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# Rethinking Musical Space

## *Muzikinės erdvės permąstymas*

### Abstract

This paper explores the relations between geographical and cultural location and ideas of musical space. Part I offers an exploration of specific musical examples to investigate how space is configured musically within musical works themselves. Key to my exploration is the contrast between the aesthetics of abstraction in Viennese modernism (where details are systematically controlled by an invisible centre) and the insistence on the heterogeneity and particularity of detail, tone and voice in the music of Bartók and Janáček. Part II considers how our understanding of modernism has been shaped by the framing discourses of musicology. My suggestion is that our understanding of musical modernism has been seriously constricted by the way these discourses replicate the same logic of centre and periphery, abstract order and raw material, historical progress and regress. In recent decades, however, we have begun to understand early modernism differently. Viewing its landscape from other perspectives, we come to see modernism as a far more plural, contradictory and heterogeneous field.

**Keywords:** space, geography, tonality, historiography, particularity, musicology.

### Anotacija

Straipsnyje nagrinėjami muzikinės erdvės idėjų ir geografinės bei kultūrinės padėties ryšiai. Iš pirmoje straipsnio dalyje aptariamų muzikos pavyzdžių matyti, kokiais būdais kūrinuose formuojama muzikinė erdvė. Analizė grindžiama Vienos modernistų abstraktumo estetikos (kurioje visos detalės sistemškai paklūsta nematomam centrui) ir pabrėžtino medžiagos daugialypumo, dėmesio detalėms, garso ir balso spalvai Bėlo Bartoko bei Leošo Janáčeko kūrinuose priešprieša. Antroje dalyje svarstoma, kaip modernizmo suvokimą formavo įrėminantys (normatyviniai) muzikologijos diskursai. Straipsnyje keliami hipotezė, kad šiandienį modernizmo suvokimą smarkiai susiaurino šiuose diskursuose vis pasikartojanti centro ir periferijos, abstrakčios tvarkos ir neapdorotos medžiagos, istorinio progreso ir regreso logika. Vis dėlto pastaraisiais dešimtmečiais modernizmą pradėjome suvokti kiek kitaip. Žvelgdami į jo lauką iš kitokių žiūros kampų, pradedame matyti kur kas pliuralistiškesnį, prieštaringesnį, daugialypiškesnį vaizdą.

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** erdvė, geografija, tonacija, istoriografija, ypatumai, muzikologija.

### Introduction

It is clear that our whole idea of musical modernism is currently changing, and has been doing so for several decades, not least because of a changing sense of geographical and cultural space.<sup>1</sup> To explore the nature of these changes I pursue two related ideas here. The first is that notions of centre and periphery have been radically undermined by modernist music itself – that is to say, modernist repertoires reformulate the idea of musical space and challenge the orderings of classical syntax and form that defined a normative sense of musical space for well over two centuries. The second is that the way the history of modernist music has been told, positioning composers as more or less central or peripheral, can no longer be sustained; as the work of Susan Stanford Friedman has argued, if modernist works open up a paratactic sense of space, so too must our discourses about them (Stanford Friedman 2007). Exploring the link between these two ideas reveals that the external geography of musical modernism has long been in tension with music's own internal mapping of modernist space.

This relationship might be better seen from a much broader historical perspective. What is modernism if not a profound questioning, across all the arts, of the classical co-ordinates of time and space? In the case of music, as we

all know, this involved a reconfiguring of tonality that had defined the spatial and temporal dimensions of Western art music for three hundred years – a system of musical thought that was a product of the same broad period of early modernity that saw the scientific revolution of Galileo, the rise of the city state, and the voyages of discovery that inaugurated European colonial rule over half the globe.<sup>2</sup> Timothy Taylor has argued powerfully that tonality is not only a product of the same mindset as colonialism, but that it 'facilitated representations and appropriations of Europe's cultural others' precisely by means of its spatialized sense of centre and periphery (Taylor 2007: 10, 24). It was not just that tonality enabled such logic, but that tonality was itself, as Kofi Agawu has suggested, 'a colonizing force', imposed on indigenous cultures in the same way as religion.<sup>3</sup>

Tonality, as we know, is to music what linear perspective is to painting – it organizes time towards a central point of perception within the listener and invests time with spatial dimensions, a process both constitutive and expressive of the modern subject. But just as tonality constructs relations of centre and periphery, it also elaborates ideas of difference and heterogeneity. In this tension between centering and decentering, the inner life of music has mirrored its outer one. So, just as a centralizing tonal system was established,

it was also challenged and undermined (witness the use of chromaticism from Monteverdi to Schoenberg). In parallel fashion, as the practices of musical modernity unfolded through geographical and institutional centres, these too were challenged and displaced. The relationship between these two spheres (of tonality and politics) thus hinges on a shared relation between the logic of centre and periphery, and a countervailing tendency towards plurality, heterogeneity, and parataxis. That relationship was exemplified, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, by the assertion of so-called 'regional' musical cultures.

This is a familiar story: the tension between the particularity of regional cultures and the assumed universality of the classical inheritance (increasingly marked as Austro-German music) was simultaneously a phenomenon of both politics and poetics. An early example is found in the construction of Czech musical identity in the 1860s, as the operas and tone poems of Smetana were taken up as a symbol of national identity, the musical corollary of the Czechs' demand for linguistic and political independence from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Across Europe and beyond, areas where geographical or political marginality had equated to cultural marginality, now turned to their distinctive qualities as a mark of independence, from Scandinavia to Spain, from the Balkans to Brazil, and from Ireland to the USA. The list of composers reads like a roll call of the early twentieth century, but 'from the outside in': Janáček, Martinů, Bartók, Kodály, Szymanowski, Enescu, de Falla, Sibelius, Nielsen, Vaughan Williams, Ives, Copland, Albéniz, Respighi, Skalkottas, Busoni, Casella, Villa Lobos, Chavez, Ginastera... the list multiplies, the closer you look.

## I. Musical Spaces

Consider the quite different trajectories of four composers whose lives and works illustrate these entwined questions of musical materials and cultural geography – Leoš Janáček, Gustav Mahler, Anton Webern and Béla Bartók. The distance between Vienna and Janáček's Brno is a mere 80 miles; that between Vienna and Bartók's Budapest, about 150 miles. Even in 1900, courtesy of the Imperial railway system, these were not great physical distances, and yet the lives, music, and professional experiences of these composers were utterly different.

Born in 1854 in Moravia, Janáček went to study in Vienna and Leipzig in his twenties before returning to the town of Brno, where he lived and worked for most of his life. His first real success was not until his opera *Jenůfa* was premiered there in 1904, by which time he was 50, and even then he had to wait another twelve years for the opera to be heard in Prague. Compare that to Mahler, six years Janáček's junior, also born and raised in Moravia. Mahler was still

studying in Vienna when Janáček arrived there in 1880, and in 1904 it was to Mahler, now Director of the Court Opera in Vienna, that Janáček wrote asking that *Jenůfa* might be considered for performance. Mahler replied politely, asking Janáček to send him a copy of the vocal score, *with German words*. There was no such copy, and the matter was dropped, to the huge detriment of Janáček's career.<sup>4</sup>

The contrast between the positions of these two, Czech-born composers could not be more striking: Mahler, in charge of one of the most prestigious musical institutions in Europe, Janáček, unable to have his opera read because its libretto was in Czech.<sup>5</sup> Where Mahler had grown up aligning himself with the cultural centre (that is, German culture), Janáček's self-image was always that of a Czech composer. His determination to forge a genuinely Czech musical language, shaped by the very rhythms of Czech speech, and his decision to remain in the provincial town of Brno – not even the more cosmopolitan Prague – all of this shaped a career that did not flower until relatively late, but also a musical language that is utterly individual.

But the same order of contrast can be found in what we might call the *internal* geography of these composers' music. I am not suggesting for a moment that we find here some kind of binary opposition; both composers worked with common materials, and both addressed a common musical past. But how, one wonders, did they react to their time at the Vienna Conservatoire, an institution characterized by Peter Franklin as realizing the political ideals of the Empire in aesthetic form.

All the races that made up the ethnically diverse, 'multinational' Habsburg Empire were represented by Mahler's contemporaries at the Conservatoire. The aim of their teachers was to make them all executants and officials of a traditional musical culture whose special value was defined by its universality and its transcendence of the popular, the ephemeral, the ethnic, the worldly. The 'mastery' of the greatest works was taken to be synonymous with their structural articulation as models of a theoretical 'organic unity'. (Franklin 1997: 32)<sup>6</sup>

Peter Franklin hears some of the same logic of centrality in Mahler's music; the Third Symphony, for example, he suggests, 'comes as near as conceivably possible to reconciling the tensions and contradictions on which both it and the Empire were grandly and precariously based' (Franklin 1997: 134).<sup>7</sup> One might agree, listening to the great D-major hymn with which the Third Symphony ends, but Mahler's music, famously, is characterized by the constant undermining of the very universal categories it tries to assert. It plays out the spatial and cultural contradictions of the final years of the Habsburg Empire, in which the attempt to assert an aesthetic universality over heterogeneous materials is a constant struggle – a struggle to order refractory materials into some closed unity. And what are those refractory materials? More

often than not, they derive from the folk and street-music which recall Mahler's own descriptions of his childhood in Iglau, as if his Czech origins could never be completely denied, despite his success in the imperial capital. We might well hear these as the eruption of what Franklin referred to as 'the popular, the ephemeral, the ethnic and the worldly' – those very elements that the imperial institutions of art, like the Vienna Conservatoire, were devoted to expunging. Of course, for all the disruptive force of the carnivalesque in Mahler, the formal logic of the symphony eventually wins through – albeit in problematic ways. The long range function of tonal space is still operative, albeit in dissonant counterpoint with its own failure.

Tonality is no less evident in the music of Janáček, and no less brought into question, but to quite different ends. Consider the opening of the second piece from Janáček's *In the Mists*, his collection of short piano pieces from 1912. The second piece opens ostensibly in D-flat major. The left hand has nothing but an alternation between tonic and dominant, while the right hand has a short neighbour-note motif, closing on the dominant degree. The interrupted nature of the phrase, coupled with its descending contour, suggests a kind of lyrical shyness that closes back upon itself. What seems like an imperfect cadence at the start of bar 4, blurs the space of the dominant and that of the tonic (the right hand closes V–I, but the left hand I–V).

Example. Janáček, *In the Mists*, opening of the second piece

The second phrase (bars 5–8) is very similar but takes the upper voice of the opening phrase into the middle of the texture and adds another above it, this time closing with a clear, if rather withdrawn perfect cadence. The third phrase (bars 9–12) revisits the same idea, but now changed enharmonically (into C-sharp minor) and making what was the middle voice of the opening phrase into the new melodic line. The fourth phrase (bars 13–16) returns to the D-flat of the opening but transposed up a fifth, as if a modulation to the dominant had been made. The three-bar Presto keeps the A-flat as a pedal, over which the right hand gives a kind of microscopic version of the neighbour note motif, before the pedal resolves back onto D-flat for a reprise of the opening Adagio, now with a clear D-flat bass, missing in the original presentation.

What emerges from this opening, is Janáček's ability to elaborate a *single* tonal space through repetition, rather than directed motion towards a *different* space. By means of a series of revoicings, by moving outer lines into the centre of the texture and vice versa, the familiar tonal gesture speaks differently each time. The musical space is enlarged not through any linear journey but by the inflections of its constantly altered repetitions. It is salutary to remember that this piece dates from 1912, the year in which Schoenberg composed *Pierrot Lunaire* and which saw the posthumous premiere of Mahler's Ninth Symphony whose slow first movement is structured around revoiced repetitions of the same material, recasting the normally highly directed and centric motion of the symphonic first movement into something curiously close to Janáček's procedure.

But Janáček's late works, for which he is best known today, were contemporary with the foundational twelve-tone works of the Second Viennese School, and the simultaneity of different musical geographies in the 1920s, is clearly heard by juxtaposing the music of Janáček and Webern.<sup>8</sup> Webern's music offers us one of the great paradoxes of musical modernism: our usual understanding is that, after the centrality of the tonal system was dissolved in atonality, the tone row offered a musical space without centre or periphery, in which every note is apparently equal, related to all the others in a constellation without centre. And yet, Webern's compositional thinking is profoundly shaped by the idea of centres. His palindromes create central points in time around which a movement is conceived, spatially, to unfold both forwards and backwards; his parallel concern with vertical mirror relations (from the level of the row to the construction of chords) results in arrangements of tones in a quasi-symmetrical fan around a central pitch; both these ideas are played out in transparent form in the first movement of the Symphony, Op.21, from 1928. In place of the experiential centrality of tonality, Webern's twelve-tone music creates a more abstract kind of spatial order.<sup>9</sup> The guiding principle of that order is not the tone as such, but

the interval (not itself a sound, but the abstract gap between two sounds); the tone row, as an abstract order, thus controls the musical work as an invisible and inaudible centre – as an ‘absent presence’, to borrow a later idea from Pierre Boulez.

Janáček’s music, by contrast, is rooted not in abstract order but the concrete particularity of his material. You can hear this immediately in the different tone of the music. Webern’s preferred ensemble creates a kind of instrumental anonymity (as with the carefully balanced ensemble of soloists in the Concerto, Op.24, or the Symphony, Op.21). Webern was probably exaggerating, in 1929, when he suggested to Alban Berg that ‘basically, the instruments become more and more immaterial to me’ (Moldenhauer 1979: 424), but his approach to instrumentation certainly reflects a progressive atomisation of his materials. Janáček, on the other hand, often wrote for idiosyncratic groupings: the *Capriccio*, of 1926, for example, is scored for piano left hand, flute/piccolo, two trumpets, three trombones and a tenor tuba.

There is undoubtedly a link between Janáček’s stubborn decision to stay in Brno, the choice of his operatic subjects, his fondness for unconventional ensembles and instrumentation, his fascination with the tone, rhythm and contour of speech patterns, and the particularity of his own music. Nor is it a coincidence, that he developed his own musical voice in tandem with a sustained interest in the collection of folk music. Over a period of 30 years, from the mid-1880s until 1914, he transcribed some 300 songs and dances, found mostly in the mountain regions of eastern Moravia, but also on trips further afield to Silesia and Slovakia. His fascination with the particularity of tone is underlined by his early insistence on the need for sound recording, though it was not until 1909 that a phonograph became available to him. Melita Milin cites the occasion of the ISCM festival in Frankfurt in 1927 at which Janáček’s *Capriccio* was performed. Janáček was present for this, but also to present a group of peasant musicians singing Moravian and Slovak traditional music; for him, the two kinds of music belonged in the same cultural space.<sup>10</sup>

The parallel with Béla Bartók is a familiar one, though Bartók’s contribution to the development of ethnomusicology is better known. Bartók’s study of folk music, through collection, transcription, recording and publication, was pursued for some 40 years, from 1905 until his death in 1945, and included trips to outlying regions of Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Moldavia, Wallachia, Turkey and Algeria. He insisted on the use of a phonograph precisely because he recognized that the character of the music he was studying hinged on particularities of tone, articulation, tuning and rhythm that a transcription alone could never capture. The relationship between his study of folk music and his own composition is of course, a huge topic; I introduce it now, without exploring it properly,

simply to underline the importance of those elements of rhythm, tone and the physicality of gesture through which his own modernism was articulated – for anyone in any doubt, the String Quartets provide abundant examples.

Let me be clear: neither Mahler’s symphonies nor Webern’s twelve-tone music represents or even evokes the centrality of imperial space, anymore than Bartók’s or Janáček’s music represents a regional space. But these quite different musics arise from different geographies and articulate different spatial co-ordinates. The expressive tension of Webern’s music, shaped around the centralizing order of the tone row, lies partly in the way in which the surface resists the underlying structure, such that the centripetal logic of the method is opposed by the centrifugal effect of the fragmented musical details. By contrast, Janáček’s music originates in a single material particularity yet builds a world of multiplicity. The embodied space of Janáček’s music tacitly critiques the universality implied by an aesthetics that arose, not coincidentally, at the administrative centre of the vast Hapsburg Empire; Janáček’s Brno distances itself from the gravitational pull of Vienna, just as the local harmonic centres of his musical prose resist the overarching logic of tonal centrality.

## II. Discourses of Musicology

Having considered such ideas within modernist music itself, I want now to move to my second idea – that our *conceptions* of modernist repertoires have been seriously constricted by the framing discourses of musicology and the way these have replicated the logic of centre and periphery, abstract order and raw material, historical progress and regress. In the last few decades, however, the stories we tell about twentieth-century music have been changing, enabling us to make sense of musical modernism by means of different narratives. The wider context for this is undoubtedly the shift that has taken place in political, intellectual and technological paradigms, from postcolonialism to deconstruction, from sound recording to the internet. The effect of such paradigm shifts is a move from the idea of a stable centre to a new geography of dynamic, plural and dispersed cultural networks. This is not the place to open up such huge topics, but it is possible to draw out the more specifically musical changes that have taken place at the same time. We might locate a changing conception of modernism in three quite distinct but related ways: *firstly*, we have become far more self-reflective and self-critical of the ways in which music history is told, and far more aware of how past histories of musical modernism have themselves been shaped by dominant aesthetic ideologies; *secondly*, our understanding of modernism has been expanded through a re-hearing, and performative re-engagement with, both

canonic and less familiar modernist repertoires; and *thirdly*, since the 1970s, a changed compositional practice, much of it emanating from outside the old Western European centres, has provoked a retrospective rethinking of the whole of musical modernism.

#### a. Musicology

Like all histories, the history of musical modernism was written after the events it narrates. As an interpretative framework for music, the term 'modernism' was not employed with any regularity until surprisingly late. For English-language readers, the term was foregrounded in 1980 by Carl Dahlhaus' book, *Between Romanticism and Modernism*, though the German original (of 1974) is *Zwischen Romantik und Moderne* (*Moderne*, note, rather than *Modernismus*). Certainly, the unquestioning ease with which we now use the term 'modernism' was not current until the 1970s at the earliest and not widespread until the 1980s. In the earlier part of the century, historians wrote, interchangeably, about twentieth-century music, modern music or contemporary music, and it was not until after 1945 that any clear historiographical models emerged.

The huge change in scholarly attitudes towards the new music (to introduce a fourth term) can be seen in a simple comparison of Paul Henry Lang's compendious *Music in Western Civilization*, published in 1941, and the even longer *History of Western Music*, by his one-time pupil, Richard Taruskin, published in 2005. Lang's final chapter, the only one on twentieth-century music, occupies a mere 40 pages of a book that runs to over a thousand, whereas Taruskin's vast history devotes two of its five volumes to the twentieth century. There are other salient shifts in perspective: Lang's penultimate chapter is titled, 'The Peripheries of Nineteenth-Century Music', with subsections on musical nationalism, including music in England, Russia, America and Scandinavia; by contrast, Taruskin challenges the notion of periphery and is at pains to decentre the story of Schoenberg and the serialism of the European avant-garde, in favour of a shift to Russia and Eastern Europe on the one hand, and the USA on the other.

Lang's history, completed in 1941 while his native Hungary was embroiled in the Second World War, similarly imagines the future of music through a spatial and geographical lens. Having depicted the music of the twentieth century in unremittingly negative terms, as the music of cultural weariness and collapse, he asserted that, 'the music of the new century will rise from the civilization of democracy and has, indeed, already sprung from the unspoiled and untapped energies of the New World and the countries of the peripheries of Europe, which heretofore were outside the main territory of Western civilization' (Lang 1942: 1030). Such geographical frameworks for dealing with music history persisted, witness the grand

historical survey of Alec Harman and Wilfrid Mellers from 1962, titled, *Man and His Music. The Story of Musical Experience in the West*, (a title that remarkably achieves centrality of both geography and gender). But its final two chapters make an implicit suggestion about the direction of new music that resonates with that of Lang. The book finishes not with its chapter on 'Europe Today', but rather with one titled 'Music in a New-Found Land', which looks to the USA for a renewal of the European musical heritage.

Between Lang in 1941 and Taruskin in 2004, however, the history of musical modernism has been told, almost exclusively, as one defined by the logic of centre and periphery – both in terms of key locations (Vienna, Paris, Berlin) and key composers (Schoenberg, Debussy, Stravinsky, Bartók). In other words, the telling of modernist music history has perpetuated the idea of key centres, just as modernist music itself obliterated the idea within compositional practice. Theodor Adorno's *Philosophie der neuen Musik*, published in 1949, was not translated into English until 1973, but the influence of Adorno's historical model was already evident among avant-garde circles in the 1950s. Adorno's intimidatingly philosophical argument not only seemed to demonstrate how the music of the Schoenberg school was the only true outcome of a process of historical necessity, but at the same time apparently exposed other modernisms as 'untrue', backward-looking or even regressive – thus Stravinsky, Debussy, Sibelius.

The appearance of Adorno's book, and his subsequent influence at the new music summer schools at Donaueschingen and Darmstadt, were contemporary with Pierre Boulez's discovery of twelve-note music, through the Schoenberg-pupil, René Leibowitz, and his vociferous insistence, as he put it notoriously in 1952, that 'any musician who has not experienced... the necessity of dodecaphonic music is USELESS. For his whole work is irrelevant to the needs of his epoch' (Boulez 1991). The elevation of serialism by the post-war avant-garde, was a defining moment in how the history of musical modernism was subsequently constructed. Adorno's idea of the historical necessity of musical material bound specific musical techniques to the idea of not only historical, but philosophical truth. The centres of musical modernism and its central figures were those – to change metaphor – that were in the vanguard, at the cutting edge. No longer Vienna, but Darmstadt, Cologne, Rome, Princeton, Berlin, and Paris once more (in the form of IRCAM).

With hindsight, the mechanics of this process are easier to uncover. Adorno's essentially Hegelian model of history found powerful confirmation in the aesthetic outlook inherited by Schoenberg, one which, through Wagner, goes back to Hegel's contemporary, Beethoven. Already in the 1920s and 1930s, when Adorno was closely allied to the Second Viennese School, Schoenberg and his pupils

were generating a powerful discourse of self-legitimation, claiming history, nature and musical logic itself, as evidence for the singular rightness of their direction, to the exclusion of all others. Such potent claims may have been silenced by the fascist movements of the 1930s, but they gradually re-emerged after 1945, as scores of Schoenberg and his pupils began to be disseminated and eventually performed. By the 1960s, the idea that Schoenberg defined a central place in musical modernism was largely established, ironically helped by Stravinsky's late turn to twelve-note composition. The defining criteria of musical modernism were thus exclusively technical; more accurately, they were the result of a set of local musical techniques being elevated to a universal status. In this process, music analysis worked hand-in-glove with music history; one simply confirmed the judgements of the other.

Of course, the majority of composers after 1950 were *not* drawn into serial practice, but they lived and worked in a framework which, silently and invisibly, placed them closer or more distant to some notional aesthetic centre: one was either at the cutting edge, or not. Library shelves are littered with musical histories of the twentieth century defined by this spatial logic – the intercity express train travels from Schoenberg to Webern to Boulez and Stockhausen; there are slower branch lines, of course, to more rural or regional destinations – Prokofiev, Janáček, Shostakovich, Nielsen, Britten. And then there are other composers who seem to be almost entirely cut out of the history books – twentieth-century in name but apparently not in spirit, denied the accolade of 'modernist' altogether – Rachmaninov, Vaughan Williams, Copland, Ravel.

### *b. Performance*

A second set of changes relate to the *performance* of modernist repertoire. There are several aspects of this. For a start, recent decades have seen the steady rehabilitation into the performance canon of composers who had earlier been marginalized by the narrow understanding of modernism outlined above. It is hard to believe that a composer so central to concert programmes today as Mahler was, until the 1960s, relatively rarely performed. In the last 50 years, his place in the musical canon has grown exponentially. In the wake of Mahler, some of his contemporaries earlier discarded as peripheral – Zemlinsky, Korngold, Schreker – have all had their champions in recent years, on the concert stage as well as in scholarship. But one might extend this list well beyond Vienna – consider the gradually renewed performance interest in Szymanowski, Schmitt, Ives, Martinů, Nielsen, Delius. The operas of Janáček, now recognized as some of the most important of the twentieth century, largely came to prominence outside his native country because of their championing by conductors (notably Charles Mackerras).

The importance of developments in technologies of recording and dissemination cannot be underestimated. If the major record labels still acted as cultural gatekeepers in the 1960s and 1970s, the increasing use of broadcast media, the explosion of the CD market, and finally the internet, has decentred the listening world in a way unimaginable to the writers of music history in the twentieth century. The broader decentering of musical taste cultures fostered by the online availability of a dizzyingly broad range of music has had a similar effect on notions of musical modernism.

But it is not just a case of who is performed, recorded or broadcast. At the same time, performers have provoked a rethinking of modernist music repertoires because they have helped us to *hear* modernist music in new ways. This has two aspects. On the one hand, the music of composers previously marginalized by the charge of conservative technique, have been reheard as strikingly new and defamiliarized through insightful performances. Suddenly one hears the ironic, heteroglossic and disjunct nature of Mahler's modernism instead of his romanticism; or, again, one hears the modernist play with the past, no less in Vaughan Williams or Benjamin Britten, than in Stravinsky. But it works the other way, too. More recent performances of so-called canonic modernist composers have drawn out lyrical qualities of the music that the pointillist aesthetic of the 1950s had obscured – compare, for example, the complete recordings of Webern's music issued in 2000 by Deutsche Gramophon, with the complete Webern issued by Sony in 1978. The later issue is twice as long – six discs rather than three – because of the inclusion of early works not available in the 1970s, but in the intervening years, the whole conception of Webern's music has changed, with expressive lyrical lines now replacing disjunct pointillism. In the words of Miriam Quick, writing in 2011, 'whereas Webern used to be performed like early Boulez, today, he is more often performed like Mahler or Brahms' (Quick 2011: 104).

### *c. Composition*

But perhaps the most directly significant challenge to an earlier view of musical modernism came from changes in musical composition itself. Modernism changed so much in the 1970s and 80s that cultural critics rushed to proclaim its death, declaring that modernism was merely a moment within a wider *post*-modernism (thus, Lyotard and many others). But the latter term has been very little used in the past two decades; indeed, it seems to have quietly evaporated. Compositional *practice*, as opposed to the academic industry of musical commentary, has been transforming itself over the last few decades in ways that might transform our understanding of modernism as a whole, not just what it is today, but how we hear and understand the music of the first half of the twentieth century.

Consider the remarkable stylistic changes in the work of György Ligeti, from the 1980s onwards, culminating in works like the Violin Concerto of 1993, with its embrace of a range of musical materials that the mid-century avant-garde had proscribed. In the Sonata for Solo Viola, of 1994, Ligeti makes a deliberate homage to the folk music of Hungary and Romania, and evokes the presence of Bartók, whose Sonata for Solo Violin of 1944 forms a kind of acoustic backdrop to Ligeti's piece. Both include a chaconne (the last movement of Ligeti's piece, the first movement of Bartók's) in which both composers audibly wrestle with history in an attempt to arrive at a simpler kind of musical statement. In the slow opening movement of Ligeti's Sonata, played entirely on the C-string, the use of natural tunings are ancient and modernist at the same time. My point is that we rehear Bartók through Ligeti – that Ligeti's music reframes that of Bartók, and helps us understand the modernism of both in an expanded way. One might say something similar about the later music of Boulez in relation to Debussy. The resonant soundscapes of a work like *Répons*, from the 1980s, opens up a link with Debussy's structural concern with tone, colour and resonance that, once again, invites us to hear both composers in a new way.

In the music of quite different contemporary composers, from the 1970s onwards, one can hear the return of musical elements that were largely expunged from music, music theory and music history by the aesthetics of the mid-century. A renewed concern with the particularity of time, memory, place and voice, far from being a retreat from some notional highpoint of the avant-garde, might be better understood as a transformation of key concerns of musical modernism in the first half of the twentieth century. In this way, a fractured continuity can be heard between, for example, Mahler and Berio, Bartók and Ligeti, Debussy and Boulez.

It is a striking aspect of contemporary music that, in the closing decades of the twentieth century, some of the most influential developments have originated outside of the geographical and aesthetic centres that had apparently defined the nature of musical modernism – to list a few, albeit very different composers, Arvo Pärt, Henryk Górecki, Erkki-Sven Tüür, Helena Tulve, Valentin Silvestrov, Alfred Schnittke, Sofia Gubaidulina, Giya Kancheli, Galina Ustvolskya, Magnus Lindberg, Kaija Saariaho. Such composers have challenged the dominant ideas of musical modernism at the same time that key figures of an earlier European avant-garde have radically rethought their own position – witness the cases of Berio, Ligeti, Penderecki, Lutoslawski, Maxwell-Davies.

In other words, modernist musical practice itself – musical composition – shows plenty of signs of being, in the terms advanced by Susan Stanford Friedman, 'transnational', 'heterogeneous' 'multiple' and 'locational' (Stanford Friedman 2007: 35–52). Current modernist music not

only challenges the false claims of the internationalism of the mid-century avant-garde, but at the same time restores a link to the plural practices of the period 1900–1940. It is the discourses of musicology that need to change, and there are plenty of signs that this is taking place. In her consideration of Serbian modernism in the first half of the century, Katarina Tomašević, building on the theory of Stanford Friedman, lamented that the model of centre and periphery nevertheless still persists (Tomašević 2008). But there are signs of change, even from the West. Jim Samson, scholar of the music of Chopin, Liszt, Szymanowski, and the idea of musical modernism, published in 2013 a vast study of *Music in the Balkans* which runs to over 700 pages. It is a study in which music is understood, above all, in terms of place, and in which ethnicity, politics, modernity and tradition are threaded through the plural musical histories of different places.

Rethinking musical modernism goes hand in hand with rehearing it, and both are constantly challenged by a rewriting of musical modernism that, as recent musical practice shows, is also profoundly involved in relocating it. The changing perspectives of our own time thus redraw the map of musical modernism. It is precisely the cultivation of the so-called peripheral that has exploded the centre. The call for a transnational understanding of musical modernism thus pushes against an open door. It is met by a current of thinking that has, for some decades, challenged older ideas of the centrality of musical modernism defined by a few key centres of Western Europe. To pursue this idea is not to swap one hierarchy for another, to reject the achievements of musical life in Paris, Vienna or Berlin, in favour of hitherto neglected areas, but rather to insist that a far richer understanding of musical modernism, and its relation to social modernity, is found in hearing the resonance of an irreducibly plural field.

## References

- 1 For a recent exploration of this idea, see: *Transformations of Musical Modernism* 2015.
- 2 For a development of this broader concept of musical modernity see: Johnson 2015.
- 3 'Of all the musical encounters spawned by the colonial encounter, that of tonal-functional harmony has been the most pervasive, the most far reaching, and ultimately the most disastrous' (Agawu 2003: 8).
- 4 See Vogel 1962: 233–34.
- 5 It is a telling irony that Janáček, as an adult, had to make a concerted effort to learn to speak Moravian, attending evening classes at the Moravian Academy in Brno (see: Horsbrugh 1981: 38).
- 6 Hartmut Krones gives precise statistics for the ethnic origins of music students at the Conservatoire in the academic year 1879–80. Out of 726 music students, 436 were from Austria, 88 from Hungary, 53 from Bohemia, 32 from Moravia, 19 from Galicia, 50 others from 'foreign' lands (13 from

Germany) with the rest from further provinces of the imperial monarchy (see Kroner 1984: 657–661).

- <sup>7</sup> A detailed account of the musical and social politics of Viennese musical life in the years 1848–1897 can be found in: Brodbeck 2014.
- <sup>8</sup> Webern, according to one of his pupils, 'always spoke of Janáček with respect' while at the same time finding Bartók too dissonant. See: Moldenhauer 1979: 465.
- <sup>9</sup> See: Busch 1985: 2–10. For a discussion of space in Op. 21 and Op. 24 see: Johnson 1999.
- <sup>10</sup> See: Milin 2008.

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## Santrauka

Remiantis Susan Stanford Friedman kultūrinės parataksės idėja, straipsnyje nagrinėjami muzikinės erdvės idėjų ir geografinės bei kultūrinės padėties ryšiai. Kalbant konkrečiau, čia gretinami būdai, kuriais muzikinę erdvę savo kūrinuose konstravo Vienos modernistai (Arnoldas Schoenbergas ir Antonas Webernas), ir visiškai skirtingi metodai, taikyti Bėlos Bartoko ir Leošo Janáčeko muzikoje. Siekiama ne oponuoti senoms hierarchinėms sistemoms ar perrašyti jas iš naujo, tik įsiklausyti į bendrą skirtingų muzikinių erdvių skambesį.

Pirmoje straipsnio dalyje pateikiama kelių specifinių muzikos pavyzdžių analizė. Kaip muzikoje konfigūruojamos įvairios erdvinės idėjos? Kaip skirtingi kompozitoriai sugeba viename kūrinyje suderinti pluralistišką, daugialypę medžiagą ir iš šios įvairovės kylančias įtampas, kurios suteikia modernios erdvės pojūtį? Kitaip tariant, prieš mąstydami apie muzikinio modernizmo geografiją – kompozitorių, kūrinių, institucijų viešą gyvavimą, galbūt turėtume pirmiau apsvarstyti modernios erdvės konfigūraciją pačioje muzikoje. Antra vertus, erdvės kūrimas muzikos priemonėmis neišvengiamai susijęs su platesniais estetiniais, kultūriniais ir politiniais erdvės apibrėžimais.

Analizė grindžiama Vienos modernistų abstraktumo estetikos (kurioje visos detalės sistemškai paklūsta nematomam centrui) ir pabrėžtino medžiagos daugialypumo, dėmesio detalėms, garso ir balso spalvai Bartoko bei Janáčeko kūrinuose priešprieša.

Antroje dalyje svarstoma, kaip šios muzikos suvokimą formavo įreminantys (normatyviniai) muzikologijos diskursai – muzikos istorija, analizė, estetika. Straipsnyje keliami hipotezė, kad tai, kaip *šiandien* suprantame muzikos modernizmą, smarkiai susiaurino šiuose diskursuose vis pasikartojanti centro ir periferijos, abstrakčios tvarkos ir neapdorotos medžiagos, istorinio progreso ir regreso logika. Vis dėlto pastaraisiais dešimtmečiais ankstyvąjį modernizmą pradėjome suvokti kiek kitaip. Žvelgdami į jo lauką iš kitokių žiūros kampų, pradedame matyti kur kas pluralistiškesnį, prieštaringesnį, daugialypiškesnį vaizdą.

Tai nulėmė bent keturių susijusių tendencijų sąveika: 1) kompozicinės praktikos pokyčiai, nuo XX a. aštunto dešimtmečio pabaigos vis dažniau vykę kraštuose, nutolusiuose nuo senųjų Vakarų Europos centrų, o tai skatina peržvelgti visą muzikos modernizmo raidą; 2) auganti muzikos istoriografijos savirefleksija ir savikritiškumas tiems požiūriams, kuriais remiantis ankstesnės modernizmo istorijos versijos būdavo nekritiškai modeliuojamos pagal dominuojančių estetinių ideologijų nuostatas; 3) naujas žvilgsnis ir angažavimasis kanonizuotam ir ne taip gerai žinomam modernizmo repertuarui, padėjęs išryškinti šios tradicijos įvairovę; 4) kultūriškai ir politiškai motyvuotas atsiskyrimas tokio muzikos modernizmo vaizdo, kurio erdvinis kontūrus iškraipė vienakryptė perspektyva.