

BOOK REVIEWS

Music and Genocide. Ed. Wojciech Klimczyk and Agata Świerzowska. Studies in Social Sciences, Philosophy and History of Ideas, Vol. 9. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2015. 243 pp. Notes. Bibliography. \$64.95, hard bound.

One bangs out the meter on the soup bowl,
Instead of soup, though, there's extract of music.

Walter Lindebaum's "Und die Musik spielt dazu" ("And the Music Played Along"), composed and performed in the concentration camp at Theresienstadt, would probably not find a place in this edited volume of essays on music and genocide. As music and art, the song fulfills none of Theodor W. Adorno's conditions of impossibility and absoluteness that serve as the aesthetic and theoretical leitmotifs for *Music and Genocide*. There is nothing in the text or the melody, borrowed from jazz composer Fredy Raymond, that condemns survivors to silence because of Adorno's indictment that "to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric," another mantra that runs through these chapters. Instead, we witness a music of survival and transcendence that is a witness because we hear it resonating beyond the silence. The moment of genocide itself is sounded, and the gap between music and genocide is closed.

Wojciech Klimczyk and Agata Świerzowska's *Music and Genocide* is a perplexing book, one that does not lend itself easily to review. In the long history of music criticism genocide does not attract frequent attention, especially from the dominant position of music writing in Europe and North America that places the conditions of aesthetics—beauty, power, transcendence—on a lofty level above and beyond the everyday moments of history. The conjunction "and" can connect, but often it separates, throwing realms of incompatibility into even greater relief, especially if one lets Adorno have his obfuscating way, as the contributors to this volume feel obliged to do. Separated from human agency and the affirmation of life by an "and," music comes to mean no more than itself, and it is distinguished from genocide by a rarefied powerlessness.

The disciplinary home for *Music and Genocide* is philosophy and aesthetics, particularly as practiced by the Centre for Comparative Studies of Civilizations at Cracow's Jagiellonian University. Several of the essays—in fact, the strongest—reflect this disciplinary point of departure. The aesthetic theories espoused by the authors of these essays—Wojciech Klimczyk, Katarzyna Naliwajek-Mazurek, Joanna Pośluszna, Łukasz Pośluszny, and Leszek Sosnowski—contain elements of theoretical unity, above all a concern for the potential of music to represent when words are not available. New questions in this volume are most effectively posed in the essays devoted to specific historical moments, especially those in Poland during the Holocaust (Naliwajek-Mazurek, and Pośluszna and Pośluszny). The ethnographic sensibilities in these essays draw us closer to music and meaning, rather than adding to the essentializing distance that Adorno has uncompromisingly imposed on postwar music aesthetics.

The essays in *Music and Genocide* fall into three general categories, which in turn follow disciplinary directions. The first of these categories, as I discuss in the previous paragraph, is philosophical and aesthetic. The second is historical and musicological. In these essays genocide develops over time and under historical circumstances that enter into the documentation of music. Whereas the more philosophical chapters concern themselves with the putative difficulty of music to represent, the historical chapters turn to the ways in which the chronicle of genocide enters into song. Arman Goharinasab and Azaden Latifkar turn to a bardic tradition to look for traces of the Russian massacre of Turkmen peoples at Geok Tepe in 1881. Kirsten Dyck

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reflects on the ways in which the memory of the Holocaust enters white-power music of more recent generations, including that of the twenty-first century. Works by Arnold Schoenberg and Krzysztof Penderecki provide narrative templates for essays by Ralph Buchenhorst and Joanna Postuszna. The essays in the third category combine ethnography with theory, and in so doing they attempt to unravel music's relation to genocide more critically, calling into question music's phenomenological capacity and limitations. A long set of theoretical reflections on the path to genocide in German music history, inevitably leading to the Holocaust, provides the substance for the opening chapter by M. J. Grant and her colleagues, Mareike Jacobs, Rebecca Möllemann, Simone Christine Münz, and Cornelia Nuxoll. Matt Lawson seeks to understand the limitations of musical language in Hanns Eisler's score for Alain Resnais's 1955 documentary film on Auschwitz, *Nuit et brouillard*. In the volume's "Afterword," Lawrence Kramer searches for a possible return path for music from acts of devastation, violence, and genocide to the European tradition that, for Kramer, has always afforded music with meaning.

The diverse methodological and disciplinary approaches in *Music and Genocide* notwithstanding, it is the paradox of the volume that the contributors remain constrained by the subjects announced by its title. Few essays really examine the details of genocide, keeping it at theoretical arm's length and accepting the claims about the difficulty of naming it. Even the essays that more ambitiously approach theory withdraw from analysis. In different ways, music is kept at a distance. In the aesthetic essays there are moments of wonderment about music's power to enchant and change the listener, and too often such generalizations seem sufficient to justify juxtaposing music and genocide. In many instances, the authors are simply talking past each other, leading one too often to question why certain chapters even appear in the book. What does belong together, however, is a serious challenge to the difficulty with which music and genocide are connected in the history of ideas, in the past and in our own day. Adorno got it wrong, and his pronouncements about impossibility remain a source of injustice. It was Walter Lindemann, instead, singing in the concentration camp, who truly got it right: and the music plays along.

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Historical Legacies of Communism in Russia and Eastern Europe. Ed. Mark R. Beissinger and Stephen Kotkin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. ix, 247 pp. Notes. Index. \$90.00, hard bound

With *Historical Legacies of Communism in Russia and Eastern Europe*, a leading political scientist (Mark Beissinger) and a top historian (Stephen Kotkin) bring together an all-star group of academics to help crystallize a growing research agenda on historical legacies in countries that have made transitions from communist regimes. With some of these countries more than a quarter century since their transitions, the time is certainly ripe for this agenda to mature.

Perhaps the volume's core argument is that it is harder than it sounds to identify what actually is a legacy and what any such legacy's effects are. In an introductory chapter that should become a standard reference point for future research, the editors argue that just because something looks and "quacks" like a legacy does not mean that it actually is one. Sometimes the present looks like the past for reasons that do not actually connect the two. Timothy Frye's excellent chapter, for example, shows that Gazprom's poor corporate governance cannot simply be ascribed to its status as