Popular Musicking and the Politics of Spectatorship at the United Nations

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> What is the place of the emotions in music? . . . [One view] holds that music is concerned with the "communication" or the "expression" or the "representation" of emotions . . . Common sense leads me to ask why people should devote so much of their lives and resources to the communication of emotions . . . and why, for that matter, listeners should be interested in having them communicated to them. *After all, we all have plenty of emotions of our own without having to feel other people's.*
> *(Small 135-6, emphasis added)*

Musicologist Christopher Small's work is often invoked to make romantic claims for music's capacity to forge community. In *Musicking*, the work from which my epigraph is drawn, he argues optimistically that music is a process in which performers and listeners each participate, a ritual that bonds people by celebrating their unique social worlds. Nonetheless, his glib argument against identifying the affective transmissions music engenders with its purpose pulses with charming anti-social cynicism. Small dismisses the theory that music facilitates the transfer of feelings between individuals, indicating his exhaustion with the often-invoked notion that art can make a better world by encouraging empathetic encounters between national and cultural others. Small's skepticism of aesthetic theories based in empathy offers a useful frame for reconsidering the use of music in diplomacy, especially in international institutions such as the United Nations.

Musical programs have often appeared at the UN, and music has long offered a set of handy metaphors to theories of international relations. In an early effort to theorize the work of the UN as performance, the Irish diplomat Conor Cruise O'Brien wrote that a resolution of the General Assembly "has the force of law in the same sense as has a sacred song: it provides spiritual encouragement and comfort and induces a sense of collective righteousness and of the legitimacy of a common endeavor" (19). At the UN, states performatively enact the contours of an international community, staging consensus and dissensus[1] in an effort to momentarily stabilize a particular configuration of states and peoples. As O'Brien implies, this work is also addressed to a global audience without diplomatic credentials in an effort to activate positive feelings regarding our species' shared humanity, responsibility, and purpose.

This chapter focuses on the divergent responses of multiple spectators addressed by the UN when it stages performances that incorporate popular music. I argue that the UN deploys musical performance as part of a broader project to transform the individual global citizens who follow the UN's work into docile subjects of global governmentality. However, this effort is undermined by the instability of the moment in which those individuals watch and listen. In what follows I will examine two scenes of what Small terms musicking: instances of performing or listening to music, an expanded category that recognizes that even spectatorship and audition constitute active participatory processes that make meaning. First, I will examine events produced by the UN Secretariat to commemorate the third International Happiness Day, held in 2015, which centered on the participation of the pop star Pharrell Williams. On that day, Williams straddled the line between two energetic audiences: a crowd of high school students who watched him from the floor of the General Assembly hall, and anxious UN functionaries who watched the crowd from the hall's green marble dais. Second, I will examine a New Year's concert mounted in the General Assembly in 2013, which featured a performance by Serbia's Viva Vox choir. Here I will focus on the Secretary-General as a highly-placed spectator who becomes a source of discomfort and offense for civil society groups and journalists who watch him in turn.

Among these other spectators, I will also locate my own gaze—my place as a spectator consuming these events through the UN's streaming web video service.

1 Dissensus is philosopher Jacques Rancière's term for a dispute that reveals inequality in spaces that claim to be egalitarian. He writes, "dissensus is not a conflict of interests, opinions, or values; it is a division put in the 'common sense': a dispute about what is given, about the frame within which we see something as given" (304).

I include my spectatorship not in an effort to generalize from my reactions, but rather to highlight their contingency. As ethnomusicologist Deborah Wong reflects on her own auto-ethnographic practice in the collection *Shadows in the Field*, "It's not impossible that your subjectivity and mine have points of overlap, but our responses are not, and can't be, equivalent" (80). My own reactions to these scenes of musicking vary widely from bemusement to aversion. I am primed to distrust sincerity, and occasionally cringe at the ways these events use pop stars, diplomats, and lay-persons. These reactions may well be a function of my privilege and position as a spectator. Nonetheless, this article is not about the contents of any individual spectator's experience, but an account of the instant of hailing whereby performance in international institutions impacts a spectator's subjectivity, interpellating that spectator as a subject of ideology. This instant will necessarily differ for each individual hailed.[2] I include my own first person accounts in an effort to theorize such moments even in their heterogeneity. As performance studies scholar Della Pollock asserts, "[t]his performative 'I' thus has a politics and an ethics. Performing displacement by error, intimacy, others, it moves beyond the atomization, alienation, and reproduction of the authorial self toward new points of identification and alliance" (252). My performative "I" is thus a consciously idiosyncratic refusal of identification with UN spectacle in service to thinking through other forms of affinity and organization.

At stake in this endeavor is a clearer view of the ways in which international institutions and the states that work within their confines exercise power via performance and spectatorship. The Secretary-General makes clear the central place of spectatorship in diplomacy at the UN; he facilitates spectatorship. His most explicit power is enshrined in the UN Charter's Article 99: "The Secretary-General may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security" (UN). The Charter calls on the Secretary-General to act as a global spectator. The Secretary-General trains the gaze of the UN Security Council on specific regions in conflict, a gaze followed often by the indirect application of economic

2 Here I follow Louis Althusser's theory of interpellation, as described in his essay, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses." Althusser tells his readers that interpellation "can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: 'Hey, you there!'" (118). While Althusser goes on to disclaim the theatricality of this example and the "temporal succession" it implies (118), the cases in this chapter insist on the utility of conceiving interpellation via the theatrical moments of hailing in which the implicit process of interpellation rises to the surface of consciousness.

and military force in the form of sanctions, peacekeeping, and related mechanisms. The UN's spectatorship is performative insofar as it is an integral part of a system of global governmentality that manages world populations by targeting "someone's body, soul, and behavior" (Foucault, *Security* 122). In other words, the UN acts on the world stage via spectatorship: by looking and not looking at particular individuals, populations, or territories, and by influencing what they can and cannot see in turn. In this context, the moment of interface between spectators and international institutions in performances of popular music at the UN provides an opportunity to reimagine the radical agency of even the most disenfranchised spectators on the world stage. Where powerful states mobilize performance on the world stage to emplace a spectator, in that spectator's reactions she or he may refuse to be placed.

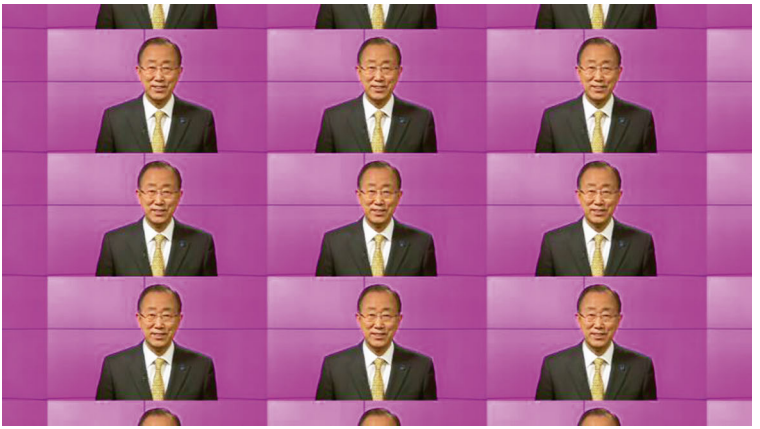
INTERNATIONAL HAPPINESS DAY

In 1972, the King of Bhutan proposed a new indicator of national development, Gross National Happiness, or GNH, to be measured alongside indicators like Gross Domestic Product. GNH looks beyond what money can buy in the administration of the state by focusing regulative and legislative attention on four pillars: Sustainable and Equitable Socio-Economic Development, Conservation of the Environment, Preservation and Promotion of Culture, and Good Governance ("Four Pillars"). In Bhutan, a Gross National Happiness Commission is charged with mainstreaming these principles into national policies, orienting the apparatus of government towards the subjective wellbeing of citizens, monitoring their affective lives in regular nationwide surveys. These surveys consist of dozens of questions measuring and quantifying a respondent's psychological well-being, health, relationship with the environment, economic standard of living, and so on ("Gross National Happiness"). Internationally, GNH has also become an ideological export, a form of diplomatic cultural capital for Bhutan on the world stage. Advancing the cause of happiness, Bhutan placed the issue on the UN's agenda in 2011 through resolution 65/309, and a year later the General Assembly unanimously adopted resolution 66/281, also penned by Bhutan, proclaiming 20 March the International Day of Happiness. The resolution also emphasized the Secretary-General's important duties vis-à-vis global spectatorship by calling on him to bring the proclamation to "the attention of all Member States, organizations of the United Nations system and civil society organizations for appropriate observance" (UNGA 1).

International Happiness Day is hardly a distraction for the Secretariat: it provides an anchor for spectacles designed to encourage global spectators to sign on to UN priorities on issues like climate change and poverty eradication. As feminist scholar Sara Ahmed details in *The Promise of Happiness*, happiness also functions as a performative promise that "gives us a specific image of the future" suggesting "happiness lies ahead of us, at least if we do the right thing" (29). As a promise, happiness organizes and intensifies the energies of those to whom it is addressed. At the UN action is often accomplished through the use of performative speech, for instance, in the active language peppering the operational paragraphs of resolutions of the Security Council or General Assembly. Philosopher J. L. Austin's theory of the speech act (detailed in his lectures, *How to Do Things with Words*) may be even more broadly applied at the UN. International relations is a realm composed of diplomatic performatives: discrete, efficacious utterances deployed to affect the relations between states. A treaty, the threat of sanctions, an off the cuff remark by a head of state—each of these may function as a diplomatic performative, as an effort to remake the world through verbal performance. The promise of happiness is another diplomatic performative that works to interpellate states and citizens as good institutions and subjects on the world stage.

For the third observance of International Happiness Day in 2015, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon released a brief video advertising programs run by the Secretariat in cooperation with groups like The UN Foundation, a non-governmental organization founded by Ted Turner to "connect people, ideas and resources to help the United Nations solve global problems" ("What We Do"). In the video the Secretary-General stands in front of a wall of neon pink flat screen monitors, imploring his audience in different languages to "be happy," while the best-selling song of 2014, pop star Pharrell Williams's "Happy," plays in the background (see fig. 9). The video launched multiple programs planned for 2015, including the #HappySoundsLike Campaign, a collaboration with streaming music platform Mix Radio, in which the public was invited to nominate songs to a global happiness playlist; an educational event in the General Assembly featuring Williams in conversation with environmental activists Philippe Cousteau and Sylvia Earle; and the Happy Party website (another co-production between Pharrell Williams and the UN Foundation, with support from Google) with which users could make animated gifs of themselves dancing along to "Happy" yet again.

Fig. 9: A screenshot of the UN promotional video "Ban Ki-moon Joins the #HappySoundsLike Campaign," featuring the Secretary-General.



Source: Courtesy of the United Nations.

At first glance Pharrell Williams's pervasive presence appears to be a product of the coincidence that Gross National Happiness found global purchase at the same time that Williams's hit song was climbing the charts. Extended reflection suggests a deeper affinity, however, between a discourse of happiness that is anti-consumerist on its face and a heavily commercialized popular music market. Even if some economists[3] are stymied by a "Happy Planet Index" that ranks the US in 150th place—"behind Burkina Faso," as *Foreign Policy Magazine* reported in 2009 (Yester)—it is not hard to be suspicious that Gross National Happiness in fact supports prevailing economic relationships. Gross National Happiness rewrites the terms with which populations are governed or managed while doing little to alter the structures of power underwriting the hierarchical distribution of states and their populations in the twenty-first-century.

Evident in the 2015 programs, implementing the Secretary-General's International Happiness Day mandate has required significant corporate sponsorship and has been largely facilitated by Ted Turner's UN Foundation. These partnerships entrench a twenty-first century neoliberal political order that prefers marketplace solutions when addressing civic issues. Where the raw measurement of wealth and production gives way to delicate assessments of individual and

3 See, for example, economist Arno Tausch's article "In Praise of Inequality? 'Happy Planet' Performance and its Determinants," and the economists quoted by Katherine Yester in *Foreign Policy Magazine*.

collective happiness, one still finds a market logic refining its tools for what philosopher Michel Foucault calls "governmentality . . . the way in which one conducts the conduct of men" (*Birth of Biopolitics* 187). Governmentality is an exercise of power not through direct applications of force, but by leveraging relationships between forces and managing populations by addressing their behaviors and dispositions (Foucault, *Security* 190-98). Gross National Happiness risks intensifying a global governmentality that sustains and obscures inequality, exploitation, and oppression. Even if the circulation of global capital is absent from an ideal theory of Gross National Happiness, neoliberal structures prove adept at incorporating the happiness discourse and infiltrating its material expressions. As a producer, songwriter, and performer with his own clothing lines and fragrances, Pharrell Williams, who ranked number 78 on *Forbes Magazine*'s 2015 list of the world's highest paid celebrities, embodies this contradiction.

While Gross National Happiness can be a positive and disruptive force in the field of economic and development policy, its implementation inevitably proves ambivalent where it becomes attached to the exercise of power via regimes of governmentality. Ahmed argues that "happiness is a form of world making" (2) and that it "becomes a duty" (7). Where she has warned against the "instrumentalization of happiness as a technique" (10), one might view the UN's International Happiness Day activities with similar suspicion. Here again, the role of the Secretary-General as a facilitator of spectatorship comes to the fore. The aforementioned General Assembly resolution 66/281 directs the Secretary-General to manage the attentions of states and civil society so that they might observe International Happiness Day appropriately. The Secretariat stages events designed to hail spectators into the duty of happiness, but these events also provide opportunities to feel otherwise.

I certainly felt otherwise. Each of the Secretariat's 2015 Happiness Day observances prompted my discomfort, but perhaps none so much as the Happy Party website Pharrell Williams, Google, and the UN Foundation produced (globalhappyparty.com). In this response, I am likely an outlier: judging from the endless sea of animated gifs of people dancing that composed the website (each uploaded by a visitor), it is clear that many others have enjoyed participating in the project. The site's looping music removes Williams's voice from the song to invite participation in performances that affirm the sentiment on offer: we are called to fill the space the lyrics have left behind. Without voice and lyrics only one index of the performing body remains, the clapping hands which refer one back to the song's missing verbal content: the repeated chorus of imperatives commanding the audience to "clap along if you feel like happiness is

the truth . . . clap along if you know what happiness is to you . . . clap along if you feel like that's what you wanna do" (Williams). What these orders lack in severity they make up for with a presumed social pressure evinced by the parade of animated gifs collected for the event. These amplify the uncanny effects of the Happy Party: though many of the gifs feature people in groups, suggesting the scenes of community Happy Party produced locally, the overwhelming visual motif of the page is a uniform grid of squares in which the strobe-like rhythm of the shifting frames of each gif unifies globally diffuse dancers. Participants are atomized; they participate to be codified and arranged, assimilated uniformly under the banner of happiness. Though they seem to be having fun, I recoil from this scene of affective administration and refuse to be placed among them.

The UN Foundation and *National Geographic Magazine* brought Williams into the General Assembly Hall on Happiness Day to participate in an educational event on climate change. Greeting the cheering crowd of assembled youths he observed drily, "[s]o this is fun" ("International Day of Happiness Event"). His mild affect and intonation epitomized the wry response engendered by institutional efforts to inorganically command fun, from corporate team-building exercises to high school pep rallies. I also sensed an element of subversive sarcasm in Williams's presentation, a performance of cool his young audience seemed to embrace as their cheering swelled again. Williams's live appearance opened a moment of radical indeterminacy in which performer and spectators navigated and negotiated their relationships with one another and with the wider world. If I found the UN's calls for a modest and tightly controlled public participation in the International Day of Happiness off-putting, in the General Assembly that day other audiences refused to be placed in their own ways.

Maher Nasser, Director of the Outreach Division for the UN's Department of Public Information, opened the event with a call for participation that had clear limits: "Please use your cell phones. You can tweet, use social media. You can dance, but not on the tables." The audience broke into warm laughter ("International Day of Happiness Event"). Later, as Nasser attempted to organize the presenters for a photograph, the music video of "Happy" began playing in the General Assembly hall. The crowd of students left their seats to make their way to the General Assembly dais, staying off the tables. On his own initiative, Williams descended into the crowd, which now became a sea of smart phones pressing forward for a selfie with the celebrity (see fig. 10). The webcast of the event cut between images of the music video and the growing chaos in the Assembly hall, and after a minute Nasser could be heard again, booming over the song to entreat the crowd, "Please don't push, there are children who might

get suffocated" ("International Day of Happiness Event"). The song was cut off and security guards pulled Williams and others back to the safety of the stage, from which they could exit the disorder.

Fig. 10: Pharrell Williams at the General Assembly during the special event on the occasion of the International Day of Happiness.

Source: Courtesy of UN Photo, Loey Felipe.

Two groups of spectators looked on one another at this event: a group of youths who transported the energy and conventions of a pop concert into the Assembly hall, and a security apparatus that watched them uneasily. The surging, self-organized crowd proved inappropriate, perhaps even subversive, in the serious diplomatic space of the General Assembly, and the representatives of authority on stage recoiled. While the disorder may have posed an immediate safety hazard to those present, it also posed an implicit threat to an institution striving to bring order to the world. A third spectator was also watching: I laughed a mirthless laugh at the ironic chaos streamed to me online, which seemed to parody the more consequential forms of crowd control for which the UN is often responsible in refugee camps or around demilitarized zones. Scholar, students, and security guards—spectators all—we materialized our relationship to an international order through the ways we watched.

According to Christopher Small, "[i]n the concert hall, as at any other kind of musical event there is an underlying kinship between the members of the audience . . . there are certain kinds of behavior they can expect of one another and

other kinds that they need not" (41). Small indicates the nexus of space, spectatorship, and expectation that makes the power of crowds legible, the grounds on which heterogeneous and spontaneous responses take on social meaning. The General Assembly hall also activates expectations of behavior, whether it is playing host to a diplomatic or a musical performance. During its usual sessions, one expects dull speeches only occasionally ruptured by scenes of Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev brandishing his shoe at the General Assembly podium in 1960, Saudi Arabia's UN Ambassador Jamil Baroody throwing a punch at the General Assembly President in 1973, or Israeli President Chaim Herzog tearing up a resolution equating Zionism with racism in 1975. All of these constitute theatrically excessive performative acts that take their meaning by virtue of their departure from the orderly norms of diplomacy.

Bringing musical performance into the General Assembly intensifies the norms governing audience behavior—how one acts and reacts takes on added performative force in the space of the Assembly hall. These added forces subvert the presumption of "underlying kinship" by rendering it a performative promise rather than manifest reality: something to be made that is always at risk of failure. The UN is founded on a similar performative promise, also always at risk of failure: "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" (UN). UN diplomats call on music to establish collective kinship as a desired horizon, organizing listeners into a unity reflected again in the concert of instruments or voices they watch. When alternative participatory formations emerge, such as the self-organized audience threatening to suffocate Pharrell Williams, they demonstrate the contingency and instability of the proposition. Deployed to generate affects (like happiness) that can foster community bonds, musical performance at the UN in fact opens a time and space that puts pressure on the processes that construct our social worlds.

NEW YEAR'S CONCERT OF THE 67TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Introducing Serbia's Viva Vox Choir in January 2013, Ban Ki-moon credited former Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld with innovating the tradition of musical performance at the UN in the 1950s. Ban spoke at a concert organized by the Permanent Mission of Serbia to the UN to celebrate Eastern Orthodox New Year and explicitly framed as a gesture of peace carried by elements intrinsic to the music presented. Turning to the performers, he noted that "tonight's performance should give us hope. The Viva Vox choir sings a cappella.

This style more than any other showcases the human voice. Voices can be used . . . to divide and oppress, or if they are used well, they can be used to heal and uplift, and harmonize" ("Viva Vox Choir"). Ban invokes a popular musical metaphor in the fields of diplomacy and international affairs, to affirm conceptual links between the harmony of voices or instruments, the harmony of the soul or spheres, and the harmony of nations or peoples. While contemporary scholarship has proven adept at deconstructing this metaphor, challenging the assumptions of universality that undergird it and the stable community it implies (see Ahrendt et al. 3-8, and Bayles in this volume), the concept of "harmonizing" remains a potent rhetorical device for policy-makers.

Speaking next, Vuk Jeremić, Permanent Representative of Serbia to the UN and the President of the General Assembly that year, continued Ban's theme: "Great music can cut across every boundary and touch every soul. It transcends differences. Irrespective of where we come from, it binds us together as human beings" ("Viva Vox Choir"). In their speeches, Ban and Jeremić indicate their attachment to an ideal of music that unites communities, performatively enacting common kinship among listeners. Yet each diplomat also noted that voices can oppress, that music transgresses political boundaries, and that sound penetrates the human body. If music forges community, it does so by mobilizing forces equally capable of dividing, destabilizing, and degrading the subjects on which they act.

The Viva Vox Concert in the General Assembly made clear the contradictions inherent in the UN's cosmopolitan promises; when melodies and lyrics prove contrapuntal, they imply the abyss separating aspirations towards global peace and the reality of competing nationalisms in international institutions. The Viva Vox Choir, according to their website, was formed in 2005 by a group of high school graduates and their former teacher and conductor, Jasmina Lorin. The group achieved international visibility in 2011 when their a cappella rendition of German industrial-metal band Rammstein's 1997 hit "Du Hast" went viral online ("Choir History"). Though Viva Vox is best known for their interpretations of popular music, for their performance at the UN they added what announcer Zoran Baranac described as "a few pieces that represent their national heritage" ("Viva Vox Choir"). These included "Tamo Daleko" (There, Far Away), a folksong composed during World War I; the nineteenth-century folksong "Ajde Jano" (C'mon Jana); and, most controversially, Stanislav Binički's "March on the Drina," written to commemorate the Serbian victory over Austria-Hungary in the Battle of Cer during World War I in 1914. The rest of the program included pop classics like ABBA's "Mamma Mia," novelty songs such as Monty Python's "Always Look on the Bright Side of Life," and representa-

tives of a cosmopolitan commercial-cultural order, like Somali-Canadian rapper K'naan's "Wavin' Flag," which became popularized when Coca-Cola used it as a promotional anthem during the 2010 World Cup.

Viva Vox's rendition of John Lennon's 1971 hit "Imagine" formed the thematic heart of the program; Jeremić received resounding applause when he quoted it in his opening remarks. But "Imagine" also imported some sentiments into the General Assembly hall that rest uneasily with the explicit and implicit goals of the organization. The song's melodic tranquility and conventional harmonic structure mask the anarchic thrust of lyrics that implore listeners to "imagine there's no countries," "imagine there's no religion," and "imagine no possessions." Performing nationalist songs to celebrate Eastern Orthodox Christian New Year a few miles down the road from Wall Street, Viva Vox seemed unlikely to do any of these things. Perhaps this is why several of the songs they performed obscured their lyrical content. The concert opened with "Ameno," a song written by new-age group Era in a gibberish designed to sound vaguely religious. Later, "Imagine" was followed by "Baba Yetu" (Our Father), a 2005 composition by Christopher Tin in which the Lord's Prayer is sung in Swahili. And for the evening's encore presentation of Stanislav Binički's "March on the Drina," Viva Vox chose to substitute non-referential vocables for lyrics composed in 1964 that celebrate the expulsion of foreign invaders with stark images of blood flowing and streaming near the cold waters of the Drina.

With words absent, the singers emulated the martial instrumentation of drums and horns, shifting between fast and slow marching tempos. After three minutes the audience began clapping along to the driving rhythm, and the official UN webcast of the performance cut to a medium shot of Ban and Jeremić seated next to one another, clapping along as well. Here again, the Secretary-General's role as a highly-placed spectator was foregrounded in official records of the event (see fig. 11). After a moment, the cameras returned to the performers on stage, the clapping was drowned out by beat-boxing, the song ended, and the room erupted in applause. This scene precipitated a minor geopolitical incident: the day after the concert, the Congress of North American Bosniaks,[4] a non-governmental organization representing Bosnian communities in the US and Canada, delivered a letter to the Secretary-General condemning his participation in the evening's presentation because it had included the "infamous and offensive Serb nationalist song, 'March on the River Drina'" (Alibasic et al.). Two days later, a Bosnian-American reporter, Erol Avdović,

4 The term Bosniak refers to those who identify with the Bosnian Muslim ethnic group, regardless of state of citizenship.

raised the issue again during the daily noon briefing by the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, this time with specific reference to the fact that Ban was seen "applauding there" ("Daily Press Briefing"). On behalf of the Secretary-General, the spokesperson responded, "[w]e sincerely regret that people were offended by this song, which was not listed in the official programme. The Secretary-General obviously was not aware what the song was about or the use that has been made of it in the past" ("Daily Press Briefing").

Fig. 11: Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and General Assembly President Vuk Jeremić watch the Viva Vox Choir perform.

Source: Courtesy of the United Nations.

According to the accounts of victims collected in the US State Department's Seventh Report on War Crimes in the Former Yugoslavia, "March on the Drina" served as a soundtrack to mass sexual violence during the Bosnian War in the 1990s. In Foča, the report asserts, Muslim "women knew the rapes would begin when ['March on the Drina'] was played over the loudspeaker of the main mosque" (US Department of State). It is not difficult to believe that the Secretary-General was indeed ignorant of the song's traumatic heritage, but this does little to ameliorate the inadequacy of the claims made by those who defended the song's inclusion in the event. From Baranac's introduction, which framed the performance as a reorientation of a once martial song to the project of peace, to Jeremić's later contention that offended parties were "twisting the meaning of our musical gift" (qtd. in Nichols), organizers of the concert and its participants demonstrated their inability to recognize the gestures and sounds that can reactivate historical traumas in the present. Where UN diplomats turn to music to

sidestep the political pitfalls of words, they prove blind to politics performed and meanings carried by the structures those words inhabit. Once again, a live encounter on the world stage between spectators and performers disconcerted the smooth administration of international relations, undermining the performance of unity, agreement, and consensus that lends so much diplomacy its normative force.

Chief among those gestures verbose diplomats cannot account for is perhaps the sound of two hands clapping, especially those hands that clap along. This may be one reason why the Secretary-General proved much more the locus of offense in the incident than either Viva Vox or the Serbian Mission. Literary scholar Steven Connor describes clapping as "a form of bodily overflow into sound" (72) and hypothesizes its evolutionary origins in "the action of slapping and cuffing the body . . . an emblematic display on the body of the aggressor of what may be in the offing for his victim" (67-8). Perhaps American and Canadian Bosnian audiences focused on the Secretary-General's rhythmic clapping in their complaint because of a similar sense of implicit menace amplified by the song's historical uses. On the other hand, perhaps the Secretary-General's participatory spectatorship offended for the ways it transgressed hard-won political boundaries. In clapping along, an ostensibly benign gesture required by his office, Ban acquiesced to the intentional and unintentional meanings arranged on stage by Serbian diplomats and performers, and he re-transmitted those contents and their affective charge through the sounds produced when his hands came together to form a rhythm.

His individual act of clapping may also have unnerved Erol Avdović and others for the submission to a controversial collective it implied. Considering the acts of audiences to the theatre, performance studies scholar Baz Kershaw notes, "Applause is the moment in which the collective aims to assert itself over the individual, in which an imagined community is forged. So the pitch of applause—whether it is a standing ovation or a desultory clap—indicates different types of consensual abandon, a giving up of individual judgement: we lose something of ourselves in putting our hands together with others in public" (135). Insofar as any articulation of community also implies the necessary acts of exclusion that produce that community, the clap that claps along acknowledges the short distance between an audience unified in applause and the cacophonous clapping that might be used to chase away an object of fear. Much like the promise of happiness, unison applause becomes a duty and demand that forecloses on disagreement or dissensus. Thus an audience and performer—the Congress of North American Bosniaks and the Serbian Mission to the United Nations—entered into dispute over the contours and contents of an international

community; a dispute that centered on the gestures and sounds made by the Secretary-General.

Feminist philosopher Julia Kristeva's formulation of abjection in *Powers of Horror* can offer much to an understanding of the import of aversive reactions to mass diplomatic spectacles. Abjection is both a psychological and a socio-cultural function; it is a process that stabilizes an individual's sense of self and which polices the borders of a given community. According to Kristeva, "The abject and abjection are my safeguards. The primers of my culture" (2). Abjection is the process of casting off what might otherwise be considered constitutive of the subject, "I." Multiple affects index the scene of abjection: fear, disgust, shame, hate, and others. Where these erupt, the subject may be said to be in a process of self-stabilization, erecting and maintaining his or her psychological boundaries. As Kristeva puts it, "I experience abjection only if an Other has settled in place and stead of what will be 'me'" (10). In abjection, subjectivity emerges from a scene of self-alienation, where this Other is cast off and cast out.

In *National Abjection: The Asian American Body Onstage*, Karen Shimakawa also asserts "the paradigm of abjection as a national/cultural identity forming process" (3). However, Shimakawa engages abjection not as an exclusive psychoanalytic explanation for the formation of specific identities, but "as a descriptive paradigm in order to posit a way of understanding the relationship linking the psychic, symbolic, legal, and aesthetic dimensions of national identity" (4). Instances of audience aversion to geopolitical spectacle mark operations of (inter)national abjection. The offended reaction of Bosnian audiences may be located at a nexus where an individual's sense of psychological identity collides with the symbolic structures of public diplomacy in the legal ramifications of events staged in international institutions and the aesthetic experience of spectatorship.

Audiences that recoil in international institutions exhibit negative reactions to the performative production of Small's "underlying kinship." Kristeva notes, "Abjection . . . is the other facet of religious, moral, and ideological codes on which rest the sleep of individuals and the breathing spells of societies" (209). Abjection is the constitutive dark side of law, order, peace, and security. Abjection erupts in the space where the UN works to build or transform a global community that may not fit an individual's pre-existing sense of self. Audiences that recoil, become offended, or cringe exhibit necessarily visceral responses to cultural and political forces that smudge the boundaries of the subject. In these moments, the forces circulating between scenes of diplomatic performance show their effects on and in the bodies of spectators.

Steven Connor writes, "Clapping one hand on another dramatizes the fact that you are a subject and an object simultaneously, a doer and a done to; you fold yourself over yourself, you form an interface with yourself, which joins to the interface you form with others" (72). To Kershaw's annihilation of the individual by the collective in applause, we may add an individualized terror of bodily and psychological boundaries losing their solidity as palm meets palm. In clapping, the body ceases to be a discrete, whole, and stable entity. My argument that musical presentations in international institutions provide an especially potent opportunity for the negotiation and renegotiation of the contours of international community rests on recognizing the interrelationship between specific bodily configurations, shared or unshared affects and meanings, and the legal structures that make nations and states—an interrelationship made explicit by abjection. Where Kristeva acknowledges the horror of bodily disintegration ("The border has become an object. How can I be without a border?" 4), those who theorize clapping recognize its potential to reproduce that horror on a broader social scale.

As interface, the clapping body produces a sonic mesh that unites spectator and performer in shared rhythm or returned sentiment. Clapping knits together an audience in shared actions, and it even incorporates bystanders (like those watching the video online) when the sound reaches our ears. While these effects may be inconsequential in most musicking, at the UN they reiterate the vital work of the institution (making common cause among peoples divided), exposing the potential failure of that work. Both the spectator who claps and the spectator who does not (either at the live event or at mediated distances) intensify the social function of musicking, prompting confrontations between individuals and the forces that bind them together.

When I watch Ban Ki-moon clap along to "March on the Drina," I recoil for different reasons than Avdović or others who were offended. If abjection may be thought of alongside the uncanny, then the abject offers reminders that it was once a part of me; it reflects me, even in its difference, like a corpse. Watching Ban Ki-moon I find my own gaze doubled, uncannily, teleporting me into the scene. We are both spectators, and his acts of spectatorship surrogate my own, highlighting differential experiences of power on the world stage. Here I must recoil, I must cast off my recognition, I must be unsettled and displaced in order to remain psychologically sound. By clapping, the Secretary-General imports existential dread into geopolitical spectacle, the terror of identity lost when an individual subject becomes an object of collective administration, a constituent of a system of global governmentality that operates through spectatorship. Watching his consensual abandon, I become aware of the forms of social control

that govern my world: I see myself and the power and limits of my own spectatorship.

The pressures of performance bear inordinately on the Secretary-General. According to the authors of *The United Nations and Changing World Politics*,

> [t]he Secretary-General walks a tightrope, needing to appear independent and not simply a pawn of any or all of the [permanent members of the Security Council], but at the same time he must maintain the confidence and support of those same states. (Weiss et al. 11)

The Secretary-General performs for audiences at cross purposes, and so becomes, as Conor Cruise O'Brien once described Dag Hammarskjöld, "an attentive spectator of his own actions" (121)—self-alienated like the spectator become object in the act of applause. Elsewhere, O'Brien argues on behalf of the ritual and theatrical functions of the UN, which he casts as a secular Vatican on the East River where the Secretary-General acts as "the high priest of the shrine" (134). The papal analogy emphasizes the interstitial nature of the role, between great powers and the people as between god and (wo)man. The Secretary-General is an interface that acts on behalf of the Security Council, the General Assembly, and a nebulous international community. The Secretary-General is directed by powerful states to stage the surveilling gaze global governmentality requires. As a locus for multiple forms of spectatorship on the world stage, he generates energies that extend to global spectators, circulate among diplomats at the UN, or rebound back upon the Secretariat.

In his essay "The Standard Modes of Aversion: Fear, Disgust, and Hatred," philosopher Aurel Kolnai lists markers of the morally disgusting:

> the *shirokaya natura* of the Russians […]; inconsistency and irresponsibility; what the French call *inconscience*, overspontaneity, overpersonalness, softness, and sentimentalism; above all, what the Germans call *Verlogenheit*: that is, a character organically wedded to, a mental life diffusely steeped in, lying, dissembling, illusion, and self-deception. (103)

Kolnai's enumerations capture the many ways in which a diplomat's magnanimity toward cultural participation might prove unsettling: in its broadness, its sentimental sincerity, and its suspect theatricality. Kolnai's implicit emphasis on national difference is also remarkable insofar as his theory of disgust investigates the affective phenomena at the heart of scenes of abjection that make nations and states, racialize communities, and risk exploding into genocidal violence. That the Secretary-General's overgenerous participation in the Viva Vox concert

offends Bosnian onlookers is not an example of misplaced outrage or an oversensitive response to a frivolous event. It is an integral and material moment in which international relations among people of different social and cultural frames are negotiated in autonomous reactions and calculated responses.

CONCLUSION

In the events investigated throughout this chapter, various audiences performed their resistance to the projects of social and political administration at the heart of the UN's work—to the unreflexive harmony it seeks. According to Sara Ahmed,

> [h]armony would be a demand for accordance. This is why I would argue that the powers-that-be might want their subjects happy rather than sad […]. The good encounter could be read as being how bodies stay in place or acquire a place in which they can stay, by agreeing with what they receive. The bad encounter can be read as how bodies refuse to be placed by disagreeing with what they receive. (213)

Ahmed accords a radical power to moments like those in which the UN's participatory events misfire and bodies refuse to be placed. Where one encounters and refuses the demand to be happy or clap along, one invites the rearrangement of psychological, physical, spatial, and social coordinates. Though I may join Christopher Small in arguing against empathy as the primary mechanism which music may offer diplomacy, I am not arguing against musical diplomacy at the UN. Rather, the utility and efficacy of music diplomacy must be noted elsewhere: in its counterintuitive effects, precisely when it misfires and results in infelicities.

According to Kolnai, "[i]t is as a disgusted self that I inscribe my quality and lineaments into the stuff of the world, and as a hating self that I set the seal of my personality on a universe reluctant and vulnerable like myself" (99). Scenes of public diplomacy at the UN may take on different meanings for different spectators, but all transmit their effects in the moment of encounter between a performance and its audiences. In our reactions we do things with even the most banal performances. As Ahmed puts it, "[t]o receive an impression is to make an impression" (40). In both positive and negative reactions, I become culturally, ideologically, and physiologically inscribed in the world, whether I am dancing on tables, taking a selfie, or clapping along. Watching others participate I become alienated from the processes that organize my social life, be they explic-

it, like public diplomacy, or implicit, like cultural abjection. A radical constituent power thus adheres to crowds assembled for the most scripted spectacles staged by the international institutions that administer global governmentality. Deploying popular music on the world stage, the UN invites audiences to recode the gestures with which it writes the world.

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