

seemingly not allow for interaction with the hard facts of its organization and basic set of assumptions.

Therefore, despite its similarity to other biennales established in disputed zones, it significantly attempts to consolidate two divergent histories under a new, singular, privileged gaze. The post-reunification Musik-Biennale Berlin can thus be said to have attempted to mend a divided cultural history, though without reflecting on how its fundamental structural constitution was a product of that same history.

### 5.3 Maerzmusik 2002-2014

From 2002 until 2014, Matthias Osterwold would serve as artistic director of the Maerzmusik festival. The beginning of his tenure would also mark the launch of this new festival, starting in 2002, as the successor to the Musik-Biennale Berlin, which had begun in the German Democratic Republic, and been put on by the Berliner Festspiele as of 1991 due to the state's collapse. The festival would be centred at the Haus der Berliner Festspiele, but worked consistently together with a varied group of other important Berlin cultural institutions. Among them were such prominent institutions as Radialsystem V, Volksbühne am Rosa-Luxemburg Platz, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), and the Hamburger Bahnhof, among many others.

Already somewhat discernable in this list of institutions was the emphasis that Osterwold placed on the festival programing a wide spectrum of musical practices and formats. This would include everything from new and historical orchestra and chamber works, to small experiments, music theatre, crossovers between music and visual arts, as well as electronic music, all in ever-changing combinations. For instance, during the first festival in 2002, the first Saturday evening was dedicated to a massive presentation of installations and compositions by, or inspired by, John Cage at Funkhaus Berlin, the former East German radio studios south-east of the city (Berliner Festspiele 2002, 104).

The festival also as of 2003 began a format that it called the Sonic Arts Lounge, in the Ticket Hall of the Haus der Berliner Festspiele. The format was conceived of as the “late night” offering of the festival, with concerts beginning as of 22h. The format was an attempt at exploring the interrelationships of avantgarde music, sound art, and club culture, all of which had rich communities in the city (Berliner Festspiele 2003, 196).

There was also a constant and very prominent emphasis on the programming of music from a variety of countries and regions that do not normally get as much focus as those major Western centres that much of CCM's history has focused on. This initiative focused for instance on China (2002), the Balkans (2003), Mexico (2008), or on Russia, Armenia, and Central Asia (2009). Osterwold would invite

composers and ensembles to come and perform at the festival from these regions, giving audiences a broad survey of musical developments around the world.

Osterwold's programming would, as a typically post-modern approach, no longer be confined to the European concert hall. His broad definition of music in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century saw it spill into various forms of music making and neighbouring fields and disciplines, including theatre, installations, etc., and an acknowledgement of works outside of Europe and North America (see also de la Motte-Haber 2011, 17). These two axis—interdisciplinarity and internationality, would form the matrix onto which the majority of Maerzmusik's programming can be mapped.

Examining the festival more closely, it is along these lines that the clearest differences between Osterwold's Maerzmusik from 2002–2014 and Polzer's festivals as of 2015 can be observed. The flood of various musical practices that the festival programed as part of its exploration of “current music” can be understood as the festival embracing a kind of post-modern diversity of musical practices; no longer differentiating between the one elite stream of the avant-garde (i.e. the German *Ernste Musik*, literally “serious music”) and music from other communities like the club scene (i.e. the German *Unterhaltungsmusik*, “entertainment music”). The issue is that the surveying of this diversity seems to ultimately be left up to the festival's director to filter and program; it still ultimately the individual figure of Osterwold that determines the current's direction(s).

Section 2.3.2 examined the difference between the post-modernism of “Magiciens de la Terre,” an early attempt at engaging with non-Western art practice on the same level as Western art practice, and the post-colonial approach of Enwezor to Documenta 11. Reanimating this discussion here can help draw out distinctions between the programming approaches of Osterwold and Polzer. “Magiciens de la Terre” was a large-scale group show that brought together works from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and exhibited them alongside works from Europe and North America. The central criticism of the show was that despite the diversity of practices that were exhibited, they were nevertheless subsumed into the para-text of the curator and his singular vision of the exhibition.

Likewise, Osterwold's programming seems to make him into a kind of programmer-as-ethnographer, travelling the world and Berlin's experimental scene, and bringing back to the Festspiele the most interesting (for him), most authentic practices from individual music-making communities. The festival becomes a kind of celebration—and thus solidification of identity—of the diversity of practices that are programmed within it. It is a post-modern celebration of diversity that, as Wolfgang Welsch states, “proceeds from the existence of clearly distinguished, in themselves homogenous cultures - the only difference now being that these differences exist within one and the same state community”—that of this festival for current music (Welsch 1999, 3).

Leadership strategies within the visual arts institution field have since shifted away from such an approach to programming, as the criticism of the “Magiciens” exhibition has shown. In the section above, it was contrasted with Okwui Enwezor’s Documenta 11, which took instead a more post-colonialist approach to organizing documenta’s programming of art from non-Western artists. His approach was to instead approach the exhibition by showing the interconnectedness of Western and non-Western art. This did not mean just looking at how non-Western artists were inspired or influenced by Western artists, but rather looking at the broad picture of interdependencies between them.

This approach pre-empts Polzer’s focus on “Time Issues” rather than musical practice with Maerzmusik. Unlike Osterwold’s “surveying” of various countries’ musical practices, reduced to several select representatives, Polzer seizes on specific issues, and sketches a network of relations that act upon it, showing how an artistic practice cannot be understood without understanding how it is interconnected with both its context, and issues that span the globe such as the legacy of colonialism, or issues of capitalism.

## 5.4 Berno Odo Polzer

### 5.4.1 The Programme is now the Text

Chapter 4 looked at how Daniel Ott and Manos Tsangaris, the current co-directors of the Munich Biennale for New Music Theater, focused their creative energy on shaping and creating a set of conditions to nurture new and experimental forms of music theatre practice—the most interesting and fitting results of which they commission to appear in their festival programs. The resulting festival is then put together by the duo, alongside their team, in such a way as to take also into consideration the festival experience of the visitors. This meant for instance between the 2016 and 2018 editions of the biennale changing it so as to not use any venue more than once, in order to ensure that there were no dark days where the festival would not present any works, in order to better maintain its “festive” energy.

Working with the greater technical limitation of one main venue, the Haus der Berliner Festspiele, along with a few additional partners, Polzer also has to take this large-scale shaping of the experience of his festival and its productions into consideration.<sup>2</sup> However, a fundamental difference between the two cases lies in the thrust of their efforts to impress upon these festivals their own viewpoint and artistic direction. DOMTS’ focus is decidedly on a practice of mentoring and

---

2 The 2017 and 2018 festivals are the focus of this section. While the program of Maerzmusik 2019 was taken into consideration, an analysis of that edition could not be included.