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Tina Frühauf (ed.), *Postmodernity's Musical Pasts* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2020).

The topic of postmodernism in music is due a reappraisal. As is widely recognised, musicology was initially slow to acknowledge the concept but seemed to try to make up for lost time with a flurry of publications during the 1990s and early 2000s. In retrospect, these tend to appear like breathless rehashes of the often grandiloquent theorising in other subjects, liberally and sometimes superficially applying ideas like 'end of meta-narratives', 'double-coding' or 'depthlessness' to music. Such uncritical celebration on the part of postmodernism's propagators was countered by similarly problematic blanket denunciations by its detractors. As suddenly as it had emerged, postmodernism subsequently disappeared from critical debates, lingering only like a bad smell that no-one dares to mention. With historical distance, it should be possible, if not necessary, to reengage with the theories and music associated with postmodernism with the requisite criticality and balance.

Something like this seems to have been the intention behind this volume. One indication of this is the choice of the term '*postmodernity*', rather than '*postmodernism*' which I have employed so far. This smart move is explained in the editor Tina Frühauf's introduction (and reaffirmed in abridged form on the back cover):

Postmodernity [...] is understood here as a distinguishing concept that applies to the second half of the twentieth century and beyond. Given the ongoing debates on post-structural terms and categories such as postmodernism, this volume specifically grasps postmodernity as a time and condition in which both modernism and postmodernism coexist (or are in a liminal space), thus acknowledging the tenacity of the former as it failed to expire and the emergence and existence of the latter. (2-3)

These remarks are complemented by similarly subtle conceptualisations of notions such as 'historicity' and 'temporality'. The question, as so often, is to what extent the editor's programmatic intentions were realised by the contributors. The book is the result of a conference held some years ago, although only a small proportion of conference papers made it into the book, which was instead bolstered by additional chapters. These kinds of collections are often a mixed bag, both in terms of subject matter and quality, and this one is no exception. For all that the editor invokes a shared sense of purpose uniting the contributors, as in frequent references to 'this volume' such as the one above, it is often difficult to see much common ground between the different chapters. While some contributors clearly attempt to make a constructive contribution to the subject and advance the debate, others relate only tenuously to the ostensible topic.

Lawrence Kramer's 'Music and Postmodern Time' (17-36) is a wide-ranging opening, moving from Shostakovich – who in turn references Bach – through Morton Feldman, Terry Riley, Karlheinz Stockhausen, and Benjamin Britten to George Benjamin, thus going well beyond the warhorses of what was considered 'postmodern music' in the 1990s. Rather than associating the term with a particular chronological period, Kramer defines postmodernism through its relation to the past:

The postmodern is a latent condition within the modern itself. The modern in turn is a category that recurs throughout history. At its simplest, the modern, whenever it occurs, is fixed by the understanding that the present has broken irrevocably with the past. The postmodern, accordingly, counters with the understanding that the modern in this sense is a fiction and that the past continues to infiltrate every present. (18)

Kramer relates this view to Bruno Latour, but the notion of the modern as a recurring phenomenon across history is also reminiscent of Susan Stanford Friedman's idea of 'planetary modernism', for

example. It is certainly a sophisticated approach, although it may be seen to simply replicate the same simplistic binaries familiar from the past. Has modernism ever really 'broken irrevocably with the past', as Kramer takes for granted? Has its relation to multiple pasts not always been rather more complex and dialectical?

Another 'postmodernising' consequence of the notion of multiple modernisms and, consequently, postmodernisms is the of flattening history. If our own present just enacts the eternal struggle between the same forces throughout history, what is specific about it? For music historians, the specificities are at least equally important as the continuities.

Joshua S. Walden's "'Aesthetic Indigestion": Alfred Schnittke, Anachronism, and the Contemporary Cadenza's Musical Past' (37-54) is a fine, gently revisionary approach to one of the composers who tended to be paraded as an example of postmodern composition. While Schnittke's cadenza to Beethoven's Violin Concerto involves a 'polystylistic' collage of materials of diverse historical origin, Walden argues that, for Schnittke, far from being flattened, the stylistic contrast created by historical difference matters greatly: '[...], in his treatment of quotations Schnittke creates a work that offers a kind of historiography of the genre of the violin concerto that upholds, rather than denies – as "postmodernist" art works are commonly held to do – the conception of the development of musical style as a progressive narrative' (40).

Where Walden critically reassesses some of the literature associated with musical postmodernism and listens to the music in new ways, Max Noubel, in 'John Adams's Post-stylistic Approach to the Past: A Response to the Uncertain Future of the Globalized World?' (55-72), seems intent on reaffirming past certainties. In a broad overview of Adams's compositional career that does not diverge much from standard accounts and is devoid of analytical details and music examples, Noubel contents himself with confirming the composer's own views on his music. Even more sweeping is Laurenz Lütteken's 'Germany, Post Modernism [sic – the variant spelling is unique in the volume and remains unexplained], and the Sphericity of Time' (75-91). On the face of it, this is an essay on the music of Wilhelm Killmayer, Jürg Baur and Isabel Mundry, who are united by virtue of their relation to Bernd Alois Zimmermann, 'the chief German-speaking composer of the second half of the twentieth century' (76) according to Lütteken, and the originator, as far as music is concerned, of the notion of the 'sphericity of time' mentioned in the title. This (the sphericity of time) is, like most things in this chapter, only briefly touched on, but not critically discussed, never mind analysed. Lütteken is not wrong in suggesting that the tendency represented by the three composers, which one might associate with 'moderate modernism', has often been overlooked notably following Adorno's dismissive attitude towards the *gemäßigte Moderne*, although the same cannot be said about Zimmermann himself. Yet Lütteken uses this as an opportunity to refight the battles of the 1970s and indulge in polemical attacks against 'the dogmatic premises of modernism' (78), 'modernism's self-accrediting dogmaticism' (78), the "'Darmstadt paradigm'" (78), 'the dogma of new music' (85), 'dogmatic self-certifying modernism' (88) and so on and so forth, some of which is blithely repeated in the editor's introduction (9). The climax is reached when Lütteken appears to casually associate musical modernism – which, if a reminder is necessary, was generally violently repressed by totalitarian regimes – with genocide, speaking of 'the relentless belief in the dynamics of progress with boundaries and progressive boundlessness drowned in measureless bloodshed' (89). There is little indication of any serious engagement with modernist music or recent literature on musical modernism – or, for that matter, postmodernism, which is mentioned only fleetingly. Again, this is not to disparage a critical reevaluation of the moderate mainstream, including the composers mentioned, but such an endeavour would need to involve more detailed analysis instead of the superficial characterisations provided here. Moreover, such a rethinking has already been underway for more than twenty years – ironically (or not) in modernist studies, witness the approaches by Arnold Whittall, J.P.E. Harper-Scott, James Hepokoski, Daniel Grimley, Alastair

Williams and Christopher Chowrimootoo, among others. In German-speaking musicology, this development is arguably paralleled by the idea of *klassizistische Moderne* in the work of Hermann Danuser and others, also dating from the mid-1990s.

Beate Kutschke comes closest to a full critical reappraisal of postmodernist thought and music. In 'Visions of the "End of History", "1968", and the Emergence of *Postmoderne Musik* in West Germany' (91-118), she starts by providing a genealogy of what she terms PEL (*posthistoire*, 'end of history' and 'loss of history'), locating the origins of this network of ideas in enlightenment utopianism. Accordingly, the notion of *posthistoire* that infiltrated discourse on new music in the 1990s can be seen as a dystopian negative image of the earlier optimistic visions of progress. In her reading, *posthistoire* was associated with a younger generation of post-avant-garde composers who came to prominence in the 1970s, including Wolfgang Rihm, Hans-Jürgen von Bose, Hans Christian von Dadelsen, Wolfgang von Schweinitz, Detlev Müller-Siemens and Manfred Trojahn, also mentioning Henryk Górecki, Luciano Berio (somewhat problematically), Alfred Schnittke and George Rochberg as their counterparts on the international scene (98). As she argues further, however, this association between PEL and *postmoderne Musik* was ultimately based on 'spurious similarities between the musical trends that were called "postmodern", on the one hand, and "*posthistoire*" and the "end of history" as theories and visions, on the other', which were in turn caused by 'the superficial and inaccurate reception of PEL theories' (106). Instead of PEL theories, Kutschke suggests that *postmoderne Musik* was given an impetus by 'the zeitgeist of "1968"', which she sums up as 'subversive, critical, pluralist, anti-authoritarian, and expressive' (116).

As a revisionist approach to the postmodernism debate of the 1990s that dares to rethink some of the tenets of the discourse and ask questions about the often tenuous associations made between music and cultural theory, this is compelling. And yet Kutschke seems to engage in some tenuous associations and problematic generalisations of her own. The most significant concerns the identification and characterisation of the work of Wolfgang Rihm, whom she – correctly in my view – regards as the leading figure among the proponents of *postmoderne Musik* listed above. 'Expressive' his music undoubtedly is, but I'm having difficulty regarding it as 'subversive, critical, pluralist' or 'anti-authoritarian', just as I would shy away from unproblematically associating someone who has set an openly nationalist drama by one of the key figures of the New Right, Botho Strauß (*Das Gehege*, 2004-05, based on Strauß' *Schlusschor*, 1991), with the New Left. (Rihm has also set texts by or collaborated with left-wing writers and artists, but his political position is at least ambiguous.)

For instance, the list of composers quoted above are said 'to mix compositional genres usually classified as representing "high" and "low" art' (98). This could be just a somewhat careless mass attribution that fits some of the individuals better than others, although it is hard to think of examples of any of them being particularly interested in 'low art'. That this is more than a casual misattribution becomes clear later on, when Kutschke likewise associates Rihm with Leslie Fiedler's manifesto 'Cross the Border – Close the Gap', with its call to overcome the 'class-structured world' and cross the line between 'elite and mass culture' (108). This seems to me a fundamental misunderstanding: I cannot think of any examples of an engagement with popular culture in Rihm's work, and little could be further from it. On the contrary, whereas the avant-gardes of the 1960s avoided institutions and genres associated with bourgeois culture and flirted with the anti-art sentiment of the historical avant-gardes and popular culture, the neo-romantic generation of the 1970s generally returned to bourgeois institutions and genres – orchestral pieces, string quartets, operas... – and a commensurate reinstatement of the sanctity of art as a separate sphere from life (and popular culture). Thus, whereas Stockhausen famously appeared on the cover of The Beatles' *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (before Rihm's time, admittedly), Rihm seems to fit a much more traditional portrait of the composer as *Bildungsbürger* in the culture of the

Bundesrepublik (pre- and post-unification) in which classical music sits at the top of the pyramid and enjoys unparalleled prestige.

As this example shows, while the notion of postmodernism in music obviously implies interconnections between intellectual history and music, analysing wherein those reside and how they manifest themselves remains a more complex problem than is usually acknowledged.

John Koslovsky's '(Neo-)Schenkerism and the Past: Recovering a Plurality of Critical Contexts' (119-37) is a cogent discussion of different conceptions of history in Schenkerian and Neo-Schenkerian thought and their relation to postmodernism. Although there may be connections between disciplinary and musical history, the minute distinctions between different Schenkerian lineages that Koslovski undertakes would have more resonance in a book on music theory; there are no obvious parallels to the music-historical developments discussed by the remaining authors.

In 'From Bach to Neruda: Historicity and Heterogeneous Temporality in the Chilean Cantata (1941-69)' (138-67) Daniela Fugellie provides a fascinating insight into a vibrant musical culture that is little known outside Chile. In contradistinction to some other chapters in the book, she also substantiates her points with analytical details, which are in turn illustrated by music examples. The direct line Fugellie establishes between the Bach reception in Chile and often avant-gardist and politically engaged compositions may be in danger of focusing too exclusively on national music history, however. After all, there are important parallels to politically motivated cantatas and cantata-like compositions elsewhere, as in the work of Eisler, Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Henze, Nono and Alan Bush, among others, which may well have had an impact on Chilean composers.

Georg Burgstaller's 'Time Re-Covered: Double Temporality in Olga Neuwirth's *Homage à Klaus Nomi*' (168-91) is another highlight, moving nimbly between the different temporal layers in Neuwirth's work, represented by Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, its rendition by the cover artist Klaus Nomi in the early 1980s and Neuwirth's own period. It is at these moments that the specific temporality and historicity of postmodernity comes fully into view. The same cannot be said of Susana Asensio Llamas's 'The Past is Home: Eduardo Martínez Torner in Postwar London; An Exile's Nostalgia for Spanish Musicology' (195-224). Not that the detailed account of Torner's life in exile is without interest, but it would make a more useful contribution in other contexts. The only tangible connection to the topic is established by way of a quotation from Sophia McClennen, who argued that the 'temporality for exiles from the latter part of the twentieth century often involves a dialectic between pre-modern myth and circularity, modern linear history, and postmodern ahistorical timelessness' (198). The use of this quotation not only runs the risk of reducing McClennen's subtle work to broad-brush generalisations, but it also leads to the logical problem of a dialectic between three elements. Are we to assume that postmodern ahistorical timelessness is the synthesis between pre-modern myth and circularity (thesis) on the one hand and modern linear history (antithesis) on the other, and how can such an apparent commitment to teleological epistemes be reconciled with an acknowledgement of postmodernism, predicated as it is on the end of such meta-narratives?

Caitlin Vaughn Carlos's contribution 'Historical Nostalgia, Nature, and the Future in Three Iconic Albums from 1971: *Aqualung*, *Who's Next*, and *Led Zeppelin IV*' seems more germane to the overall topic. Reading deftly across music, lyrics and cover art, Carlos argues that these albums present a nostalgic picture of an indeterminate rural past as a counterfoil to industrial and environmental decline. This conclusion is beyond dispute, but at times the complex multifariousness of these works appears to be downplayed to arrive at this reading. For example, Carlos emphasises how the contrast between acoustic and electric instruments in Led Zeppelin's 'Stairway to Heaven' parallels that between a faux-medieval pastoral idyll and a polluted present, quoting the group's Robert Plant to the effect that the acoustic guitar and recorder opening expressed 'the beauty and

remoteness of the pastoral Britain' (233). But this vision is contradicted by the lyrics. This is the first verse:

There's a lady who's sure all that glitters is gold
And she's buying a stairway to heaven
When she gets there she knows, if the stores are all closed
With a word she can get what she came for
Ooh, ooh, and she's buying a stairway to heaven

This strongly suggests that not all is what it seems ('all that glitters is gold') and that the supposed pastoral idyll is an illusion that is undermined by greed and corruption from the start.

Finally, in his 'Indie Neofado's Temporality: A Tale of Nostalgias' (249-72), Michael Arnold employs Svetlana Boym's distinction between restorative and reflective nostalgia to illuminate the expression of *saudade* in Portuguese Indie Neofado. This is a promising strategy that has the potential to go beyond stating the obvious, such as postmodernism's expression of nostalgia, and instead provides further differentiation and analysis. At times, however, Boym's binary distinction seems too crude to capture the fundamental ambivalence and multi-layered irony that Arnold finds in the musicians' attempts to salvage a form of expression that was tainted by its instrumentalization during the authoritarian regime of António de Oliveira Salazar.

Overall, there are some excellent chapters in the book that, taken together, suggest a path forward for the study of postmodernism and postmodernity. Yet it remains too heterogeneous and in places frankly wayward to proceed a significant distance along that path. The production standards are high, and the volume benefits from a bibliography and index, although the standard of copy-editing is mixed.