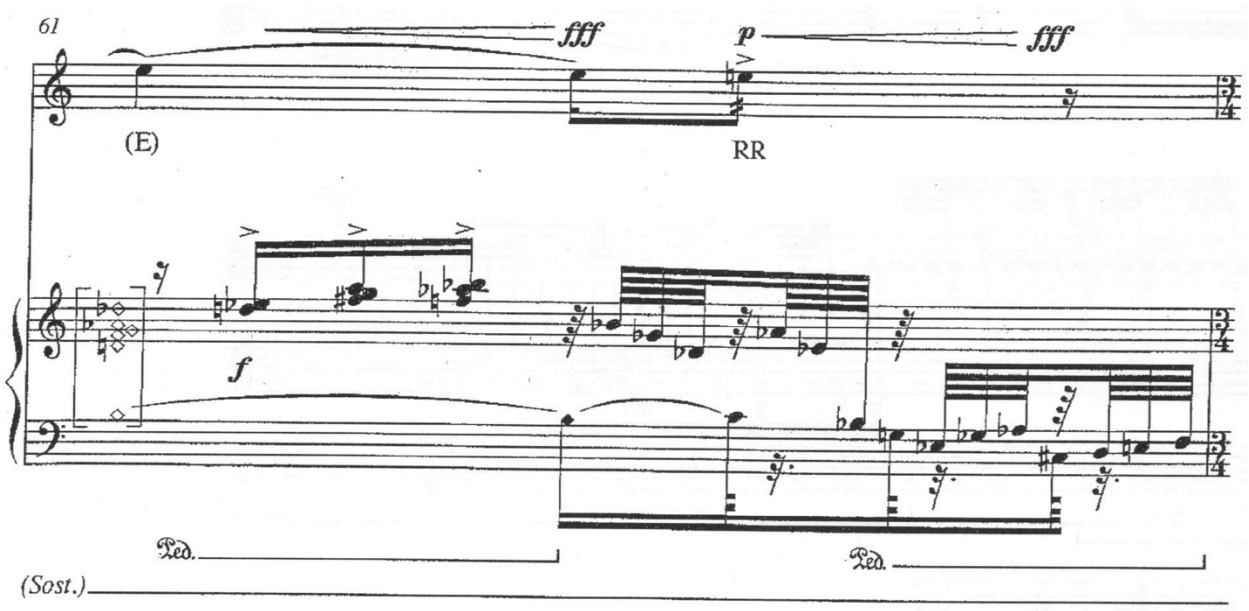
Example 5-19: Lachenmann, *GOT LOST*, mm. 1-3



Example 5-20: Lachenmann, *GOT LOST*, mm. 12-13



Example 5-21: Lachenmann, *GOT LOST*, mm. 59-61



Example 5-21 (continued)

This moment stands in marked contrast to the culmination of pitch development in the opening gestures of *dal niente* and *Pression*; even though the process is similar, the end result is a moment of catharsis, a speaking subject that explodes into being *through* tone. This particular quotation comes from an aphorism in Nietzsche's *The Gay Science*, and it exists alongside two other texts in *GOT LOST*: a poem by Álvaro de Campos, and a note that Lachenmann found in an elevator in 2002. **Table 5-3** shows the wonderfully absurd juxtaposition between Lachenmann's three texts.

27. Der Wandrer „Kein Pfad mehr! Abgrund rings und Totenstille!" – So wolltest du's! Vom Pfade wich dein Wille! Nun, Wandrer, gilt's! Nun blicke kalt und klar! Verloren bist du, glaubst du – an Gefahr. (from Friedrich Nietzsche: *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, 1882)	27. The Wanderer "No more path! An abyss all around and dead silence!" You wanted it this way! Your will swerved from the path! Now, wanderer, it counts! Now look coldly and clearly! You are lost, if you believe—in danger.

Table 5-3: Texts for *GOT LOST* with English translations

Todas as cartas de amor são Ridículas. Não seriam cartas de amor se não fossem Ridículas. Também escrevi em meu tempo cartas de amor, Como as outras, Ridículas. As cartas de amor, se há amor, Têm de ser Ridículas. Mas, afinal, Só as criaturas que nunca escreveram Cartas de amor É que são Ridículas. Quem me dera no tempo em que escrevia Sem dar por isso Cartas de amor Ridículas. A verdade é que hoje As minhas memórias Dessas cartas de amor É que são Ridículas (Todas as palavras esdrúxulas, Como os sentimentos esdrúxulas, São naturalmente Ridículas). Álvaro de Campos (alias: Fernando Pessoa) Ammann-Verlag, Zürich 1987	All love letters are Ridiculous. Would not be love letters if they were not Ridiculous. In my time I also wrote love letters, Like the others, Ridiculous. Love letters, if there is love, Must be Ridiculous. But, ultimately, Only creatures who have never written Love letters You are Ridiculous I wish that I had the time to write Without realizing it Love letters Ridiculous. The truth is that today My memories These love letters And you are Ridiculous (All the words bizarre, Such bizarre feelings They are naturally Ridiculous)

Table 5-3 (continued)

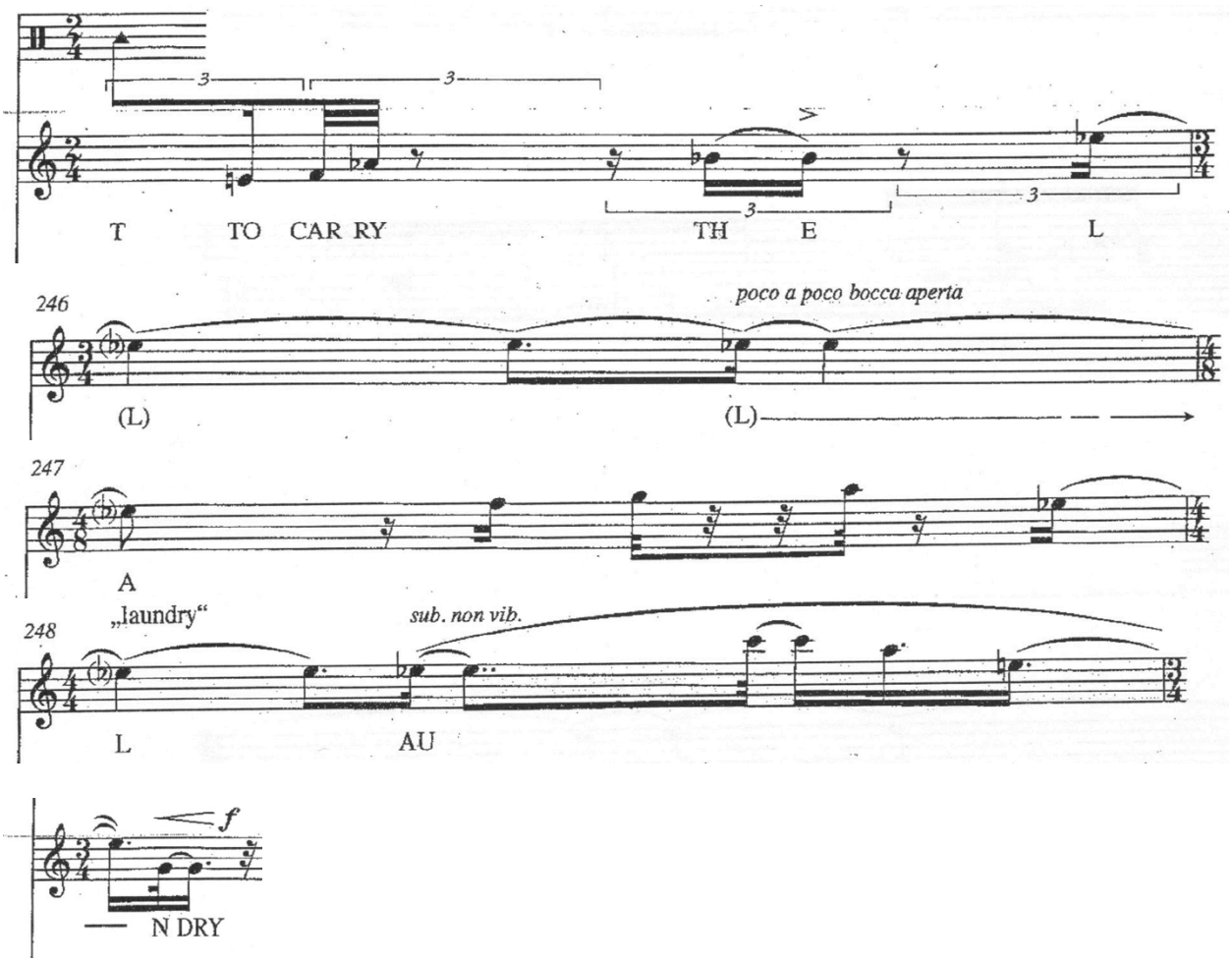
	Monday 4.3.2002 Today my laundry-basket got lost. It was last seen standing in front of the dryer. Since it is pretty difficult to carry the laundry without it, I'd be most happy to get it back. Margret Bail Tel 342

Table 5-3 (continued)

Lachenmann's text-setting suggests three speaking subjects that clamor for attention. Even the layout of the score, which often divides the voice part into two textually distinct staves, encourages this interpretation. Although he cycles through the voices throughout *GOT LOST*, each of the texts maintain strong identities—the Campos poem is almost entirely spoken, for instance, while the other two are mostly or entirely sung, and the English and Portuguese texts usually occur simultaneously while the Nietzsche is more likely to be presented alone. The Nietzsche text dominates; it is the sole text present in the first ten minutes of the twenty-seven minute piece, and although the other two texts are more prevalent throughout the middle and end, Nietzsche returns for the last word ('*Gefahr*'). The phrase "*Kein Pfad mehr*" is uttered three times throughout the piece, and each iteration is sung slowly and emphatically in a tight pitch range. The recurring motive of a loud repeated note on this phrase renders the statement vehement—rather than being alienated from her voice, rather than feeling blindly for language, the singing subject uses it in conventionalized ways to express and communicate. Like the outburst of "ICH" in *Das Mädchen*, the moment of the Nietzsche-text's emergence treads the same ground as the construction of Liubka Shevzova in *Il canto sospeso*. In all three cases, a single voice emerges in a hopeless situation: a death sentence, a crushing jumble of

compositional voices, a world in which no path exists. *GOT LOST*, however, contains the most legible subjects in Lachenmann's oeuvre—they speak, they sing, and they maintain a consistent presence until the end of the piece.

The persona of Lachenmann's basket-seeker is markedly different than that of his Nietzsche persona. The word "laundry" is drawn out across a series of wistful leaps that dramatize the somewhat banal situation, as in **Example 5-22**. Here, then, is melody—but a melody that Lachenmann himself wrote. It's unclear whether it is meant to make the bourgeois listener confront herself, and it's unclear whether the ability to write such melodies came about as a result of self-confrontation—a denial of Lachenmann's longstanding denial of melody—or through a loosening of compositional mandates, a self-administered bit of freedom to do what was easy.



Example 5-22: Lachenmann, *GOT LOST*, mm. 245-49, voice

Lachenmann's commentary for this piece, quoted above, attempts to effect a move similar to that of his commentary for *temA*, *Salut*, and *…Zwei Gefühle…* in claiming that the texts are "stripped of the pathos, poetry and profanity of their diction." But his admission of the singing voice, his attention to prosody, his development of distinct characters that sing throughout *GOT LOST* marks it as a work operating by a radically different ethical code. More so than any of Lachenmann's other pieces, the voices of his *Lied* retain traces of "the traditional 'big' expressive tone, the gesture full of pathos, lyricism, drama and emotion" that he described as Nono's legacy.

Singing, modernity, modernism

Like the reception of *Il canto sospeso*, the critical reaction to *GOT LOST*'s newly found lyricism ranged from adulatory to confused to disdainful. Several commentators make note of Lachenmann's unusual treatment of the voice: for instance, the description of the piece for a 2011 performance at the *Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart* calls it "a rare homage to the human voice [by] the composer of *Das Mädchen mit den Schwefelhölzern*."[60] Almost inevitably, however, another reviewer, Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf, criticized what he saw as old-fashioned tendencies:

> I admit that the recently premiered work by Helmut Lachenmann, *Got Lost* for voice and piano, was simply disappointing for me: three times too long in relation to the idea developed, conservative in approach - a hampered piano melodrama - and especially a relapse into an old avant-garde tone of the 1960s, when someone wanted to give an introduction to non-conventional, namely avant-garde composition, as if an unintended pedagogy. Lachenmann fell into his own trap: The style turns into Mannerism, a category of which he so often criticized the opposite side, complexity; and his tendency to be overly long. If this piece were to last perhaps 7 or 8 minutes (instead of over 20), it would be at least a small but focused affair.[61]

Mahnkopf's accusation of conservatism on the grounds of the piece being a "hampered piano melodrama" seems somewhat contradictory in light of the foregoing discussion; after all, according to Lachenmann many of his pieces constitute just that. Perhaps the complaint is actually that the melodrama isn't hampered enough, that subjectivity and melody are given too

[60] "Mit Got Lost von Helmut Lachenmann schrieb der Komponist von *Das Mädchen mit den Schwefelhölzer* eine seltene Hommage an die menschliche Stimme." http://www.wkv-stuttgart.de/?id=1426, accessed 8/22/13.
[61] Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf, "Helmut Lachenmann: 'Concertini,'" *Musik-Konzepte* 146 (July 2009): 46–59. "So gebe ich zu, dass das jüngst uraufgeführte Werk von Helmut Lachenmann, *Got Lost* für Stimme und Klavier, für mich einfach nur enttäuschend war: dreimal zu lang im Verhältnis zur entfalteten Idee, konservativ im Ansatz – ein verhindertes Klaviermelodram – und vor allem ein Rückfall in einen altavantgardistischen Tonfall der 1960er Jahre, als wolle jemand eine Einführung in nicht-konventionelles, eben avantgardistisches Komponieren geben, gleichsam eine unfreiwillige Pädagogik. Lachenmann tappte in seine eigene Falle: Der Stil schlägt um in Manierismus, eine Kategorie, die er so häufig der Gegenseite, dem Komplexismus, vorhielt; und sein Hang, in Länge auszuarten. Wäre dieses Stück vielleicht 7 oder 8 Minuten (statt der über 20) lang geworden, es wäre immerhin eine kleine, aber konzentrierte Angelegenheit."

much liberty. For this critic, as well as an earlier version of Lachenmann, the die is cast when the expressive and melodic voices coalesce in m. 50—the subject emerges, and the piece is relegated to the inferior status of a melodrama, of a composer's indulgence. And when Lachenmann indulges in this way, he loses his modernist credibility among accusations of conservatism and relapse.

Lachenmann's approach to the voice differs from that of the other composers in this dissertation. Sciarrino, Reich, and Xenakis all take on the voice as a problem that is, in a certain sense, solvable. They are able to arrive at a mode or modes of vocality that revivify the voice's mystery and singularity: Sciarrino's distinctive prosody and extended techniques; Reich's speaking voices, "instrumentalized" voices, and cantillation melodies; Xenakis's mass textures that move as one. Lachenmann, however, never credits himself as having found a solution. He seems to feel the loss of the voice as an irrevocable one: to settle for a Rousseauian metaphysics of the voice, to continue to use it as a marker of humanity that is both unique and fundamentally unknowable, is to ignore the brutality of reality. His refusal to settle on an acceptable mode of vocality might bring him the closest to Adorno's idea of a *musique informelle*, and it might even bring him closer to the noumenal. Through a strategy of negativity and prohibition, he cultivates a rocky, uncertain terrain with no clear path—themes that resonate with the texts of both *…Zwei Gefühle…* and *GOT LOST*. Lachenmann wears the freedom of not having a clear path as a burden, a burden with certain risks. As Nietzsche's aphorism teaches us, when you swerve from the path, you are lost and in danger: in this case, the danger is the admission of the very thing Lachenmann most desires.

Works Cited

Abbate, Carolyn. *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Adorno, Theodor W. *Philosophy of New Music*. Translated by Robert Hullot-Kentor. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.

———. "*Vers une musique informelle*." In *Quasi una fantasia: Essays on Modern Music*, 269–322. Verso, 1998.

Albright, Daniel. *Modernism and Music: An Anthology of Sources*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.

Anderton, Craig. "Auto-Tune: The Controversy That Will Not Die." *Pro Sound News* 37, no. 2 (February 2015): 29–29.

Anhalt, Istvan. *Alternative Voices: Essays on Contemporary Vocal and Choral Composition*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984.

Bailey, Kathryn. "'Work in Progress': Analysing Nono's 'Il Canto Sospeso.'" *Music Analysis* 11, no. 2/3 (July 1, 1992): 279–334.

Balibar, Etienne, and James Swenson. "Structuralism: A Destitution of the Subject?" *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, no. 1 (2003): 1.

Barthes, Roland. "The Grain of the Voice." In *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation*, 179–89. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

Beirens, Maarten. "Voices, Violence and Meaning: Transformations of Speech Samples in Works by David Byrne, Brian Eno and Steve Reich." *Contemporary Music Review* 33, no. 2 (March 4, 2014): 210–22.

Berio, Luciano, Rossana Dalmonte, and Bálint András Varga. *Two Interviews*. Translated by David Osmond-Smith. New York: Marion Boyars Publishers Ltd, 1985.

Beyer, Anders. *The Voice of Music: Conversation with Composers of Our Time*. Edited by Jean Christensen. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000.

Björk. *Medúlla*. CD. USA: Warner Bros. Records, 2004.

Bloch, Ernst. "Magic Rattle, Human Harp." In *Essays on the Philosophy of Music*, translated by Peter Palmer, 140–45. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Bonds, Mark Evan. *Music as Thought: Listening to the Symphony in the Age of Beethoven*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.

Borio, Gianmario. “Music as Plea for Political Action: The Presence of Musicians in Italian Protest Movements around 1968.” In *Music & Protest in 1968*, edited by Beate Kutschke and Barley Norton, 29–45. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

———. “Round Table: Modernism and Its Others.” Edited by Laura Tunbridge. *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 139, no. 1 (January 2, 2014): 177–204.

Borio, Gianmario, and Hermann Danuser, eds. *Im Zenit Der Moderne: Die Internationalen Ferienkurse Für Neue Musik Darmstadt 1946-1966*. Freiburg: Rombach, 1997.

Boulez, Pierre. *Boulez on Music Today*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971.

Brody, Martin. “‘Music for the Masses’: Milton Babbitt’s Cold War Music Theory.” *The Musical Quarterly* 77, no. 2 (Summer 1993): 161–92.

Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex.”* New York: Routledge, 1993.

———. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990.

———. “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory.” *Theatre Journal* 40, no. 4 (1988): 519–31.

Butt, John. “Choral Music.” In *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music*, edited by Jim Samson, 213–36. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Cage, John. *Silence: Lectures and Writings*. Middletown CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1961.

Carroll, Mark. *Music and Ideology in Cold War Europe*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Castoriadis, Cornelius. *The Imaginary Institution of Society*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987.

Caudwell, Christopher. *Illusion and Reality: A Study of the Sources of Poetry*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1946.

Charlton, David. *Opera in the Age of Rousseau: Music, Confrontation, Realism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Chion, Michel. *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

———. *The Voice in Cinema*. Translated by Claudia Gorbman. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.

Cole, Ross. “‘Fun, Yes, but Music?’ Steve Reich and the San Francisco Bay Area’s Cultural Nexus, 1962–65.” *Journal of the Society for American Music* 6, no. 03 (August 2012): 315–48.

———. "'Sound Effects (O.K., Music)': Steve Reich and the Visual Arts in New York City, 1966–1968." *Twentieth-Century Music* 11, no. 02 (September 2014): 217–44.

Cone, Edward T. *The Composer's Voice*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974.

Connor, Steven. *Beyond Words: Sobs, Hums, Stutters and Other Vocalizations*. London: Reaktion Books, 2014.

———. *Dumbstruck: A Cultural History of Ventriloquism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Cooper, Sharon, Sonia Turchetta, Per Vollestad, Carsten Stabell, Alvise Vidolin, Paolo Zavagna, and Carmen Maria Carnecci. *Perseo e Andromeda*. Milano: BMG Ricordi, 2000.

Cross, Jonathan. "Paradise Lost: Neoclassicism and the Melancholia of Modernism." In *Rethinking Musical Modernism*, edited by Dejan Despić and Melita Milin, 55–64. Institute of Musicology, 2008.

Decroupet, Pascal, Elena Ungeheuer, and Jerome Kohl. "Through the Sensory Looking-Glass: The Aesthetic and Serial Foundations of Gesang Der Jünglinge." *Perspectives of New Music* 36, no. 1 (1998): 97–142.

Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology*. Translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.

Deutsch, Diana, Trevor Henthorn, and Rachel Lapidis. "Illusory Transformation from Speech to Song." *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* 129, no. 4 (2011): 2245–52.

Dolar, Mladen. *A Voice and Nothing More*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2006.

———. "The Burrow of Sound." *Differences* 22, no. 2–3 (January 1, 2011): 112–39.

Earle, Ben. *Luigi Dallapiccola and Musical Modernism in Fascist Italy*. Music since 1900. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Eidsheim, Nina Sun. "Voice as a Technology of Selfhood: Towards an Analysis of Racialized Timbre and Vocal Performance." Doctor of Philosophy in Music, University of California, San Diego, 2008.

———. "Voice as a Technology of Selfhood: Towards an Analysis of Racialized Timbre and Vocal Performance." Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, San Diego, 2008.

Etheridge, Melissa. "Screw You, Auto-Tune." *Billboard* 126, no. 32 (October 4, 2014): 13–13.

Fink, Robert. "(Post-)minimalisms 1970–2000: The Search for a New Mainstream." In *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music*, edited by Nicholas Cook and Anthony Pople, 539–56. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

———. *Repeating Ourselves: American Minimal Music as Cultural Practice*. 1st ed. University of California Press, 2005.

Flatley, Jonathan. *Affective Mapping: Melancholia and the Politics of Modernism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008.

Foucault, Michel. *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76*. Edited by Mauro Bertani, Alessandro Fontana, and François Ewald. Translated by David Macey. 1st ed. New York: Picador, 2003.

Fox, Christopher. "Luigi Nono and the Darmstadt School: Form and Meaning in the Early Works (1950-1959)." *Contemporary Music Review* 18, no. 2 (1999): 111–30.

———. "Music after Zero Hour." *Contemporary Music Review* 26, no. 1 (February 2007): 5–24.

Gann, Kyle. "A Technically Definable Stream of Postminimalism, Its Characteristics and Its Meaning." In *The Ashgate Research Companion to Minimalist and Postminimalist Music*, edited by Keith Potter, Kyle Gann, and Pwyll ap Siôn, 39–60. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013.

Gaonkar, Dilip Parameshwar. "Toward New Imaginaries: An Introduction." *Public Culture* 14, no. 1 (December 21, 2002): 1–19.

Gibson, Benoît. *The Instrumental Music of Iannis Xenakis: Theory, Practice, Self-Borrowing*. Iannis Xenakis Series. Hillsdale, New York: Pendragon Press, 2011.

Goehr, Lydia. "The Quest for Voice." In *The Quest for Voice: On Music, Politics, and the Limits of Philosophy*, 88–131. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

Gopinath, Sumanth. "Reich in Blackface: *Oh Dem Watermelons* and Radical Minstrelsy in the 1960s." *Journal of the Society for American Music* 5, no. 2 (2011): 139–93.

———. "The Problem of the Political in Steve Reich's *Come Out* (1966)." In *Sound Commitments: Avant-Garde Music and the Sixties*, edited by Robert Adlington, 121–44. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Grant, M. J. *Serial Music, Serial Aesthetics: Compositional Theory in Post-War Europe*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Hanson, Josef. "German National Song in the Third Reich: A Tale of Two Anthems." *Music and Politics* 7, no. 1 (Winter 2013).

Harkness, Nicholas. *Songs of Seoul: An Ethnography of Voice and Voicing in Christian South Korea*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014.

Harley, James. *Xenakis: His Life in Music*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Harley, Maria Anna. “Space and Spatialization in Contemporary Music: History and Analysis, Ideas and Implementations.” Ph.D. Dissertation, McGill University, School of Music, 1994.

Hewett, Ivan. “Music Beyond Time.” In *Iannis Xenakis: Composer, Architect, Visionary*, edited by Sharon E. Kanach and Carey Lovelace, 88:16–33. New York: Drawing Center, 2010.

Iddon, Martin. “Darmstadt Schools: Darmstadt as a Plural Phenomenon.” *Tempo* 65, no. 256 (04/01/2011 2011): 2–8.

———. *New Music at Darmstadt: Nono, Stockhausen, Cage, and Boulez*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Idelsohn, Abraham Zebi. *Jewish Music: Its Historical Development*. Courier Dover Publications, 1929.

Iverson, Jennifer. “Statistical Form amongst the Darmstadt School.” *Music Analysis* 33, no. 3 (October 1, 2014): 341–87.

Kanach, Sharon E., ed. *Performing Xenakis*. Vol. 2. Iannis Xenakis Series. Hillsdale, New York: Pendragon Press, 2010.

Kane, Brian. “Eight Theses on Sound and Transcendence.” *Non-Cochlear Sound*, 2010. http://noncochlearsound.com/?page_id=202.

———. “Iannis Xenakis: The First Composer of Biopolitics?” In *Xenakis Matters: Contexts, Processes, Applications*, edited by Sharon E Kanach, 91–99. Hillsdale, N.Y.: Pendragon Press, 2012.

———. *Sound Unseen: Acousmatic Sound in Theory and Practice*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Keil, Charles. “Participatory Discrepancies and the Power of Music.” *Cultural Anthropology* 2, no. 3 (August 1, 1987): 275–83.

Keusch, Elizabeth, Sarah Leonard, Salome Kammer, Mayumi Miyata, Yukiko Sugawara, Tomoko Hemmi, Lothar Zagrosek, Staatsopernchor Stuttgart, Staatsorchester Stuttgart, and Staatsoper Stuttgart. *Das Mädchen Mit Den Schwefelhölzern: Musik in Bildern*. Vienna, Austria: Kairos, 2002.

Kim-Cohen, Seth. “Sound Today (Is No Longer a Function of the Ear).” *Non-Cochlear Sound*. Accessed May 5, 2012. http://noncochlearsound.com/?page_id=101.

Klangforum Wien with Beat Furrer (conductor), Anette Stricker (soprano), Otto Katzameier (bass baritone), Kai Wessel (countertenor), and Simon Jaunin (baritone). *Luci Mie Traditrici*. Compact disc. Kairos, 2001.

Kundera, Milan. “Postface: Total Rejection of Inheritance Or, Who Is Iannis Xenakis?” In *Performing Xenakis*, edited by Sharon E. Kanach, 2:391–94. Iannis Xenakis Series. Hillsdale, New York: Pendragon Press, 2010.

———. *Testaments Betrayed: An Essay in Nine Parts*. 1st ed. New York: Harper Collins, 1995.

LaBelle, Brandon. *Background Noise: Perspectives on Sound Art*. 2nd edition. New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015.

Lachenmann, Helmut. “Hören ist wehrlos - ohne Hören: Über Möglichkeiten und Schwierigkeiten.” In *Musik als existentielle Erfahrung: Schriften 1966-1995*, edited by Josef Häusler, 116–35. Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1996.

———. “The ‘Beautiful’ in Music Today.” *Tempo*, 1980.

———. “Touched by Nono.” *Contemporary Music Review* 18, no. 1 (1999): 17–30.

———. “Über das Komponieren.” In *Musik als existentielle Erfahrung: Schriften 1966-1995*, edited by Josef Häusler, 73–82. Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1996.

———. “Werkkommentare.” In *Musik als existentielle Erfahrung: Schriften 1966-1995*, edited by Josef Häusler, 367–403. Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1996.

———. “Zur Analyse Neuer Musik.” In *Musik als existentielle Erfahrung: Schriften 1966-1995*, edited by Josef Häusler, 21–34. Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1996.

“Lachenmann: ‘... Zwei Gefuehle ...’ · Breitkopf & Härtel.” Accessed October 2, 2015. https://www.breitkopf.com/work/3849/zwei-gefuehle.

Lagaay, Alice. “Between Sound and Silence: Voice in the History of Psychoanalysis.” *Episteme* 1, no. 1 (2008): 53–62.

LeBlanc, Jimmie. “Xenakis’ Aesthetic Project: The Paradoxes of a Formalist Intuition.” In *Xenakis Matters: Contexts, Processes, Applications*, edited by Sharon E Kanach, 59–80. Hillsdale, N.Y.: Pendragon Press, 2012.

Levenson, Michael H. *Modernism*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011.

———. , ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Levitz, Tamara. *Modernist Mysteries: Perséphone*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Lindenberger, Herbert. *Situating Opera: Period, Genre, Reception*. Cambridge Studies in Opera. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Losada, C. Catherine. “Complex Multiplication, Structure, and Process: Harmony and Form in Boulez’s Structures II.” *Music Theory Spectrum* 36, no. 1 (June 2014): 86.

Maconie, Robin. *Other Planets: The Music of Karlheinz Stockhausen*. Lantham: Scarecrow Press, 2005.

Mahnkopf, Claus-Steffen. "Helmut Lachenmann: 'Concertini.'" *Musik-Konzepte* 146 (July 2009): 46–59.

Manahan, George, Pamela Wood, Cheryl Bensman, Rebecca Armstrong, Jay Clayton, and Steve Reich and Musicians. *Tehillim*. München: ECM Records, 1982.

Mandolini, Ricardo. "Boulez-Xenakis: La conjonction des utopies." In *Présences de Iannis Xenakis*, edited by Makis Solomos, 67–70. Paris: Centre de documentation de la musique contemporaine, 2001.

Maniates, Maria Rika. *Mannerism in Italian Music and Culture, 1530-1630*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979.

Mansfield, Nick. *Subjectivity: Theories of the Self from Freud to Haraway*. New York: New York University Press, 2000.

Mao, Douglas, and Rebecca L. Walkowitz, eds. *Bad Modernisms*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

Matossian, Nouritza. *Xenakis*. 2nd ed. Lefkosia, Cyprus: Moufflon Publications, 2005.

Maus, Fred Everett, Marion A. Guck, Charles Fisk, Fred Everett Maus, James Webster, Alicyn Warren, and Edward T. Cone. "Edward T. Cone's 'The Composer's Voice': Elaborations and Departures." *College Music Symposium* 29 (1989): 1–80.

Mellinger, Melise, and Salvatore Sciarrino. *La lontananza nostalgica utopica futura*. Vienna: Kairos, 2000.

Metzer, David. "Modern Silence." *The Journal of Musicology* 23, no. 3 (Spring 2006): 331–74.

———. *Musical Modernism at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

———. "The Paths from and to Abstraction in Stockhausen's Gesang Der Jünglinge." *Modernism/Modernity* 11, no. 4 (November 2004): 695–721.

Mila, Massimo. "La linea Nono." *La Rassegna Musicale* 30 (1960): 297–311.

Minor, Ryan. *Choral Fantasies: Music, Festivity, and Nationhood in Nineteenth-Century Germany*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

More, Thomas. *Utopia*. Edited by George M. Logan and Robert M. Adams. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Nancy, Jean-Luc. *Listening*. Translated by Charlotte Mandell. New York: Fordham University Press, 2007.

Nielinger, Carola. "'The Song Unsung': Luigi Nono's 'Il Canto Sospeso.'" *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 131, no. 1 (January 1, 2006): 83–150.

Nonnenmann, Rainer. *Der Gang durch die Klippen: Helmut Lachenmanns Begegnung mit Luigi Nono anhand ihres Briefwechsels und anderer Quellen, 1957-1990*. Wiesbaden: Breitkopf et Härtel, 2013.

Nono, Luigi. *Luigi Nono: Texte, Studien Zu Seiner Musik*. Edited by Jürg Stenzl. Zürich: Atlantis, 1975.

Novak, Jelena. "Everything Is Available: A Conversation with Philip Glass." Translated by Tamara Rodwell-Jovanović. *New Sound: International Magazine for Music*, no. 14 (January 1, 1999): 17–22.

———. "From Minimalist Music to Postopera: Repetition, Representation and (Post)modernity in the Operas of Philip Glass and Louis Andriessen." In *The Ashgate Research Companion to Minimalist and Postminimalist Music*, edited by Keith Potter, Kyle Gann, and Pwyll ap Siôn, 129–40. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013.

———. "Singing Corporeality: Reinventing the Vocalic Body in Postopera." Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Amsterdam, 2012.

Osmond-Smith, David. "New Beginnings: The International Avant-Garde, 1945–62." In *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music*, edited by Nicholas Cook and Anthony Pople, 336–63. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Ossi, Massimo. *Divining the Oracle: Monteverdi's Seconda Prattica*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Paddison, Max. "Contemporary Music: Theory, Aesthetics, Critical Theory." In *Contemporary Music: Theoretical and Philosophical Perspectives*, edited by Irène Deliège and Max Paddison, 1–15. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009.

Parsons, Ben. "Sets and the City: Serial Analysis, Parisian Reception, and Pierre Boulez's Structures 1a." *Current Musicology*, Fall 2003, 53–79.

Pleasants, Henry. *The Agony of Modern Music*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1955.

Poizat, Michel. *The Angel's Cry: Beyond the Pleasure Principle in Opera*. Translated by Arthur Denner. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992.

Potolsky, Matthew. *Mimesis*. The New Critical Idiom. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Potter, Keith. "Mapping Early Minimalism." In *The Ashgate Research Companion to Minimalist and Postminimalist Music*, edited by Keith Potter, Kyle Gann, and Pwyll ap Siôn, 19–37. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013.

Potter, Keith, Kyle Gann, and Pwyll ap Siôn. “Introduction: Experimental, Minimalist, Postminimalist? Origins, Definitions, Communities.” In *The Ashgate Research Companion to Minimalist and Postminimalist Music*, 1–16. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013.

Powers, Harold S. “Melody [fr. Lat. Melodia, Fr. Gr. Meloidia, Fr. M... - Credo Reference.” *Harvard Dictionary of Music*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003. http://search.credoreference.com.proxy.uchicago.edu/content/entry/harvdictmusic/melody_fr_lat_melodia_fr_gr_meloidia_fr_melos/0?searchId=7c6c20d5-7900-11e5-b548-0e37d1c87205&result=1.

“Protest Nach Zwei Seiten: ‘Musik Der Jungen Generation’ in Darmstadt.” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, August 30, 1950.

Puca, Antonella. “Steve Reich and Hebrew Cantillation.” *The Musical Quarterly* 81, no. 4 (December 1, 1997): 537–55.

Quartetto Prometeo. *Quartetto N. 7 ; Quartetto N. 8 ; Sei quartetti brevi*. Vienna: Kairos, 2012.

Reich, Steve. *Works 1965-1995*. Compact disc. New York: Nonesuch, 1997.

———. *Writings on Music, 1965-2000*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Restagno, Enzo. *Reich*. Torino: EDT, 1994.

Reyland, Nicholas W. “The Spaces of Dream: Lutosławski’s Modernist Heterotopias.” *Twentieth-Century Music* 12, no. 1 (March 2015): 37–70.

Romm, James. “More’s Strategy of Naming in the Utopia.” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 22, no. 2 (1991): 173–83.

Rosenstiel, Léonie. *Nadia Boulanger: A Life in Music*. 1st ed. New York: W.W. Norton, 1982.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Essay on the Origin of Languages and Writings Related to Music*. Edited by John T. Scott. Vol. 7. The Collected Writings of Rousseau. Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1998.

Safir, Rachid. “Some Vocal Techniques Used in Iannis Xenakis’ Nuits and Oresteia.” In *Performing Xenakis*, edited by Sharon E. Kanach, 273–96. Iannis Xenakis Series: No. 2. Hillsdale, New York: Pendragon Press, 2010.

Salgado, Carmen Pardo. “Le rôle de l’abstraction chez Iannis Xenakis.” In *Présences de Iannis Xenakis*, edited by Makis Solomos, 107–12. Paris: Centre de documentation de la musique contemporaine, 2001.

Scherzinger, Martin. “Curious Intersections, Uncommon Magic: Steve Reich’s *It’s Gonna Rain*.” *Current Musicology*, no. 79/80 (Fall 2005): 207–44.

———. “Luciano Berio’s Coro: Nexus between African Music and Political Multitude.” In *Luciano Berio: nuove prospettive = new perspectives: atti del Convegno, Siena, Accademia chigiana, 28-31 ottobre 2008*, edited by Angela Ida De Benedictis, 48:399–430. Chigiana. Firenze: L.S. Olschki, 2012.

Schwarz, K. Robert. *Minimalists*. London: Phaidon, 1996.

Sciarrino, Salvatore. *12 madrigali*. Rome: Rai Trade, 2006.

Sciarrino, Salvatore. *Carte da suono: (1981-2001)*. Edited by Dario Oliveri. Palermo: Novecento, 2001.

“SICPP: Ives, Lachenmann.” *New England Conservatory*. Accessed October 2, 2015. http://necmusic.edu/sicpp-ives-lachenmann.

Smart, Mary Ann. Review of *Review of Metaphysical Song: An Essay on Opera*, by Gary Tomlinson. *19th-Century Music* 23, no. 1 (1999): 103–9.

Spycket, Jérôme. *Nadia Boulanger*. Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1992.

Stefani, Gino. “Melody: A Popular Perspective.” *Popular Music* 6 (1987): 21–35.

Stockhausen, Karlheinz. “Musik und Sprache.” *Darmstädter Beiträge Zur Neuen Musik* 1 (1958): 65–74.

———. “Musik und Sprache.” *Die Reihe* 6 (1960): 36–58.

Straus, Joseph N. “The Myth of Serial ‘Tyranny’ in the 1950s and 1960s.” *The Musical Quarterly*, 1999.

Stuckenschmidt, Hans Heine. “Spielerei, Pathos Und Verinnerlichung: Abschluß Der Darmstädter Konzertreihe.” *Neue Zeitung*, August 30, 1950.

Tagg, Philip. *Everyday Tonality: Towards a Tonal Theory of What Most People Hear*. New York: Mass Media Scholars’ Press, 2009.

Taruskin, Richard. *The Oxford History of Western Music*. Vol. 4: The Early Twentieth Century. 5 vols. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

———. *The Oxford History of Western Music*. Vol. 5: Music in the Late Twentieth Century. 5 vols. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

“The Steve Reich Website.” Accessed December 13, 2014. http://stevereich.com/.

Todd, R. Larry. *Nineteenth-Century Piano Music*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Tomlinson, Gary. *Metaphysical Song: An Essay on Opera*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999.

———. *The Singing of the New World: Indigenous Voice in the Era of European Contact*. New Perspectives in Music History and Criticism. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Touloumi, Olga. "The Politics of Totality: Iannis Xenakis' Polytope de Mycènes." In *Xenakis Matters: Contexts, Processes, Applications*, edited by Sharon E. Kanach, 101–25. Hillsdale, N.Y.: Pendragon Press, 2012.

Varga, Bálint András. *Conversations with Iannis Xenakis*. London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1996.

Vinay, Gianfranco. *Immagini, gesti, parole, suoni, silenzi: drammaturgia delle opere vocali e teatrali di Salvatore Sciarrino*. Rome: Accademia nazionale di Santa Cecilia; Ricordi, 2010.

Waeber, Jacqueline. "Jean-Jacques Rousseau's 'Unité de Mélodie.'" *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 62, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 79–143.

Wagner, Richard. *Richard Wagner's Prose Works*. Translated by William Ashton Ellis. Lincoln, Nebraska, 1995.

Walker, D. P., and François Lesure. "Claude Le Jeune and 'Musique Mesurée.'" *Musica disciplina* 3, no. 2/4 (1949): 151–70.

Watkins, Glenn. *The Gesualdo Hex: Music, Myth, and Memory*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2010.

Webster, James. "Cone's 'Personae' and the Analysis of Opera." *College Music Symposium: Special Issue on Edward T. Cone's The Composer's Voice* 29 (1989): 44–65.

Weidman, Amanda. "Anthropology and Voice." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 43, no. 1 (2014): 37–51.

Williams, Christopher. "Of Canons & Context: Toward a Historiography of Twentieth-Century Music." *Repercussions* 2, no. 1 (1993): 31–74.

Wishart, James. "'Breaking Up is Hard to Do': Issues of Coherence and Fragmentation in Post-1950 Vocal Music." In *Words and Music*, edited by John Williamson, 2005.

Wörner, Karl H. *Stockhausen: Life and Work*. Translated by Bill Hopkins. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976.

Xenakis, Iannis. *Formalized Music: Thought and Mathematics in Composition*. Edited by Sharon E. Kanach. Harmonologia Series: No. 6. Hillsdale, New York: Pendragon Press, 1992.

———. "La Crise de La Musique Sérielle." *Gravesaner Blätter* 1 (1955): 2–4.

Xenakis, Iannis, Ralph Fassey, and Madeleine RoyB. *Transformation d'un combat physique ou politique en lutte d'idées*. La Souterraine: Main courante, 2006.

Xenakis, Iannis, and Sharon E. Kanach. *Music and Architecture: Architectural Projects, Texts, and Realizations*. The Iannis Xenakis Series: No. 1. Hillsdale, New York: Pendragon Press, 2008.

Xenakis, Mâkhi. "Meteorites." In *Iannis Xenakis: Composer, Architect, Visionary*, edited by Sharon E. Kanach and Carey Lovelace, 88:129–31. Drawing Papers ; New York: Drawing Center, 2010.

Zender, Hans, Walter Nussbaum, Klangforum Wien, Schola Heidelberg, and Ensemble Aisthesis. *Mouvement (--Vor Der Erstarrung) --Zwei Gefühle--, Musik Mit Leonardo ; Consolation I ; Consolation II*. Germany: Kairos, 2001.