jean-françois lyotard
richard littlefield
suzanne g. cusick
david neumeyer
marion a. guck
david gramit
robert fink
alan street
joke dame
essays

music/ideology
resisting the aesthetic

edited and
introduced
adam krims
commentary
henry klumpenhouwer

CRITICAL VOICES IN ART, THEORY AND CULTURE

jean-françois lyotard
richard littlefield
suzanne g. cusick
david neumeyer
marion a. guck
david gramit
robert fink
alan street
joke dame
essays

music/ideology
resisting the aesthetic

edited and
introduced
adam krims

commentary
henry klumpenhouwer

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 1998 by Overseas Publishers Association

Published 2019 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
Music/ideology : resisting the aesthetic.—(Critical voices in art, theory and culture)
1. Music—Theory 2. Music—Philosophy and aesthetics
3. Musical analysis—Philosophy
I. Lyotard, Jean-François II. Krims, Adam
III. Klumpenhouwer, Henry
781

ISBN 13: 978-90-5701-241-9 (hbk)
ISBN 13: 978-90-5701-321-8 (pbk)

DOI: 10.4324/9781003759447

contents

introduction to the series

CRITICAL VOICES IN ART, THEORY AND Culture is a response to the changing perspectives that have resulted from the continuing application of structural and poststructural methodologies and interpretations to the cultural sphere. From the ongoing processes of deconstruction and reorganization of the traditional canon, new forms of speculative, intellectual inquiry and academic practices have emerged which are premised on the realization that insights into differing aspects of the disciplines that make up this realm are best provided by an interdisciplinary approach that follows a discursive rather than a dialectic model.

In recognition of these changes, and of the view that the histories and practices that form our present circumstances are in turn transformed by the social, economic, and political requirements of our lives, this series will publish not only those authors who already are prominent in their field, or those who are now emerging—but also those writers who had previously been acknowledged, then passed over, only now to become relevant once more. This multigenerational approach will give many writers an opportunity to analyze and reevaluate the position of those thinkers who have influenced their own prac-

tices, or to present responses to the themes and writings that are significant to their own research.

In emphasizing dialogue, self-reflective critiques, and exegesis, the Critical Voices series not only acknowledges the deterritorialized nature of our present intellectual environment, but also extends the challenge to the traditional supremacy of the authorial voice by literally relocating it within a discursive network. This approach to text breaks with the current practice of speaking of multiplicity, while continuing to construct a singlularly linear vision of discourse that retains the characteristics of dialectics. In an age when subjects are conceived of as acting upon one another, each within the context of its own history and without contradiction, the ideal of totalizing system does not seem to suffice. I have come to realize that the near collapse of the endeavor to produce homogeneous terms, practices, and histories—once thought to be an essential aspect of defining the practices of art, theory, and culture—reopened each of these subjects to new interpretations and methods.

My intent as editor of Critical Voices in Art, Theory and Culture is to make available to our readers heterogeneous texts that provide a view that looks ahead to new and differing approaches, and back toward those views that make the dialogues and debates developing within the areas of cultural studies, art history, and critical theory possible and necessary. In this manner we hope to contribute to the expanding map not only of the borderlands of modernism, but also of those newly opened territories now identified with postmodernism.

Saul Ostrow

foreword
corresponding scores

MUSIC IS SOUND STRUCTURED BY MEANS of rhythms and cadence. It is also ordered by social and cultural predilection. For most people, music's meaning or effect resides in its aesthetic reception. It fills our homes, offices and automobiles via radio, cassette and compact disc. Sometimes it soothingly blocks out the silence that might otherwise engulf us and at other times it raucously obliterates our sense of self. Taken in by the ear the resulting satisfaction, stimluated desires, or antipathies tend to reside within the body itself—this claim can be made not only for pop music but also for "classical" or "high" music.

We seldom think of music as constituting an ideological form intent on organizing, administering, or indoctrinating its audience. This is because it is experiential, seemingly immaterial by nature, merely a distraction or entertainment that in its pure form is without anything more than associative content. Often compared to mathematics because of the abstract purity of its rationalized form and content, music is thought to "soothe the savage beast," though it also has its dark and uninhibited side. The source of all these effects lies in the intersection of score and performance, authorship and interpretation. Given the

social and cultural roles that sociologists and anthropologists understand music as playing in most societies, what is encoded between the acts of conception and realization (which are both circumscribed by historically determined standards and criteria) are messages that replicate, reenforce, or challenge social values.

As the practical and political questions concerning the role of aesthetics in the production of subjectivity (and identity) come to the fore, the critical discourses that form around these practices (such as music—not the mass culture kind, which has long been the subject of sociological concern, but its other) that have been represented as insular or autonomous now reveal the complex reality of their subjects. We now find within such forms of cultural production that the long-proposed purity of the aesthetic experience, which had been the heralded goal and triumph of modernist art, constituted a philosophical and ideological trope. There lurked within the aspiration to attain direct experience beyond language and mediation not only a metaphysical but also a symbolic act of denial, for this nonreflective privileging of the sensuous as just a thing in itself conceals the nature of the construction, conditions, and order of perception that is affected by the social order.

Adam Krims has compiled in this volume texts by music scholars who have redirected the study of music away from a fixation with the ways and means of aesthetic effect and focus instead on those concerns previously thought to be marginal. In turn they also address the practice and goals of the study of music and practically reveal how critical theory and analysis appled to the doctrine of essentialism, the ideal of categorical imperatives, and the criteria of competency seeks to make available in all its guises the language and the symbolic reality it orders. By unfolding music's structures, styles, and foibles, these authors seek to decode how music represents the complex and fluid relationships between the social, the ideological, and the psychological.

With their mixture of social, political, psychoanalytic, and structuralist readings, the texts assembled in this volume raise the question of whether cultural theory and analysis must always reinscribe an ideology of aesthetic autonomy. This represents the effect of the present search for the means to revise the prevalent understanding of *how* and *what* our cultural forms do *for* and *to* us. Invoking postmodern thought, these essays introduce an interdisciplinary approach that covers a wide range of subjects both by implication and explication. What is possibly of equal interest to the lay reader is that these articles function also as an introduction to the broad range of issues—ranging from aesthetics to femi-

nism—facing those concerned with music theory, as well as the connection between music analysis, theory, and aesthetic ideology. In his commentary "Poststructuralism and Issues of Music Theory," Henry Klumpenhouwer demonstrates that the interrogation of such issues is most rewarding when approached through diverse discourses.

The approach implicitly rejected by the authors assembled in this volume is the one that gives absolute primacy to either the observing subject (audience/spectator) or attributes to the author's intent the power of determination. The reason for this is that such an approach replicates the ideological complicity of those methodologies representing each form as a self-defined anteriority. Reciprocally, both views posit that the origin and goal of all historicity is a form of transcendental consciousness.

As the critiques of modernism spread to all disciplines, not only are new approaches to old questions required but so are new objectives. It is within this environment that the growing consensus may be that while both audience and author must be accounted for, they are not reducible to historical analysis nor to a theory of the knowing subject, but rather to a theory of the role and effect that society's discursive practices play in their formation. This approach reflects the view that both the producer and consumer are always, already, situated in discursive practices that shape their consciousness. To this end, "critical theories" and the analysis they generate focus on those trace elements of the historical forms of discourse that structure the substantive content of their subject. Thought of within this context, music's practices collide with and are themselves affected by a wide range of themes.

Saul Ostrow

introduction
postmodern musical poetics and the problem of "close reading"

adam krims

THOSE WHO HAVE SOME FAMILIARITY with music theory as a discipline will notice that not all the essays presented here fit the definition of "music theory" in its (late twentieth-century) traditional, formalistic sense. On the contrary, some of the scholars and essays reprinted here are critical of that sense of music theory. But a central (if generally implicit) theme of this book is that each essay does represent music theory in two crucial senses of the phrase: building theories about music, and grappling with what we may call "musical poetics."

The first sense is only redundant or trivial if one loses sight of what music theory, in its North American institutional practice, has frequently become; and here we encounter the respect in which postmodern theories lurk somehow behind or around the approaches of each author. For in practice, music theory has either confined itself to post-Kantian models of beauty as aesthetic "free play" or has at least allow such models to constitute its central means of validation.[1] Whether in the form of Schenker analysis, set or serial post-tonal theory, or even adoptions of Harold Bloom's literary theories, the internal coherence of artworks remains even today an enabling assumption of most work in the field.[2]

DOI: 10.4324/9781003759447-1

Thus, one of the goals of this volume—*redefining* "music theory" as simply meaning "theory about music"—is decidedly *not* redundant in relation to how the phrase is understood today. For example, Richard Littlefield and David Neumeyer's essay takes as its explicit project the revision of some of Schenker's analytical method on ideological grounds. If that is music theory—and it is emphatically contended here that it is—then redefining music theory as theory about music constitutes a radical challenge indeed.

Of course, to say that the field today tends to validate music on post-Kantian grounds is not necessarily to say that music theorists by and large think explicitly in such terms; on the contrary, the lineage of musical aesthetics (via such figures as Schopenhauer, Schiller, and Hanslick) tends to survive without proper names, and with terms like "structure" and "coherence" used in their place.[3] And it is precisely the post-Kantian ideology of disinterested free play to which the phrase "the aesthetic" refers in the title of this book. "Resisting the Aesthetic," then, as the subtitle of the volume, indicates that the essays contained herein tend, from different perspectives, to challenge music theory by interrogating its very foundations—not for a fantasy of escaping the aesthetic or music theory entirely, but to sound out the possibilities of thinking differently about musical poetics.

And musical poetics is the other aspect of this collection that marks it as music theory, as each essay grapples in some way with the problematic and necessary task of closely reading musical texts. The very act of close reading has itself come under scrutiny in the past few years within the world of music scholarship and has always been somewhat suspect in related fields (such as communications, cultural studies, anthropology, and sociology).[4] It is the crisis of close reading, indeed of the whole field of musical poetics, that forms a frame for the essays contained here—and the latter may be taken as various strategies of response.

It is not uncommon to find music theory reproached as "essentializing" (Cusick 1991) and "pseudo-scientific" (McClary 1985), and to find close reading charged as "pull[ing] us back toward the aestheticism and transcendentalism of earlier ideologies" (Tomlinson 1993a).

Such assertions are disturbing not because they are unfair, but precisely because they frequently are true: the characterizations must be taken seriously, as they raise the question of the very possibility of attempting music theory in the late twentieth century; and the response needs to be informed by postmodern theory and ground itself within the contemporary environments of the humanities.[5] The following discussion is meant to suggest one form such a response might take.

Before doing that, though, it is worth noting an earlier attempt to grapple with these issues, especially since they were undertaken by a figure to whom much of the recent innovators in musicology owe an acknowledged intellectual debt, Theodor Adorno.[6] In a little-known lecture only recently published, "On the Problem of Music Analysis" (1982), Adorno considers the dilemma of immanence and eminence in music, including essentialism in music analysis and the relation of historicity and society to musical structure. His own concern to see music as symptom, attempted solution, and determinate success and failure leads him to a consideration of the role that music analysis may play in this determination. Adorno's consideration of the musical object leads him to a methodological point that is echoed, in various forms, in the essays contained in this book: "[I]n order to read notation at all, so that music results from it, an interpretive act is always necessary—that is to say, an analytical act, which asks what it is that the notation really signifies. Already in such elementary processes as these, analysis is always essentially present" (1982: 172).

Even if, as one might expect, Adorno's discussion betrays a Eurocentric (and class exclusive) bent in his focus on notated music, his point about the ubiquitousness of analysis may serve to remind us that, in fact, we analyze music all the time, often without explicitly acknowledging it. Offhand references to formal articulations, genre, and tonal area bring with them a whole world of theoretical baggage, even in the narrow sense of music theory being challenged here: it is then a question of what kind of music theory one wishes to engage, rather than its presence or absence. Adorno's observation reminds us of the impossibility of a nontheoretical approach to music; the implications here—for example, the scholar's role in establishing the contour of the music she is discussing—cannot be lost for poststructuralist theory.

But Adorno's discussion goes well beyond that, focusing on how the analyst may find the "truth content" (*Wahrheitsgehalt*) in the work. Adorno recognizes that a focus on immanent relations risks bracketing out the sociohistoric determinations of music; at the same time, he sees musical structure as an unavoidable mediation of any social content: comparing music analysis to "translation, criticism, and commentary," he asserts that it is "one of those media through which the very work unfolds. Works need analysis for their 'truth content' to be revealed" (1982: 176). At the same time, Adorno is careful to prevent even this initial interpretive step from bracketing what ultimately interests him, namely the work's relation to its historical situation; for example, he critiques Schenker's

Urlinie as representing "a point of view which disregards the thoroughly historical structure of all musical categories." In fact, analysis not only constructs the "momentum of the works in themselves, but also . . . the momentum which pushes beyond the individual work" (1982: 174, 176); so that one cannot analyze a piece without slipping into the broader world of musical discourses.

In a sense, Adorno can be seen here as embroiled in the same problem that both haunts and inspires the essays in this volume: the *close* reading of music brings with it the specter of the closed reading, a reading that isolates and essentializes the social/historical practice of music. What we have seen of Adorno's discussion so far might be taken to suggest that he saw no solution other than to analyze music in (at least) two different steps: a structural(ist) analysis of the "purely musical" relations, and then a more explicitly historical interpretation. The two-step process then would raise the more abstract problem of social analysis using structural homologies.[7] The initially structuralist analysis of the musical work also suggests the danger—despite Adorno's implication that music analysis is basic to any experience of music whatsoever—of reinscribing the essentialism with which postmodern critiques have reproached music theory.

But Adorno's mediating goal for music analysis is not the flushing out of an organic unity, but rather the encircling of what Fredric Jameson might call an "absent center": analysis has as its task, he says, "to reveal as clearly as possible the *problem* of each particular work . . . to become aware of a work as a *force-field* [*Kraftfeld*] organized around a problem . . . the paradox, so to speak, or the 'impossible' that every piece of music wants to make possible" (1982: 181). The crucial point here is that the "problem" itself is a mediation between musical "structure" and the social situation that ultimately determines it: it is no coincidence that the composer whose music Adorno uses to illustrate this is Schoenberg, the outstanding success and abject failure of whose music are, for Adorno, determinate effects of the particular form that capitalism took at that moment. So the "problem" is both determinate of musical structure and determined by the greater social organization: it acts as the pivot by which musical structure and social organization become continuous.

Adorno's attempt at a solution to the problem of close reading anticipates many of the current critiques of music theory; but in the Cold War, positivistic environment of 1950s North American music scholarship, his analytical ideas did not catch on. It is only now that postmodern theory has finally established a presence in music scholarship that we find the sublime

presence of "the social" returning to haunt the formerly sanitized world of musical structure.

Indeed, these days, it would seem difficult, if not impossible, to take seriously many poststructuralist critiques of representation (not to mention structure) without radically rethinking close reading.[8] At the same time, however, such critiques would seem to suggest that close reading (i.e., music analysis and music theory) need to be reconfigured, and not abandoned, for at least two major reasons.

First, it must be acknowledged that, regardless of whether it ever described "true" musical structure, music theory nevertheless has substantially penetrated public discourse about music. From concert-program (or liner-note) discussions of sonata form to Adorno's theories of culture, from radio references to Mozart's "perfection of form" to conservative cultural critiques of rap music's "primitive" nature—the discourse of music theory has, since at least sometime in the early- to mid-nineteenth century, been inseparable from both the music professional and the more public representations of music (and culture generally). It would seem problematic to maintain that we may safely dismiss music theory as "false consciousness" and allow music to exist apart from constituent theorizing; such a position would itself hardly take account of postmodern lessons about the discursive constitutions of artistic production and reception. Careful (and methodologically informed) explorations of music theory are necessary to understand the social constitution of "music," and to see the multiple ways in which that constitution plays into wider circuits of power.

All this suggests that a shift in the notion of musical structure from essence to discourse might be part of the shift to the new meaning of music theory. In fact, the notion that what is currently called music theory may simply be a (sometimes contradictory) ensemble of discourses would seem to argue all the more strongly that we examine it in detail, armed with as much (preferably historicizing) awareness as possible of its workings. What would presumably arise is a quite different ensemble of activities from those that currently predominate in music theory journals, books, and conferences; one goal of this volume is to suggest the very different trajectories that these activities might take.

A second reason to preserve (and enhance) the practice of close reading is the crucial role that musical poetics (by which I mean shared performances and interpretations of musical sound) will have to play in more generalized cultural theory. Even postmodern critiques of music theory suggest that whatever kind of practice music is in Western society, it performs certain social functions.[9] In that

case, some form of poetics is necessary: if cultural life is to be mapped, then it is important to recognize that representation (in its broader meaning within critical theory) is not simply a what, but also a how. In the case of music, it is difficult to deny that the "how" involves, at least, the particular arrangements of sound.[10] To assert that talk about structure, form, unity, and the like are "just discourse" is to miss the point: regardless of whether such terms have real referents (the latter being in any case a problematic notion in many postmodern models of representation), social action is profoundly affected by them. And it is for this very reason that bracketing musical poetics risks ignoring social processes by which musical actors (performers, composers, producers, and so on) model, invoke, play against, or in some other way make use of poetic discourse. Setting aside musical poetics would be no less a mystification than the more traditional practice of treating musical poetics as socially isolated or autonomous: in both cases, the text/context dichotomy remains deeply inscribed in our scholarly practice.

Postmodern music scholarship, then, would not render musical poetics (that is, music theory) a marginal or denigrated element, but rather would undermine, at the most basic level, what too frequently become its contexts and purposes: instead of serving to increase an aestheticized and autonomous pleasure, a postmodern music theory might recognize how that pleasure is every bit as worldly and functional as the economic and social conditions that are sometimes dismissed as irrelevant. As Kramer (1993) puts it, we might do well to "read as inscribed within the immediacy-effects of music itself the kind of mediating structures usually positioned outside music under the rubric of context" (1993: 32). Even if the phrase "music itself" here must be taken with caution, as a virtual effect of analytical practice, we can recognize here a glimmer of a possible disciplinary effect of postmodern theory: perhaps the music theory/musicology split—a disciplinary reinscription of the text/context dichotomy—may itself constitute an obstacle to the nascent project of postmodern music theory.

The disciplinary split may help to explain how that postmodern theory which has been engaged in each of the disciplines seems to be distributed. Specifically, musicology seems to have emphasized what Said (1983) famously called "worldliness," while music theory (the "text" side of the text/context split) frequently seems to favor what he refers to as "textualist" postmodernisms.[11] Thus, scholars such as Susan McClary, Suzanne Cusick, Gary Tomlinson, and Richard Leppart may turn to gender studies, post-Foucauldian discourse theory, and in general the complex loosely known as "cultural studies"[12]; while others such as Kevin Korsyn, Patrick

McCreless, Robert Snarrenberg, and Brian Hyer turn to Bloom's "anxiety of influence," Saussure, and Derrida.[13] Granted, there are a fair number of efforts that do not cleanly break down into one or the other category, such as much of the work of Lawrence Kramer (and it is probably no coincidence that postmodern music scholarship often ends up difficult to categorize, disciplinarily); and also granted, gender studies has made inroads into music theory to almost as great an extent as it has into musicology.[14] But nevertheless, the distribution of worldly and textualist postmodernisms suggests that we cannot rely on postmodern theory itself to break us out of the text/context dichotomy, any more than can musicologists' suspicions of music theory or music theorists' suspicions of musicology.[15]

The present volume might be taken to suggest one way around, if not out of, the text/context dichotomy, albeit one whose origin under the title "music theory" hardly eradicates any trace of the problem. Specifically, this book takes as one of its premises the notion that music theory might simply be defined as "theory about music," rather than being reserved, as it usually is, for more structuralist practices of modeling artworks. The broadening of the term music theory explains the inclusion of essays by such authors as Suzanne Cusick, Robert Fink, and David Gramit, whose institutional affiliations and writings more commonly may be thought to suggest musicology. On the other hand, the essays included here all grapple in some way with the problem and challenge of close reading; even when, as in the case of Cusick's essay, some of the very enabling assumptions of close reading are cast into question, the relation of musical poetics to broader theories of culture is somehow engaged. And if some traces of the traditional practices of music theory should remain in its postmodern versions—and no doubt, some should—then this difficult relation may end up being one of the central problems of the latter.

If postmodern music theory is taken this way, then close readings of music need not reinforce the ideology of aesthetic autonomy.[16] On the contrary, they may constitute a step toward broadening out music analysis to the practice of a more generalized cultural poetics. And it is perhaps significant in that context that the first essay of the volume, Jean-François Lyotard's "A Few Words to Sing," is the production of a scholar whose career has itself traced a trajectory of cultural poetics. In addition to his well-known theorizing of contemporary culture and ideological mutations that have come to constitute the postmodernity, Lyotard offers the perspective of someone for whom there seems to be no question of the relevance of close reading to social and ideological processes. Instead, the ways in which Berio's *Sequenza III* disrupts accepted models of musical structure comes

to suggest wider issues of semiotic reversal and subversion. At the same time, the idea of structure becomes not a hindrance to social engagement but rather an enabling condition for Lyotard's suggestion that the piece is determined by a particular condition of late capitalism.

In contrast to Lyotard, Joke Dame offers a reading of the same piece in counterpoised poststructuralist traditions, namely those of both Kristeva's genotext/phenotext dichotomy and gender performativity. Kristeva's categories stand in the odd position of having both constituted the grounds of some earlier productions of poststructuralism and of nevertheless being periodically renewed in changing contexts; in that sense, the dichotomy might be said to typify Kristeva's early work in general, in which the venerable projects of semiotics and psychoanalysis show surprising flexibility and adaptability to new ideological and methodological contexts. In Dame's essay, performance becomes a kind of productivity both grounded in and eluding the parameters of composition and musical structure.

Richard Littlefield and David Neumeyer's "Rewriting Schenker: Narrative/History/Ideology" offers an approach more in accord with current North American practices of music theory and yet in counterposition. Their concerns are directed toward one of the dominant paradigms of the field, Schenker analysis; but at the same time, its narratological aspects and ideological support (the latter often being dismissed as irrelevant to "musical" considerations) become the occasion for examining the interactions between close readings of tonal music and models of social hierarchy. There, not only is Schenker's organicist context interrogated; it is historicized, rather than dismissed. Ironically, the latter gesture—to acknowledge Schenker's constant reliance on explicitly organicist ideology—has sometimes served to dehistoricize, rather than to historicize, Schenker. Indeed, the blatancy of both his aesthetic and his more explicitly ideological remarks often preserves the music-analytical practice, thus lamentably reinforcing the notion that the category of the aesthetic may survive outside its enabling social conditions. Littlefield and Neumeyer's essay thus has the great virtue of suggesting that we may fail in any attempt to tinker surgically with historical utterances, or, in this case equivalent, to separate out the "aesthetic" as a category.

Robert Fink's "Desire, Repression, and Brahms's First Symphony" offers a novel perspective on one of the central issues of postmodern music scholarship, namely the sexual politics of the sonata. Fink both draws on and diverges from Susan McClary's well-known work on gendered formal processes; for him, the first movement of Brahms's First Symphony, op. 68, suggests a rethinking of the

ways in which sonata form may work through figures of sex and gender. Not only does he imbricate Freudian perspectives to the more common social hermeneutic, but Fink goes a step further to suggest complex relationships between close reading and theoretical practice; instead of being an either an application of a method or a pretended abstraction from a presumably purified musical experience, his argument traces paths among historical, psychoanalytic, music-analytical, and sociological registers. When these different modalities of music theory—in the expanded sense of the term advocated here—are allowed to interact and modify each other, Fink's theoretical flexibility itself becomes programmatic, demonstrating that engaging psychoanalysis, contrary to some critiques, need not inscribe a unitary or omniscient subject. On the contrary, the ultimate goal of the analysis is a cultural situation, described by Freud in a universalizing way but contextualized by Fink as a historical moment readable in Brahms's working-out of sonata form.

David Gramit's "Lieder, Listeners, and Ideology: Schubert's 'Alinde' and Opus 81" adopts a different strategy of what we might call "social hermeneutics," taking as its cue one of the richest sources of social meanings: genre. Specifically, the Schubert lied mentioned in the title invokes, via some of its closely-read musical characteristics, the network of associated discourses of nationality and national characteristics that would have been second (or is it first?) nature to the audiences for whom the song was composed. Those discourses are seen as ways in which nineteenth-century Viennese bourgeois subjects might have been socialized to view the world; and here music might be seen to take its place alongside literature, philosophy, or, for that matter, urban architecture as a means of reproducing desired characteristics of subjects.

Suzanne Cusick's "Feminist Theory, Music Theory, and the Mind/Body Problem" takes up the problem of a feminist reading of a woman's composition. For Cusick, the issue invokes a consideration of how music informs gendered behavior; and this, in turn, draws attention to how roles are played out in the act of performance. As a performer herself, Cusick locates the relevant cultural processes not from abstracted musical relations found in a score, as in traditional music theory, but rather in the performers' bodies. Thus, one way in which Cusick confronts the problem of close reading is to shift its object, both enabling a certain pun on performativity and suggesting a new way to bring music theory closer to discussions of the body.

Two essays in the collection perform interventions at levels closer to what is traditionally considered the musical "text." Alan Street's "Superior Myths,

Dogmatic Allegories: The Resistance to Musical Unity" focuses on one of the enabling assumptions of music analysis, namely the unified and self-related functioning of the musical artwork. Street sees an allegorical reading, after the work of Paul de Man, as a promising alternative to pure self-relation; as a practice, such a conception allows the music analyst both to take the self-relational premise seriously (i.e., to perform some sort of poetics) and to undermine the ideology of the artwork that too often follows closely on its heels. On another level, Richard Littlefield's "The Silence of the Frames" problematizes the very act of close reading from within, taking a methodological cue from Derrida's *The Truth in Painting* (1987) to examine various types of musical framing. Littlefield's essay aims directly at the very definition of the word music, throwing into question the notion that music has any "internal" context. One possible implication of Littlefield's essay is the very impossibility of an even provisionally self-relational reading. With this essay, the enabling conditions for even a postmodern music theory face a crisis whose resolution still lies in some unimagined future; and in addition, Littlefield demonstrates that engaging Derrida's work need not amount, as it too often does, to a replication of music analysis's aestheticizing tendencies.

Marion Guck's "Analytical Fictions" shifts the standard object of close reading, taking as its premise the unavoidably fictive status of music theory and analysis. Her essay foregrounds the language of music-analytical writing, exploring how rhetorical devices position the analyst with respect to both the music and the reader. Guck's project undermines the standard assumption in music theory that subordinates the ways we talk about music to "the music itself"; by subverting that priority, her essays emphasizes that mystifying music as somehow beyond words cannot exempt it from the postmodern problematic of representation.[17]

Finally, the commentary of Henry Klumpenhouwer, specially commissioned for this volume, occupies (and expands) a space between the explicitly Marxist problematic of Adorno and the more squarely postmodern positions of the recent essays. Klumpenhouwer commends the critiques of representation and knowledge that run throughout the essays included here; and he contextualizes the critiques in terms of certain dichotomies (such as text/context) that have long recurred in music studies, under ever-changing circumstances and with ever-changing ideological values. He also takes the issue a step further, challenging postmodern theory again to confront that from which much poststructuralist theory emerged, and that against which it often defines itself—namely, dialectical thought and historical materialism. If figures such as Fredric Jameson may be called (as they sometimes

are) "postmodern Marxists" because they validate postmodern paradigms of knowledge in certain registers while still maintaining a position of critique toward those same paradigms, then the same may be said of Klumpenhouwer, whose explicitly Marxist discussion simultaneously constitutes a unique contribution to music theory and underlines the need to continue projects of musical poetics.

In sum, the essays contained here may be taken to suggest that postmodern theory can leave room for close reading of music, even as the latter's dangers cannot be dismissed. It certainly should be kept in mind that modeling musical "structure" risks aestheticizing and formalizing music, thus eliding historical consciousness and reproducing social structures of domination.[18] And it must also be acknowledged that the field of music theory is frequently complicit in this regard (and often in remarkably unselfconscious ways). But at the same time, it would be no less a mystification to treat music as if it somehow lacks a poetics of representation—that is, to treat music as an undifferentiated site of pleasure or ideological reproduction. In fact, this particular mystification would be a certain means of assuring the reproduction of social domination, as critical approaches to musical poetics would be required to give way to the aestheticizing forms currently all too prevalent in the academy.

Instead, it would make sense to pursue a new configuration of the relationship between music analysis and social life, in which music analysis is crucial to cultural studies. "Musical" processes should indeed be mapped, at the risk of reifying the "purely" musical, but with an awareness, culled from study in poststructuralist critical and cultural theories, of the dangers of essentialism and domination. In this way, the question of representation(s) can be pursued on many different levels simultaneously, with critical and postmodern approaches establishing a presence where they are, in a sense, most needed—in the often closed and insular field of music theory.[19] Contexts can then be provided in which musical analyses, rather than reenforcing the ideology of aesthetic autonomy, are furnished in the service of broader cultural poetics.

If music theory is able to reach this stage, then perhaps this volume can have helped to bring about its own obsolescence; perhaps in some time "postmodern music theory" will have ceased to constitute a special category. But many things stand between now and then, not the least among them the very necessary widespread inclusion of training in critical and cultural theory in North American graduate music programs. It can be hoped that in the meantime, the essays gathered here can suggest a range of possibilities.

works cited

Adorno, Theodor. 1982. "On the Problem of Music Analysis," translated by Max Paddison. *Music Analysis* 1.2:169–181.

Agawu, Kofi. 1993. "Does Music Theory Need Musicology?," *Current Musicology* 53:89–98.

Cusick, Suzanne. 1994. "On a Lesbian Relation With Music: A Serious Effort not to Think Straight." In *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology*, ed. Phillip Brett and Elizabeth Wood. New York: Routledge.

Derrida, Jacques. 1987. *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Galand, Joel. 1995. "The Turn from the Aesthetic," *Current Musicology* 58:79–97.

Jameson, Fredric. 1991. *Postmodernism: Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Hyer, Brian. 1994. "'Signing Branches': Prosopopoeia in Rameau's Pigmalion," *Music Analysis* 13.1:7–50.

Kingsbury, Henry. 1991. "Sociological Factors in Musicological Poetics," *Ethnomusicology* 35.2:195–220.

Klumpenhouwer, Henry. 1996. "Commodity-Structure, Disavowal, and Practices of Music Theory." Paper delivered to the American Musicological Society, Baltimore, Maryland.

Korsyn, Kevin. 1991. "Toward a New Poetics of Musical Influence," *Music Analysis* 10.1/2:3–72.

Kramer, Lawrence. 1993. "Music Criticism and the Postmodernist Turn: In Contrary Motion with Gary Tomlinson," *Current Musicology* 53:25–35.

Krims, Adam. 1994. "Bloom, Post-Structuralism(s), and Music Theory," *Music Theory Online* 0.11.

———. 1995. "On the Fear of Losing Our Tools: A Response to Joseph Straus," *Music Theory Online* 1.1.

———. Forthcoming. "Disciplining Deconstruction (for Music Theory)." *Nineteenth-Century Music.*

———. Forthcoming. *Rap Music and Poetics of Identity.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Leppert, Richard. 1995. *The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation, and the History of the Body.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Leppert, Richard and Susan McClary, eds. 1989. *Music and Society: The Politics of Composition, Performance, and Reception.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lippman, Edward. 1992. *A History of Western Musical Aesthetics.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Manuel, Peter. 1993. *Cassette Culture: Popular Music and Technology in North India.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

McClary, Susan. 1985. Afterword to *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, Theory and History of Literature 16 Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

———. 1991. *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

McCreless, Patrick. 1991. "Syntagmatics and Paradigmatics: Some Implications for the Analysis of Chromaticism in Tonal Music," *Music Theory Spectrum* 13.2:147–178.

Norris, Christopher. 1988. *Deconstruction and the Interests of Theory.* London: Pinter.

Said, Edward. 1983. The World, the Text, and the Critic. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Snarrenberg, Robert. 1987. "The Play of Differance: Brahms's Intermezzo, Op. 188, no. 2," In *Theory Only* 10.3:1–25.

Stokes, Martin. 1994, "Introduction: Ethnicity, Identity, and Music." In *Ethnicitiy, Identity, and Music: The Musical Construction of Place,* ed. Martin Stokes. Oxford: Berg Publishers.

Straus, Joseph. 1995. "Post-Structuralism and Music Theory: A Response to Adam Krims," *Music Theory Online* 1.1.

Tomlinson, Gary. 1993a. "Musical Past and Postmodern Musicologies: A Response to Lawrence Kramer," and "Tomlinson Responds," *Current Musicology* 53:18–24; 36-40.

———. 1993b. *Music in Renaissance Magic: Toward a Historiography of Others.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

van den Toorn, Pieter. 1995. "A Response to Richard Taruskin's 'Myth of the Twentieth Century,'" *Music Theory Online* 1.5.

Young, Robert. 1981. "Post-Structuralism: An Introduction." In *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader,* ed. Robert Young. New York: Routledge.

notes

1 The fact that beauty, not the sublime, has constituted the field's principal means of validation helps to explain its resistance to some postmodern theories. It also brings into question the relevance of Joel Galand's (1995) attempt to defend traditional music theory on the grounds that certain theories of the sublime have constituted critiques of epistemology.

2 My own work (1994) has discussed the current popularity of Harold Bloom's theories in music scholarship, arguing that its ultimate function is to reinscribe the enabling assumptions being discussed here, while pretending to challenge them. Joseph Straus's (1995) response and my own (1995) counter-response further testify that music theory's embrace of Bloom is not a radical departure from its dominant practices.

3 This lineage is well represented in Lippman (1992), especially the sections on post-Kantian musical aesthetics; and Norris (1988: 28–31), summarizes some of the major relevant developments.

4 Among those identifying the dangers of close reading, from quite different perspectives, are Tomlinson (1993a), McClary (1985), Cusick (1994), and Kingsbury (1991). The limits to its use, from the standpoint of communications theory, are summarized in Manuel (1993: 15–17).

5 van den Toorn (1995), for example, shows no inclination toward grounding his

response in a knowledge of postmodern theory and thus provides an ineffective defense of close reading to anybody who takes postmodern knowledge seriously.

6 Rose Subotnik and Susan McClary are just two examples of scholars who acknowledge Adorno as a major inspiration. In view of the general recent trend to consider Adorno closer to postmodern theory than was previously assumed, his presence in this introduction comes perhaps as no surprise.

7 Jameson (1991: 186-8) provides an incisive and disturbing discussion of the problems of engaging homological social analysis.

8 Young (1981) provides a good overview of such critiques, notably beginning with voices from Marxist scholarship.

9 This, in fact, is one of Tomlinson's (1993a) most salient points. Kingsbury (1991) shows how the notion of "music" functions in a conservatory setting.

10 Stokes (1994) argues just this point.

11 Said explains "worldliness" and discusses some of the problems with "textualist" poststructuralisms (1983: 33–35, 39–53). Krims (1997) discusses some of the latter, in the specific context of deconstruction.

12 McClary (1991) is her best-known work incorporating cultural theory; Leppert and McClary (1989) provides a wide spectrum of cultural-theory related music scholarship; Leppert (1995) engages theories of cultural representation and the body with relation to music; and Tomlinson (1993b) invokes especially the work of Foucault.

13 Korsyn (1991), McCreless (1991), Snarrenberg (1987), Hyer (1994). (Krims 1994) suggests that the popularity of Bloom's work does not necessarily constitute a departure from the ideologies of traditional music theory; nevertheless, the textualist orientation of music-theoretical work engaging Bloom's theories is consistent with the trend being discussed here.

14 Suzanne Cusick's essay in this volume is only one of many such examples. Also notable are writings by Marion Guck (of which the essay contained herein would not be representative), Ellie Hisama, and Fred Maus.

15 An unfortunate example of the latter is Kofi Agawu, who asserts that "[m]ore pertinent [than context] is to demonstrate how [it] . . . determine[s] the nature of the musical work," adding that "[i]t seems unlikely that context-mongers will be able to provide us with an answer . . ." (1993: 91). Notable here are the assumption that the "nature of the musical work" boils down to the results of analysis, and the way in which the assumption enables the privileging of music theory over musicology.

16 Tomlinson's belief (1993) that close reading does reinforce that ideology is in many respects the most compelling. In some ways, the discussion here constitutes an oblique response to his worthwhile and important challenge.

17 van den Toorn (1995) attempts just such a mystification.

18 In addition to Tomlinson (1993), Klumpenhouwer (1996) elaborates this point persuasively.

19 I pursue this matter in great depth in the introduction to my *Rap Music and Poetics of Identity* (forthcoming).

"a few words to sing"

jean-françois lyotard

communicative discourse and figural work

THE FUNCTION OF ART AND POLITICS IS to make people dream, to fulfill their desires (but not to allow their realization), to transform the world, to change life, to offer a stage on which desire (the director) plays out its fantasmatical theatrics. The *operations* common to the dream (or to the symptom), to this art, and to this politics must, therefore, be recovered and made manifest. One such manifestation is *critique*, which must now be applied to art and politics.

Four operations define the dream-work: condensation, displacement, considerations of representability, and secondary revision.[1] The first two must be seen as the fundamental operations of the unconscious; the other two as mixed procedures at the center of which the demands of desire and censorship are respected simultaneously

The following are the characteristics of the unconscious process according to Freud:[2]

1. "[The Unconscious] instinctual impulses are co-ordinate with one another, exist side by side without being influenced by one another, and are

DOI: 10.4324/9781003759447-2

exempt from mutual contradiction.... There are in this system no negation, no doubt, no degrees of certainty." This implies "judgments" outside the categories of quality (neither affirmative nor negative) and modality (neither assertoric nor hypothetical).

2. "The cathetic intensities [in the Unconscious] are much more mobile." In the primary process, in contrast to the secondary process (language, action), energy is not "connected"; it is "free." Displacement and condensation are the characteristic operations of this nonconnection. Thus we cannot identify them with the operations at work in language.

3. "The processes of the system Ucs. are *timeless*; i. e., they are not ordered temporally, are not altered by the passage of time; they have no reference to time at all." Here we find the violation of one of the essential pivots of discourse's organization. In particular, the lack of reference to the actual time of the speaker (*linguistic time* in Emile Benveniste's terminology,) would have as its correlate the elision of the speaking subject.

4. "The Ucs. processes pay just as little regard to *reality*. They are subject to the pleasure principle..., [to] the replacement of external by psychical reality." Neither the referent nor the context of unconscious "discourse" can be recognized.

The characteristic that captures all of this, however, is the mobility of cathexes. Mobility signifies that the basic condition of discourse, that is, discontinuity or the existence of *articuli*, is not satisfied by unconscious "discourse." Freud always characterizes the unconscious as work, as an other of discourse, and not as another discourse. Primary and secondary space are broken down as are continuity and discontinuity, the nonconnected and the connected, the atemporal and the temporal, the asubjective and the subjective, the amodal and the modal, the aqualitative and the qualitative. We use the word *figural* to designate every trace of the primary in the secondary.

In a text, the effects of the unconscious are marked by transgressions of the sort listed above. Even in a plastic representation (a painting), the work of the unconscious deconstructs the rules of design, of value, of chromatic composition, decoration, and subject, and can even go so far as to act critically on the plastic support itself. This means that the characteristics enumerated by Freud apply not only to discourse but also to the representation of reality insofar as it is encoded, that is, written. This holds a fortiori for film, which brings together the characteristics of discourse and those of plastic representation.

It is true that the discourse of music does not refer to a referent in the same way

that language does. Nevertheless, music appears as a temporal organization (diachronic, like speech) of discontinuous elements (*articuli*, the notes) defined, like phonemes, by their place in a system (the scale and rules of harmony). In music the work of the unconscious produces effects of meaning by transgressing diverse levels: temporal organization (rhythm, development), steps between the elements (the scale), discontinuity between the elements (existence of notes), composition of elements out of other elements, sonorous material of so-called musical objects.

Let us reverse the proposition: every transgression of this type is equal to a trace of the primary process; that is, a transgression makes the listener grasp the secondary, the "linguistic," the "written" character of the music to which his ear is attuned and in which this trace is marked. Such transgressions then have a critical function, at least as long as they are not in turn connoted, that is, replaced in a new language as a constitutive operation, such as a rhetorical one, although they may be more elementary.

Luciano Berio's place is central regarding this problematic. He belongs to the movement of accelerated deconstruction, which seized upon the principles and levels of musical discourse, not only because he is a "modern musician" (connoted already), but also because he works directly, explicitly, upon the relation between language and music. In *Sequenza III* he is not content with the critical movement (sonorous disorder in the musical order) that we have indicated. He is not even content to oppose language as order against music as disorder. Rather, he reverses the roles, attributing to the musical region a coefficient elevated to a secondary organization, while speech appears shaken to its phonetic roots by the primary process. This reversal of usual roles—the musical object being, in principle, further from the connective model than the linguistic object—deserves reflection. It is necessary to situate it in relation to critical reversal in general.

language, music, critical reversal

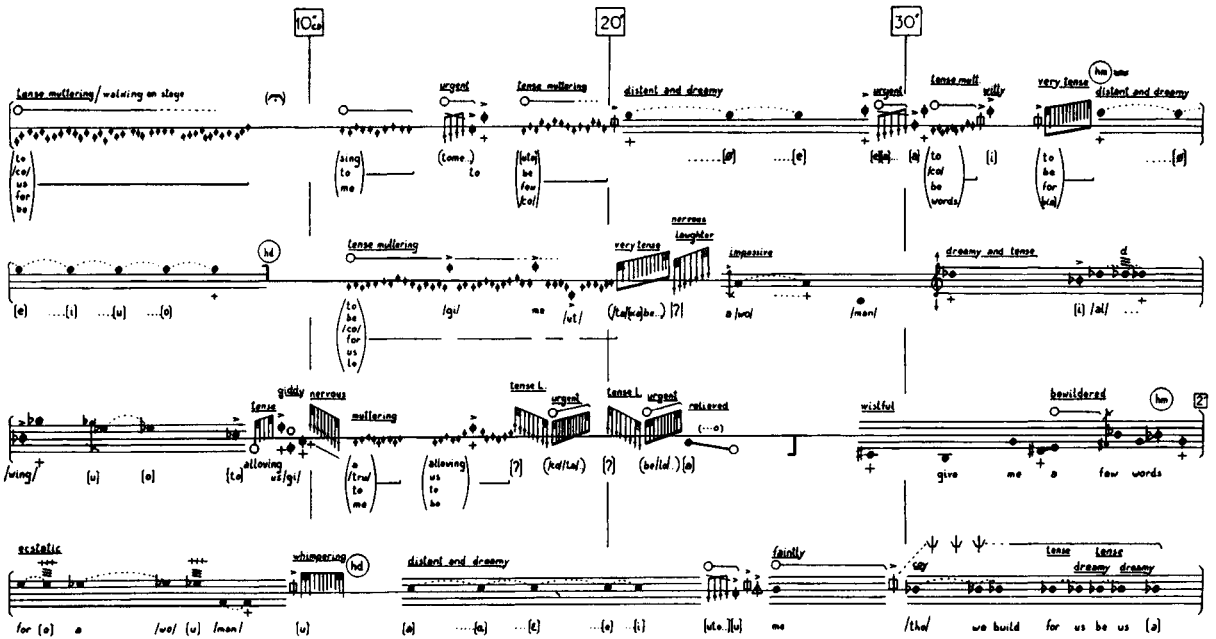
There is a Western hypothesis concerning the musical object that would claim that it is a quasi discourse. This hypothesis signifies that the sonorous organization must certainly entail (quasi) deviations but that the principles of order remain sufficiently sensible that the listener still recognizes what he is in the process of hearing (discourse). Such a double demand corresponds to the compromise between a

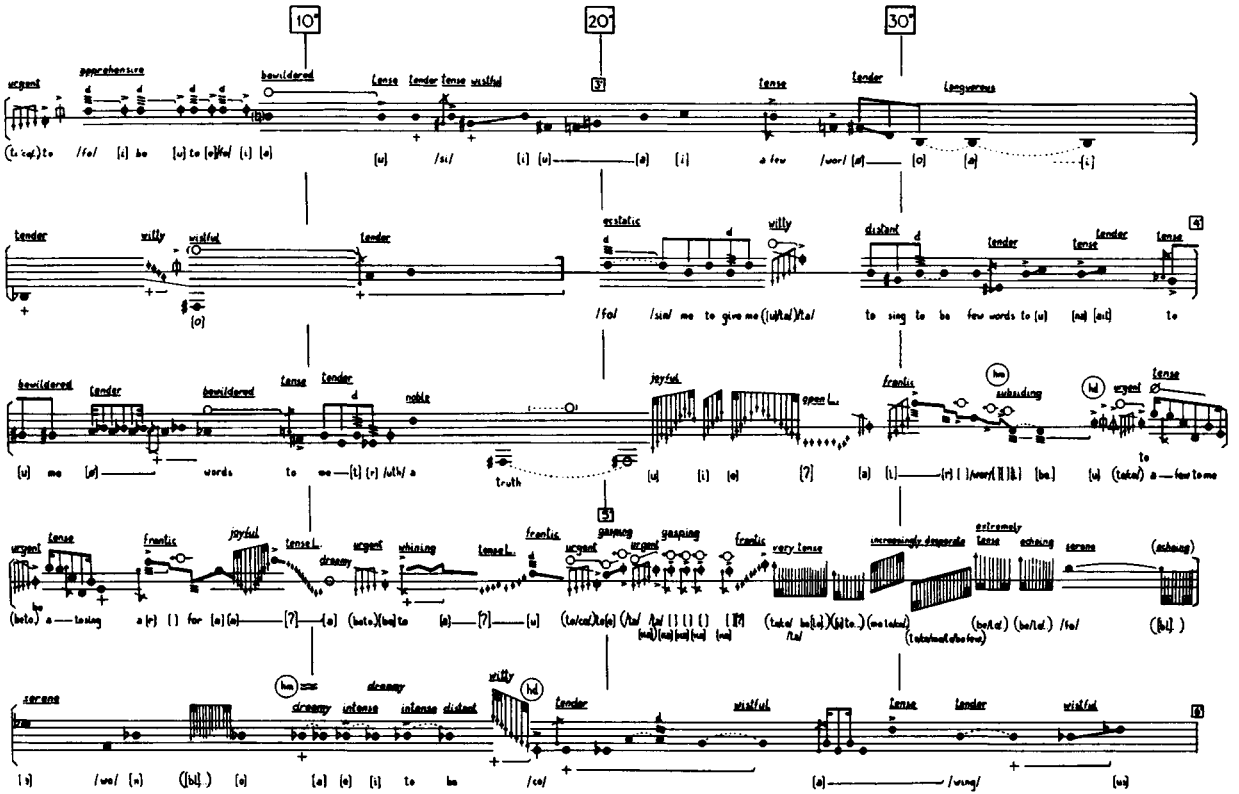
sequenza III

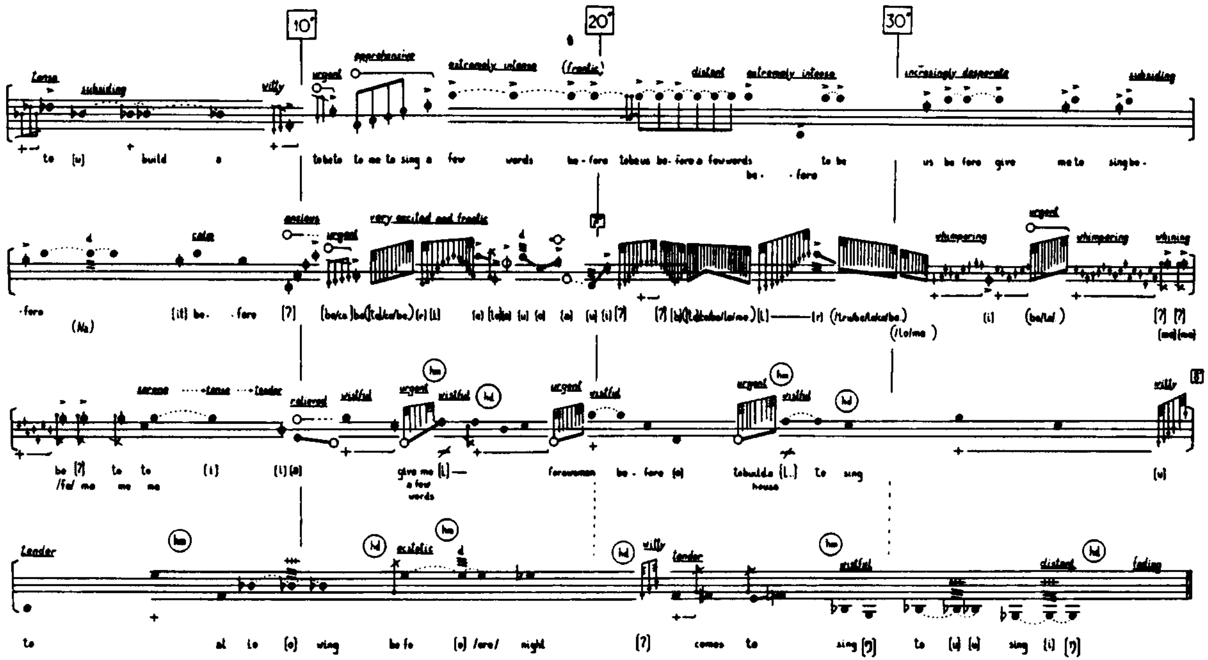
per voce femminile (1966)

luciano berio

text: markus kutter




10"
20"
30"
urgent
apprehensive
bewildered
tense
tender
tense
wistful
tense
tender
longuerous
tender
wistful
tender
willy
wistful
tender
ecstatic
willy
distant
tender
tender
tense
bewildered
tender
bewildered
tense
tender
noble
joyful
frantic
subsiding
urgent
tense
urgent
tense
frantic
joyful
tense
dreamy
urgent
whining
frantic
gasping
urgent
gasping
frantic
very tense
increasingly desperate
extremely
tense
echoing
serene
(echoing)
serene
dreamy
dreamy
intense
intense
distant
willy
tender
wistful
tense
tender
wistful


10"
20"
30"
tense
subsiding
witty
urgent
apprehensive
extremely intense
(frantic)
distant
extremely intense
increasingly desperate
subsiding
anxious
calm
urgent
very excited and frantic
whimpering
urgent
whimpering
whining
serene
tense
tender
relieved
wistful
urgent
wistful
urgent
wistful
urgent
wistful
witty
tender
ecstatic
witty
tender
wistful
distant
fading

system that allows the production of recognizable musical "discourses" and the "free play" of transgressive operations in relation to that system. This play, however, does not cease to constitute itself in a second-order system, and the operations do not cease to be connoted there. In short, a rhetoric is formed.

From a descriptive point of view there are three levels:

1. the system (scale, harmony) that allows the production of musical discourse;
2. the transgressive operations; and
3. the rhetorical aspect of these operations.

From the point of view of energy, it is easy to understand that every nonconnoted deviation is like an event. It blocks the communication of the musical "discourse." Being unheard of, every deviation necessitates a supplementary expenditure of energy so as to be heard and believed. Nevertheless, if it does not exceed the limits fixed by the rules of the system (the first level), the event is reabsorbed. It becomes situated in the rhetorical field and the affective result is, first, a surprise, followed immediately by a kind of satisfaction. This is comparable to a joke [*mot d'esprit*]: Freud stresses the limits that the deviations of language must respect in order to be witty [*rire d'esprit*]. Similarly, the equilibrium of surprise and satisfaction, of the charge and discharge of the psychical apparatus, makes for a strictly governed musical pleasure.

From a historical point of view, we are tempted to say (leaving the concern of accuracy and specificity to the specialists) that during the classical age musical events (of the second level) remained enclosed in the field authorized by the system (the first level) and could thus be easily connoted in musical rhetoric (the third level). In music, this would occur in a manner similar to what would arise in painting and literature. Up to the period 1860–1880, the various schools leave musical space intact, as do modern painters. No modern painter (the Impressionists included) questions plastic space; nor do novelists question literary space. The break represented by Cézanne, the Cubists, and, especially, the Abstractionists, consists in (and Pierre Francastel has shown this as well) the displacement of plastic space. This break is the end of representation, the end of working the plastic support. The line, value, and color are treated as something in which a scene is recognized, and not as something to be seen itself. The same holds for Mallarmé and the Dada movement in literature. Musicologists would undoubtedly know where the fracture took place in music: Wagner, Schoenberg, Webern?