

4. Probing the Compositional Relevance of Cultural Difference: Key Tendencies of East Asian New Music Since the 1950s

The most obvious compositional articulation of culturally encoded forms of alterity is the immediate juxtaposition of idioms or structures that are clearly “culturally charged,” accentuating their uniqueness, their fundamental difference, perhaps their incommensurability (→ I.3). This model becomes particularly palpable if Western and non-Western instruments are placed in direct confrontation with one another – a tendency that has been mostly peripheral on a global scale since Tōru Takemitsu’s *November Steps* for *shakuhachi*, *satsuma-biwa*, and orchestra (1967), but should be accentuated all the more in the studies presented here. Tan Dun’s *Ghost Opera* (1994) for *pipa* and string quartet offers a relevant example of “composed-out” alterity, as do many works by composers such as Toshio Hosokawa or Toshi Ichiyanagi (→ III.5, IV.1). As outlined already in Chapter II.6, there are two key works of modern European music theater in which an East Asian instrument assumes the extraterritorial function of the “Other”: the Japanese *shō* mouth organ in Helmut Lachenmann’s *Das Mädchen mit den Schwefelhölzern* (1990–96) and the Korean arched zither *ajaeng* in Hans Zender’s *Chief Joseph* (2003) (→ II.6). Thus, the staging of cultural alterity through the dramaturgical use of musical instruments can be found among composers of different nationalities and is not limited to the Asian context.

Meanwhile, within globalized art music, a clearly ambiguous discourse of cultural difference has become established. On the one hand, many authors sympathize with approaches that aim at independence from the aesthetic criteria of Western modernism, understanding cultural difference as a medium of incommensurability and thus adopting a substantial achievement of aesthetic modernity by working against its consolidation as a norm. On the other hand, this dynamic has been picked up by Western-dominated markets, such that concert promoters and the public often expect traces of cultural difference in works by Asian, African, or Latin American composers (→ I.3). Concurrently, the unspoken norms and formats of new music sometimes leave little room for deviation. This paradoxical situation is further confused by often polemically accentuated phrases in music journalism – especially in German-speaking countries – that sometimes still derogate cultural heterogeneity, ambivalence, and hybridity with epithets such as “dilution,” “touristic appropriation,” or “pastiche.”¹⁸⁰

This chapter sketches some of the historical and aesthetic conditions under which the compositional relevance of cultural difference in the Asian context has steadily increased since the 1950s. In particular, it can be shown how cultural difference has become a central aesthetic metaphor for composition in situations of cultural upheaval. But the following case studies also demonstrate that attempts to impose a simple dualism between cultural difference and cultural Westernization usually fail. On the contrary, in all cases an essential impulse emanates from the aesthetics and critical thought of Western modernism or postmodernism, although their basic sociocultural basic requirements obviously cannot be transplanted to other cultural contexts without friction. The most prominent Asian composers of the 1960s and 70s, Isang Yun (1917–1995), José Maceda (1918–2004), Chou Wen-Chung (1923–2019), and Tōru Takemitsu (1930–1996), were explicitly aiming at a compositional expression or integration of the culturally different. Their works are unthinkable without the indissoluble entanglement of local or national discourses with the impression and influence of Western politics, art, and aesthetics. These played into detailed compositional decisions but also into the way these composers

¹⁸⁰ Examples can be found in abundance; see, for example, Häusler, “Begegnungswege,” Boehmer, “Globalisierung als heimischer Fetisch,” and Nyffeler, “Der Reiz des Fremdgehens.”

communicated their compositional ideas and techniques to both Western and non-Western audiences or readerships.

Culturalist Polarization in Isang Yun's Music

This rings particularly true when the situation of migration is considered. The problem of (non-Western) national(ist) essentialism appears particularly troublesome when confronted with a (Western) cultural surrounding as the unsettling experience of otherness and alterity might be existentially perturbing or potentially traumatic.¹⁸¹ When considering this biographical context, it appears inevitable that Isang Yun (1917–1995), surely the most influential Korean composer worldwide to date, was concerned from the beginning of his stay in Europe (1956) with the problem of finding a compositional identity that can encompass both his Korean origin and past and his European/German present. The inescapable frame of reference of this search for identity can be found in the discourses of contemporary European music from the 1950s to the 1990s, a frame of reference of the highest importance for Yun's self-conception as a composer, as has been repeatedly shown.¹⁸² The cultural frame of reference during Yun's first 40 years in Korea, including his studies in Japan (1933–36 in Osaka, 1938–41 in Tokyo with Tomojirō Ikenouchi), on the contrary, was significantly more fragmented and inseparably linked to the modernization of East Asian societies oriented toward Western models, as well as repressive Japanese colonial rule in Korea. Against this background, I will first explore the question of how Yun constructed, polarized, or negotiated a cultural "self" and cultural "other." The basis of my reflections is Yun's music before 1975, works in which references to Korean or East Asian traditions tend to play a more significant role than in later works, giving them immediate relevance to the discussion of interculturality.

How did Yun resolve the question of a cultural self and cultural other? First of all, it is noticeable that he always drew a very sharp contrast in his writings between "East" and "West." One of the numerous statements that point in this direction is the following: "The West is more work-related, Asia more intuition-driven, with all the little colors, melismas, and ornaments. The West accentuates the structure and the form, the East the underlying vitality of the music."¹⁸³ A similar juxtaposition, here transferred to the more specific contrast between Korean and European music, can be found in the radio program "Musik und Instrumente des alten Korea"¹⁸⁴ (Music and Instruments of Ancient Korea), which Yun made in 1963 for West German Radio in Cologne. Its main arguments are summarized in keywords in Table 3.5.

¹⁸¹ See, among others, Gratzer and Grosch, *Musik und Migration*.

¹⁸² See, among others, Eikemeier, "Ist Yun Isangs Musik koreanisch?" Howard, "Korean Tradition in Isang Yun's Composition Style," Sparrer, "Isang Yun und koreanische Tradition," Kim, "The Diasporic Composer," Utz, *Neue Musik und Interkulturalität*, 222–254, Yun, *Zwischen zwei Musikwelten*, Howard, *Creating Korean Music*, 129–135, 140–153, and Han, *Interkulturalität in der neuen Musik Koreas*.

¹⁸³ Yun, "Über meine Musik," 305 ("Der Westen ist mehr werkbezogen, Asien mehr von der Intuition getragen, mit all den kleinen Färbungen, Melismen und Verzierungen. Der Westen akzentuiert die Struktur und die Form, der Osten die tragende Lebendigkeit der Musik.").

¹⁸⁴ Yun, "Musik und Instrumente des alten Korea."

Table 3.5: Polarization of Korean and European music in Isang Yun's radio program
"Musik und Instrumente des alten Korea" (1963)

	Korean Music	European Music
time	no beginning, no end rests reaches completion in the moment	ends hastening reaches completion over time
individual tone	infinitely long, vessel of vividly flowing feeling articulated in naive joy stylized according to the rules of a pronounced decorative sense of art lively brush stroke of ink painting	smoothing, abstraction bound in functional contexts receives meaning from the sense of the whole abstract lines

The sweeping nature of this comparison catches the eye. The thesis, for example, that the tone in Western music is always "bound in functional contexts" follows the highly influential stereotype that for "all" European music at least since Beethoven, if not since Bach or earlier, a kind of musical discursivity can be assumed in which each tone has a clear and definite function in the hierarchy of the whole. This stereotype was not least established by the Hegel- and Neo-Kantian-influenced German-language music theory of the nineteenth century, which was often oriented almost exclusively toward Beethoven, and has most prominently resulted in the ideas of "harmonic functions" (Hugo Riemann) and "formal functions" (Arnold Schoenberg, Erwin Ratz).¹⁸⁵ The fact that many works by Schubert, Schumann, Berlioz, or Debussy cannot be adequately described according to such a concept was already recognized in the early twentieth century, but this did little to impede the "success" of this idea until today. Yet Yun's tendency toward stereotyping is even clearer in the statement that the Korean tone is "articulated in naive joy." Is the single tone in Korean court music – Yun refers here in particular to the well-known piece *Sujech'ön*¹⁸⁶ – not equally part of a structural framework, a network of heterophonic lines that have a considerable complexity? Without delving into this question here, we can say that Yun's words demonstrate a postcolonial pattern: his "native" non-Western tradition represents the "feeling," the "naive," the "decorative," while the Western, on the contrary, aims at the "sense of the whole" and at "abstraction," and therefore at rationality. It is a small step from this position to the sweeping comparisons of nineteenth-century orientalism,¹⁸⁷ whose evaluations Yun reverses simply by positively defining attributes formerly considered deficient. Overall, it is obvious that Yun constructs a largely homogeneous "self" and "other."

¹⁸⁵ A critique of the idea of musical "functions" is implicit in many energetic and phenomenological approaches to music theory and analysis that tend to highlight the qualia of perceived sound at least in part independently from their functionality within a larger form or context. It is relevant in this context that Yun received instructions, among others, from Josef Rufer, an influential former student of Schoenberg, in Berlin in 1957 whose book *Die Komposition mit zwölf Tönen* (1952) he had studied in Japanese translation while still in Korea (Sparrer, "Isang Yun").

¹⁸⁶ Yun, "Musik und Instrumente des alten Korea," 15.

¹⁸⁷ See Wimmer, "Vom Umgang mit kulturellen Differenzen in der Philosophie."

Of course, it would also be completely misleading to deny that certain fundamental differences exist between traditional Korean and modern European music, even if such differences might have lost some of their sharpness as a result of the extensive process of renewal in both traditional Korean and twentieth-century Western-oriented music. The decisive factor, however, is the observation that Yun's music does not make these differences audible in the sense of a polarized tension. His works appear to be – possibly in contrast to traditional Korean music – quite spontaneously comprehensible, and were well-received within a European frame of reference. This is often explained with the argument that Yun "integrated" these differences into his personal style in the process of composing. This argument is evident in the following assessment from the 1996 article "Korea" in the MGG encyclopedia:

In his music, Yun shows that Korean origin and identity can also become recognizable in the musical language of avant-garde sounds, not only superficially, by deploying traditional rhythms, scales, or ornaments, or by incorporating historical instruments, but rather by an aesthetic sensibility rooted in Eastern philosophies and intellectual contexts that lead to a distinctive style that is not Asian or European, but rather both at once. In this sense, Isang Yun became a teacher and role model for the following generation.¹⁸⁸

On the face of it, this characterization seems plausible, yet I would like to draw attention to a point that strikes me as a key problem in the discussion of interculturality as a whole, namely the argument of a dualism between "surface" and "substance."¹⁸⁹ The "surface" is supposedly "merely technical," here referring to elements from traditional Korean music or "historical" (meaning Korean) instruments. The "substance," meanwhile, lies in "aesthetic sensibility" and "intellectual contexts." In this simplistic separation of spirit and technique – a foundational discourse in the early reception of Western music in East Asia (→ III.1) – lies a core problem of intercultural reception generally. On closer examination, it quickly becomes clear that "surface" and "substance" in musical contexts are as difficult to separate as "mind" and "body" in the field of epistemology.

This becomes particularly obvious in light of traditional Korean instruments: instrumental "technique" cannot be separated from a particular mental attitude or condition with which the performers produce a sound; this becomes clear in aesthetic concepts such as *mat* ("delicateness") or *möt* ("taste").¹⁹⁰ But conversely, the instruments themselves already contain the full potential of the (music) culture that produced and produces them (and which was and is produced by them), as evidenced, for example, by the connection between the construction of the instruments and the structural elements of the traditional repertoire, such as the varied heterophony based on constant inflection. One could further specify this connection and ask how far the identity of Korean music can be communicated without its medium, the "historical instruments." Conversely, one might similarly pursue the question of how much of the "spirit"

¹⁸⁸ Bühler and Chu, "Korea" ("In seiner Musik zeigt Yun, dass koreanische Herkunft und Identität auch in der Musiksprache avantgardistischer Klänge erkennbar werden kann, nicht nur vordergründig durch Verwendung traditioneller Rhythmen, Skalen oder Ornamente, oder durch Einbeziehung historischer Instrumente, sondern durch ein in östlichen Philosophien verwurzeltes ästhetisches Empfinden und geistige Inhalte, die zu einem unverwechselbar eigenen Stil führen, der nicht asiatisch ist oder europäisch, sondern beides zugleich. In diesem Sinne wurde Isang Yun Lehrer und Vorbild für die nachfolgende Generation.")

¹⁸⁹ See, more specifically, Utz, *Neue Musik und Interkulturalität*, 43–49, 58–61.

¹⁹⁰ See Howard, "Different Spheres: Perceptions of Traditional Music and Western Music in Korea."

of Mozart's music is preserved in recordings of *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* by Japanese *koto* ensembles.¹⁹¹ But this argument cannot be limited to the question of the instruments alone: fundamentally, one must question the possibility, often taken for granted, of being able to communicate cultural "substance" musically, without recourse to its structurally *and* timbrally defined idioms. Ultimately, this discussion points back to those polarizations between structure and sound, or form and sound, that are deeply ingrained in nineteenth- and twentieth-century music-aesthetic discourse (→ II.1).¹⁹²

Yun's move to the allegedly "more substantial" level of reception of basic philosophical and aesthetic concepts, and his great reluctance about the use of concrete and recognizable Korean sources in his works in any case demonstrates, in a particularly clear way, that he operated within a European frame of reference. His view "back" on Korean and East Asian culture was prominently shaped by a "regionalist" European gaze.¹⁹³ The unified image that he verbally painted of Asia and Europe ("We Asians," "in Europe," etc.¹⁹⁴) corresponds to the vagueness of his compositional reception of Asian music and aesthetics from an ethnological perspective, which Keith Howard has discussed:¹⁹⁵ the construction of basic aesthetic principles from archaic, Daoist, Buddhist, and shamanistic ideas as well as from different, scarcely compatible Korean music genres, yields on closer examination a complex of strongly divergent references that are only provisionally held together under the mantle of the "Asian."

This situation undoubtedly also means that ethnological authenticity was of secondary importance to Yun's composing, which of course was also a widespread attitude in his generation. With a stronger emphasis on authenticity in the details, a substantial counterdiscourse to the dominant Western concept of music might have developed – yet Yun avoided this possibility, not least through his insistence on the emphatic conception of the autonomous musical work, and perhaps also through the predominantly discursive macroformal design of his compositions. It was not until the 1980s and 1990s that such a counterculture took on a distinct shape in some works by younger Korean and other East Asian composers (→ III.5).

This is not the place for a detailed musical analysis of Yun's music, but on the basis of the previously discussed problems, some preconditions and objectives of such analyses may be suggested. First of all, it is obvious that only a small (though surely significant) part of the intercultural reception processes that preceded the writing of Yun's works are in fact deducible from his scores. A closer understanding of Yun's music therefore requires a research approach that connects source-oriented historical and ethnomusicological knowledge as equal poles of analysis. This of course requires a more extensive availability of written sources (translation of Korean writings by and about Yun, increased exchange of Western and Korean research,

¹⁹¹ See The New Koto Ensemble of Tokyo: *Koto Mozart!*, LP Angel S-37553 (1978, the LP also includes one *koto* arrangement of the Symphony in G minor K. 550). Numerous similar productions have appeared, such as the CD *Samurai Chamber Orchestra: Samurai Mozart* (insideout 2007), which contains six arrangements of *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, among others for *koto* ensemble, *shamisen* ensemble, and *shakuhachi* ensemble.

¹⁹² See, among others, Janz, *Klangdramaturgie*, 32–39, Stollberg, *Ohr und Auge – Klang und Form*, and Utz, "Liberating' Sound and Perception," 21–30.

¹⁹³ "Yun's Asian identity emerged in Europe, and was a reaction and accommodation to his migration into a new cultural environment." (Howard, "Korean Tradition in Isang Yun's Composition Style," 67.) See also Kim, "Migration im Wandel" and Kim, "European music' outside Europe?"

¹⁹⁴ See, for example, Yun, "Über meine Musik," 298.

¹⁹⁵ Howard, "Korean Tradition in Isang Yun's Composition Style," 83–84.

collection and publication of Yun's writings and letters¹⁹⁶) as well as the documentation of oral history (systematic interviews with contemporary witnesses, etc.). Finally, a precise presentation of the performance history and audience, press, and scholarly reception of Yun's music in Germany and Korea, and an explanation of how these performance and reception histories impacted Yun's work, would be required.

For a close reading of intercultural aspects in Yun's works, it seems necessary to put together a detailed chronology of Yun's encounter with Western and Korean or East Asian music and culture, in order to be able to establish his knowledge and perspectives regarding these areas during the composition of key works such as *Réak* (1966), *Glissées* (1970), *Piri* (1971), and *Gagok* (1972).¹⁹⁷ It also seems imperative to reconstruct the creative processes of such key works through closer scrutiny. What were Yun's sources prior to, and during, these compositions? In what ways did information about Korean (or other Asian) musical genres flow into these works, and how did Yun bring this knowledge together with compositional techniques that he appropriated in Europe (serial technique, etc.)?

Similar issues could be proposed for research on other dominant Asian composers of Yun's generation who significantly contributed to the idea of intercultural compositions from the 1950s and 60s on, among them Chou Wen-Chung, Tōru Takemitsu, and José Maceda. While much has been written about their aesthetic approaches and, importantly, close analyses of their key works have been published, a precise philological account of their compositional processes that sheds light on the preconditions and dynamics of their intercultural reception process remains a profound challenge for a future global music historiography – especially since such a philological approach could substantially transform certain tropes and currently one-sided assessments of their work.

More than fifty years after Yun's *Réak*, numerous composers of various backgrounds still face the problem that the dominance of the Western cultural and aesthetic frame of reference in new music is difficult to escape, and that the potential for a thoroughgoing differentiation of musical "languages" in the context of cultural globalization is far from exhausted. This problem becomes pressing when composers aim to materialize aspects of fragmented or hybrid identities musically or – from the elementary experiential space of migration – feel the necessity or compulsion to address them (→ I.2). Yun may have guessed much of this when he wrote:

We Asians stayed in our tradition for much longer because we were satisfied, and now we are approaching Europe's traditional music in a hurried and careless way. But should this continue, or can we not find something in our own musical cosmos with which we can enrich the world?¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶ First steps have been taken in the five volumes of the *Ssi-ol Almanach* of the Berlin Internationale Isang Yun Gesellschaft (<https://yun-geellschaft.de/die-geellschaft/buecher>) and in the scholarly works mentioned in footnote 182. A major step for an updated view on Yun's biography has recently been provided by Walter-Wolfgang Sparrer's trilingual monograph on Yun's "Life and Work in Pictures" (Sparrer, *Isang Yun. Leben und Werk im Bild*).

¹⁹⁷ Currently, there are significant analyses of all these works, but, owing to a lack of documentary sources, they remain largely speculative with regard to the objectives raised here. See, most importantly, Kabisch, "Klang, Ton, Geräusch, Exkurs," Choi, "Réak (1966)," Kim, "Musical Syncretism in Isang Yun's *Gasa*," Howard, "Piri: Isang Yun's composition and the Korean oboe," and Turner, "Performing Cultural Hybridity in Isang Yun's *Glissées pour violoncelle seul* (1970)."

¹⁹⁸ Yun, "Über meine Musik," 300 ("Wir Asiaten sind viel länger in unserer Tradition geblieben, weil wir zufrieden waren, und jetzt nähern wir uns sehr eilig und unvorsichtig der europäischen traditionellen Musik. Ob das aber so weitergehen soll oder ob wir nicht doch in unserem musikalischen Kosmos etwas finden können, womit wir die Welt zu bereichern vermögen?").

November Steps (1967), Distance (1972), and Tōru Takemitsu's Enactment of Alterity

In East Asia, it became apparent already during the late 1950s that, after almost a hundred years of permeation by Western models (→ III.1), it was no longer possible to construct a simple opposition between Western and East Asian discourses of musical aesthetics as two homogeneous systems. Takemitsu's most famous work, *November Steps*, demonstrates a special awareness of this situation. The composer was influenced over many years by the intercultural aesthetics of John Cage, which was of great importance for a number of Japanese composers following guest performances by Cage and David Tudor in Japan in 1962 – although research sometimes overemphasizes this influence.¹⁹⁹ Cage's "tactic" was to erase the cultural meaning of musical material in the process of composition – that is, to alter it beyond recognition, completely "de-idiomizing" it until a "culture-free space" is reached, outside of cultural dialects and attributions, a position Cage supported by adopting the Huayan Buddhist principle of "unimpededness and interpenetration" (→ II.6). This tactic made all epochs and cultures seemingly coexist on an unlimited continuum of sound and silence, which the composer ultimately only had to "capture" and depict in his music, as Cage rigorously attempted in his "silent work" 4'33" (1952).

We see the influence of Cage on the conception of *November Steps* above all in the goal of avoiding an overly obvious interaction between Western orchestra and Japanese solo instruments (*satsuma-biwa* and *shakuhachi*); the concern is for Japanese and Western sounds to co-exist without a constructed relationship, without a compositionally "forced" association. The intention to *enhance the difference* between Western and Asian principles was key to many of Takemitsu's works from the 1960s and 1970s, and his musical thinking thus shows clear traces of the systematic separation of both traditions since the Meiji era (→ III.1). Takemitsu comments on his concept of cultural alterity:

We have to spend much time in understanding each culture. And it seems to take almost infinite time. Therefore, rather than resolving the contradiction I have in my mind, I would like to spend a long time making it greater, expanding it until it becomes my personal way of representation.²⁰⁰

And, with reference to *November Steps*, Takemitsu wrote:

A composer should not be occupied by such things as how one blends traditional Japanese instruments with an orchestra. Two worlds of sound: *biwa-shakuhachi* and the orchestra. Through juxtaposition, it is the difference between the two that should be emphasized.²⁰¹

A detailed analysis of the score does indeed show the subtle and carefully planned connection of both cultural layers in timbre, melodic design, and energy, and how logically and "organically" they merge with or evolve from each other.²⁰² The desired representation of difference thus

¹⁹⁹ See Sawabe, *Neue Musik in Japan*, 103–128, Galliano, *Yōgaku*, 221–238, and especially the more detailed historical analysis in Fukunaka, "Re-situating Japan's Post-War Musical Avant-Garde through Re-situating Cage."

²⁰⁰ Takemitsu, "Music and Culture" (translation adapted by the author).

²⁰¹ Takemitsu, "Notes on November Steps," 87.

²⁰² For more detail, see Utz, *Neue Musik und Interkulturalität*, 296–299. For more comprehensive analyses of this work, see Burt, *The Music of Tōru Takemitsu*, 110–131, Langenkamp, "Close Encounters of Another Kind," 186–188, and Menzel, *Hōgaku*, 287–294. In total, Takemitsu composed seven pieces featuring Japanese instruments: *Eclisse* (1966) for *shakuhachi* and *biwa*, *November Steps* (1967) and *Autumn* (1973) for orchestra with *shakuhachi* and

tends to lead to a balanced synthesis that was meant to be avoided. The difficulty of translating cultural difference into musical structures – as outlined earlier, for example, in Zender's *Fürin no kyō* – becomes apparent. To be sure, unlike the radical “de-idiomaticization” of Cage, Takemitsu's aim was not a complete “abstraction” of cultural dialects, but their preservation in coexistent juxtaposition. The compositional sophistication of sonic rapprochement and connection in his music, however, at least partially obliterates the layers of meaning – not least those of the original sociocultural context – that might essentially underline a claim of the materials' cultural difference.

Takemitsu's work *Distance* for oboe and *shō* (1972) also explicitly addresses cultural alterity by the juxtaposition of instruments. The work shows comparable problems to *November Steps*, though its entirely pioneering character is beyond any doubt (it is probably one of the earliest works to use the *shō* as a solo instrument, → 4.1). That the composer gives the pragmatic option in the score's preface for the work to be performed without the *shō* part (i.e., as an oboe solo) makes it clear that the two instruments are not placed on the same compositional level. Whereas the European instrument is furnished with all the refinements of modern instrumental technique, thanks to the soloist and dedicatee Heinz Holliger, the *shō* is limited to an ebbing and flowing harmonic background. This seems to derive from the – simplistic and historically dubious (→ IV.1) – traditional “background” function of the *shō* in the *tōgaku* repertoire of *gagaku*. The arrangement on stage also expresses this hierarchy: the *shō* soloist stands in the background, far from the oboist.²⁰³ Takemitsu's intention to use distinct Western and Asian categories by no means succeeds, as in *November Steps*. On the contrary, Asian and Western instruments are integrated into shared processes through clear relationships in pitch organization and *Klangfarbemelodie*. For example, in the excerpt shown in Example 3.10, dissonant relationships (seconds and sevenths) between the pitches of oboe and *shō* (marked by arrows) predominate, creating musical tension that dissolves into unisons or octaves (marked by circles).

To what extent is cultural difference actually audible or comprehensible here? A critical analysis of interculturally conceived strata must, above all, problematize hidden hierarchies. The seemingly balanced coexistence of strata can prove to be a mere conceptual idea that is only fulfilled by the compositional design in a rudimentary way. As a composition, *Distance* may well be quite convincing on its own terms. As an intercultural situation, however, Takemitsu's polarization remains questionable, above all because of the culturalist reduction to which both instruments are subjected, and the consequent hierarchization of their interactions.

biwa, *Distance* (1972) for oboe and *shō*, *Voyage* (1973) for three biwas, *In an Autumn Garden* (1973/79) for *gagaku*, and *Ceremonial* (1991) for *shō* and orchestra.

203 See also corresponding stage arrangements in Toshio Hosokawa's *Birds Fragments II* (1990) for *shō* with percussion ad libitum, *Birds Fragments III* (1990) for *shō* and flute(s), and in Yūji Takahashi's *Mimi no ho* (1995) for *shō*, viola, and speaker (→ IV.1). We can assume, in all cases, a direct reference to Takemitsu. Yet the compositional conception of Hosokawa (which is also close to Takemitsu in terms of compositional aesthetics) and Takahashi (which starts from a fundamental critique of cultural essentialism) are to be regarded as clearly contradictory (→ III.5, IV.1).

Example 3.10: Tōru Takemitsu, *Distance* for oboe and shō, p. 5–6

José Maceda's Sound Masses and the Search for an Anti-Causal Logic

The music of the Philippine composer José Maceda (1917–2004) creates unorthodox connections between aurality and written notation, a feature which evidences his double perspective as a composer-ethnomusicologist.²⁰⁴ Maceda's historical position might be considered even more anachronistic than Yun's or Takemitsu's, as he worked within a generation that was heavily involved in the formation of affirmative national music after independence in 1946, relying, as in almost all other Asian countries, on the vocabulary of Classical-Romantic symphonic music (→ III.1). The Romantic idiom was enriched with folk melodies and rhythms, especially ones derived from the songs of the *kundiman* repertoire.²⁰⁵ Remarkably, Maceda's resort to pre-colonial forms of Philippine music did not lead to his claiming that it was "untouched" or "authentic." Rather, he tried to derive from these early practices general principles that he considered valid at least for Southeast Asian music, if not for Asian music as a whole. From these principles he sought to derive an anti-Aristotelian logic – as an explicit antithesis to cultural homogenization by Western standards, which was particularly noticeable in the Philippines after almost 400 years of colonial history.²⁰⁶ Maceda described the paradigms of this logic with the three key concepts of continuity, infinity, and indefiniteness.²⁰⁷

Maceda's turn – after training in Paris as a pianist – toward local forms of Philippine music was triggered by his discovery of the *kubing* jaw harp of the Hanunóo-Mangyan people on the West Philippine island of Mindoro during fieldwork in 1952. (Fourteen years later, in the composition *Kubing* [1966], this find was directly cast in a composition for five male voices, seven *kubing*, and other Philippine instruments.) As a result, Maceda studied the music of Southeast Asia in detail from 1957 to 1958 and from 1961 to 1963, graduating with a degree in ethnomusicology in the USA (PhD supervised by Mantle Hood at the University of California Los Angeles).²⁰⁸

Like several other non-Western and Western composers who turned to political and social issues in the 1970s, Maceda's work was initially based on social situations related to the fragmented experiences of cultural difference, as documented in the question he asked himself during a tour of his homeland as a pianist in 1947: "What has all of *this* got to do with coconuts and

²⁰⁴ The most important source for the understanding of Maceda's work, personality, and aesthetics is Tenzer, "José Maceda and the Paradoxes of Modern Composition in Southeast Asia," an article on which much of the following is based. Maceda's estate is catalogued by the UP Center for Ethnomusicology at the University of the Philippines, Quezon City (<http://upethnom.com/jmcollection/index.php/josemaceda>). In addition, the encyclopedia MGG Online published a new entry on Maceda in 2019 (Kartomi, "Maceda, José").

²⁰⁵ See Samson, *Die zeitgenössische Kunstmusik der Philippinen* and Santos, "Art Music of the Philippines in the Twentieth Century."

²⁰⁶ Magellan arrived in the archipelago in 1521, and Spanish colonial rule began in 1565, lasting 333 years until 1898. The Philippines was a US colony from 1898 to 1946.

²⁰⁷ See Maceda, "A Concept of Time in a Music of Southeast Asia."

²⁰⁸ A selection of the most important publications of José Maceda is listed here: "Chants from Sagada Mountain Province, Philippines," "Drone and Melody in Philippine Musical Instruments," "A Search for an Old and a New Music in Southeast Asia," "A Concept of Time in a Music of Southeast Asia (A Preliminary Account)," "In Search of a Source of Pentatonic Hemitonic and Anhemitonic Scales in Southeast Asia," "Acculturation and Internationalization: The Philippine Situation," "A Logic in Court Music of the Tang Dynasty," "Bipolarity and the Fifth Interval in Gamelan and Medieval European Music," "Counts of Four and the Fifth Interval," *Gongs and Bamboo. A Panorama of Philippine Musical Instruments*, "Upland Peoples of the Philippines," as well as Maceda et al. "Philippines." Yūji Takahashi translated a selection of Maceda's articles into Japanese, published 1989 as Maceda, *Dorōn to merodī / Drone and Melody*.

W. Bl.

55

piss. pizz. $\frac{fff}{}$

V. I

V. II

pizz. gliss. $\frac{f}{}$

A.

pizz. gliss. $\frac{f}{}$

Vc.

pizz. gliss. $\frac{f}{}$

C. B.

Example 3.11: Iannis Xenakis, *Pithoprakta* for string orchestra, two trombones, and percussion, p. 10

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rice?”²⁰⁹ The sociopolitical reality of the Philippines seemed incompatible with the emphatic aesthetics of the Classical-Romantic work of art. His compositional thinking was subsequently clarified through the examination of Edgard Varèse’s and Iannis Xenakis’s concept of sound masses, as well as through Parisian *musique concrète*, which he encountered in 1958. In the aesthetic designs of Varèse and Xenakis, Maceda saw, in contrast to parameter-oriented postwar serialism, a path that pointed beyond the narrow limits of European music.²¹⁰

In Maceda’s works of the 1960s and 1970s, his exploration of social and societal contexts and the resulting compositions with large groups of performers converged with his interest in the sound masses of Varèse and Xenakis. These works are more directly bound to specific performance contexts than Maceda’s later, increasingly precisely formulated scores. These earlier works include, above all, the ritual music *Pagsamba* (Adoration, 1968) for 241 performers, *Cassettes 100* (1971) for one hundred tape recorders and one hundred players, *Ugnayan* (Atmospheres, 1974) for 20 radio stations, *Udot – Udot* (Hesitations, 1975) for several hundred performers, and *Ading* (1978) for two hundred performers and public participation.²¹¹

Taking up an idea formulated by Michael Tenzer,²¹² it is constructive to compare three music examples to explore Maceda’s music: the field recording of the Hanunóo *Kalipay* celebration made by Maceda in 1953 with Harold C. Conklin, the beginning of Iannis Xenakis’ *Pithoprakta* for string orchestra, two trombones, and percussion (1955–56), and the beginning of the second part (“Gloria / *Luwalhati*”) of Maceda’s *Pagsamba*. In all three examples one can hear transformations between clearly separated “sound masses” or sound states: in the field recording of the *Kalipay* celebration, we can hear different sound qualities emerging successively from the regular basic rhythm: the gong *agung* played with wooden mallets, the small guitar-like *kudyapi*, and the three-string fiddles *gitgit* (possibly the highlighting of these instrumental parts might be due to the recording researchers moving in-between the groups of musicians). In Xenakis’s large orchestral textures, one first hears a continuous agglomeration of low pizzicato sounds, and then an even transformation into short bowed glissandi with significant changes of register. This is followed by two more sound fields, first high pizzicato pitches in high density (Ex. 3.11), then sustained high harmonics, over which we hear Morse-code-like pulses of woodblocks and pizzicati. Maceda’s *Pagsamba*, a Catholic mass set in the Philippine language Tagalog (originally a local language of the Manila area that later served as the basis for the official national language, Filipino), is scored for 241 performers. The “Gloria” (Ex. 3.12) opens with a small poly-

209 Quoted in Tenzer, “José Maceda and the Paradoxes of Modern Composition in Southeast Asia,” 94.

210 See ibid., 97–99.

211 To the best of my knowledge, the most comprehensive catalogue of José Maceda’s works can be found in the “Living Composers Project” by Dan Albertson at <http://www.composers21.com/compdocs/macedaj.htm> (updated 02/01/2017), see also “Werkverzeichnis José Maceda.” *MusikTexte* no. 102 (2004), 75. It should be added that it is extremely difficult at present to consult Maceda’s scores for study purposes, as they have not been edited by a music publisher and the administration of the estate is currently unable to perform such tasks. At this point, I would like to thank Ramon P. Santos and Jonas Baes for providing excerpts and copies from Maceda’s works.

212 See Tenzer, “José Maceda and the Paradoxes of Modern Composition in Southeast Asia,” 100–103.

Example 3.12: José Macea, *Pagsamba* for 241 performers, II. "Gloria / Luwalhati," Opening

GEORIA (LUWALHATI)

100 WHOLEST

Copyright © 1968 by José Macea, Manila

phonic setting in male choirs ("Luwalhati sa Diyos so kaitaasan" / Glory to God in the highest), followed suddenly by a large tutti outburst ("At so lupa ay kapayapaan at sa anga taong may mabuting kalooban" / and on Earth peace, good will toward men), after which the duct flutes *ongiyong* (Huagao) and calling choir voices can be heard, then the buzzers *balingbing* (Kalinga, Luzon), passing into the rattles *palakpak* (Tagalog) and the wooden sticks *bangibang* (Huagao), with which the voices mingle again. At the end of the first section, the texture transforms into *agung* gongs (hanging nipple gongs, Maguindanao province) and *gandingan* (narrow-rimmed nipple gongs, also from Maguindanao) and back to the low male voices of the beginning. The sound masses are thus organized according to quasi-ethnomusicological classificatory principles. The performers are distributed in a circle around the audience, following an exact plan of the original performance space, the large circular building of the Catholic church Parish of the Holy Sacrifice in Quezon City. This aspect of the staging refers to the social component of Macea's concept and thus to the ritual functions of pre-colonial music in the Philippines. The 241 performers are scattered around the auditorium according to a detailed floor plan²¹³ and located in the midst of the audience. Each of the one hundred instrumentalists uses five different bamboo instruments: in addition to the aforementioned duct flutes, buzzers, rattles, and wooden sticks, these instruments also include *tagutok* (Maranao) bamboo scrapers. There are one hundred vocalists, five quintets of male voices, and two gong groups of eight *agung* and *gandingan* respectively.

In Macea's work, cultural difference is conceptualized as having a dual function: on the one hand, the ethnomusicologist Macea tries to find a new musical "grammar" through a comparative analysis of different local and superregional Asian genres, which is very deliberately opposed to a paradigmatic Western concept of art and at the expense of a certain essentializing tendency. On the other hand, the composer Macea refers to the sound masses of Varèse and Xenakis, thus adopting a compositional technique of material organization that is decisively shaped by Western modernity and that must be understood, in the Philippine and Asian contexts, as a counterdiscourse to nationalist trends.

Macea relates the participation of large groups of people to a special Javanese and Balinese concept of nature: "The participation of thousands of people in music-making in the open air is like their identification with nature, a concept manifest in Javanese and Balinese paintings, where men, plants, and animals are all treated as part of the jungle that envelops them."²¹⁴ This perhaps naïve desire of Macea's to include a harmonious interaction of man and nature in his music must surely be seen as the result of his ethnological research, which was accompanied by a critique of the often hasty and unreflecting form of Westernized cultural development in the region. On this basis, Macea in 1984 formulated three basic principles of his ethnomusicological research, which can also be directly related to his compositional procedures:²¹⁵

1. The variety of musical colors that results from the interplay of larger ensembles.
2. The primary significance of fundamental sounds or drone sounds, which include various ostinato variants, drones, or large-scale repetitions.
3. The importance of ethnomusicological classification of instrumental and vocal sounds as a source of ideas for connecting and organizing instrumental groups and sound events.

²¹³ The floor plan appears on the cover of the CD *José Macea: Gongs and Bamboos*, Tzadik TZ 7067 (2001).

²¹⁴ Macea, "A Search for an Old and a New Music," 167.

²¹⁵ Macea, "A Concept of Time in a Music of Southeast Asia." This text is based on Macea's 1984 Charles Seeger Memorial Lecture for the Society for Ethnomusicology.

Example 3.13: José Macea, *Udot-Udot* for 6, 60, 600 or more performers

UDLOT-UDLOT (HESITATIONS)

for 6, 60, 600 or more performers

José Macea (1975)

DRONE	TIME in min.	MIXED INSTRUMENTS				TIME in min.	VOICES
		Group 1		Group 2			
	00	SILENCE		SILENCE		00	
	01					01	
	02	5&7 5&9		6&8 6&9		02	
	03	7&9 5&11 7&11		6&10 5&8 6&11		03	
	04					04	
	05	SILENCE		SILENCE		05	
	06					06	
	07	2&3 2&4		7&5 5&8		07	
	08	2&5 3&4 3&5		7&9 7&11 5&11		08	
	09	SILENCE				09	
	10	5&7 5&9		2&3 2&4		10	
	11	7&9 7&11 5&11		2&5 3&4 3&5		11	
	12	SILENCE				12	
	13	2&3 2&4				13	
	14	2&5 3&4 3&5		6&8 6&9		14	
	15	SILENCE		6&11 6&10 6&12		15	
	16			SILENCE		16	
	17					17	
	18	: J J J : J J :		: J J J : J J :		18	
	19					19	
	20					20	
	21	SILENCE				21	
	22			SILENCE		22	
	23	: J J J : J J :				23	
	24			5&8 5&9		24	
	25	6&10 7&10 7&12				25	
	26	SILENCE				26	
	27	5&7 6&3		2&3 2&4		27	
	28	6&5 7&3 5&4		3&4 3&5 2&5		28	
	29	SILENCE				29	
	30			SILENCE		30	
	31			5&6 5&8		31	
	32	2&3 3&5		6&4 6&3 7&4		32	
	33	2&4 3&4 3&6				33	
	34	SILENCE				34	
	35			: J J J : J J :		35	
	36					36	
	37	SILENCE				37	
	38	2&3 2&4		3&2 4&2		38	
	39	2&5 3&4 3&5		4&3 4&5 3&6		39	

By emphasizing such general principles, Macea sought to find a solution to the conflict between nationalism or localism and cultural Westernization. The confrontation with drone, ostinato, and a system in which timbres have more weight than pitch organization led to a compositional aesthetic concept that accentuates continuity, infinity, and indefiniteness. Macea expands on this concept in his extensive article "A Concept of Time in a Music of Southeast Asia (A Preliminary Account)," in which the construction of a (Southeast) Asian concept of time and a (Southeast) Asian logic, clearly tending toward essentialism, derives a fundamentally postcolonial discourse from musical structures:

[...] the music of Southeast Asia fills time along notions of continuity, infinity and indefiniteness in a non-secular metaphysical world, and hierarchy in a secular world. The musical techniques used in musical forms prefer melodic ambiguity, repetition and diffusion to identification and isolation of things as these are brought about by a system of logic known as causality.²¹⁶

Maceda considers causal logic manifested in the hierarchy of major-minor tonality,²¹⁷ though here he implies, perhaps subliminally, the overly functional and reductionist interpretation of tonality by (the earlier writings of) Hugo Riemann.²¹⁸ In addition, Maceda also claims to recognize a causal logic based on polarities in postwar serialism²¹⁹ – a certainly contestable interpretation, since parameter-based serialism is ultimately not based on polarities, but on gradations of all parameters. Overall, Maceda's juxtaposition of Western/causal and Asian/anti-causal logic seems too dualistic and simplistic. His argumentation is more convincing elsewhere, when he applies principles of Southeast Asian traditions to his own music, which he ultimately describes as distilling a substance that he as an ethnologist cannot easily put into words and therefore intends to reflect in his music:

I have spoken of elements such as repetition, drone, nature, time, the universe, scales, shamanism, rituals, timbre as fundamental musical elements, and of a thinking of what music may be – as these are present in the music cultures in the Philippines and Southeast Asia. These elements make up an imaginary world which is felt and understood by a village inhabitant, but they are too deep for words and therefore are unexplainable by himself, a village guru, an anthropologist or by an ethnomusicologist. This world may be captured in a sound structure or in music, just as an eighteenth-century enlightenment is crystallized in the music of Bach, and the clarity and discipline in Chinese thought are manifest in the music of a South Chinese ensemble.²²⁰

What do these principles imply for the creative process and the notation of Maceda's scores? In the 1970s, the principles of continuity, infinity, and indefiniteness could still be clearly derived from action scores, which describe sound constellations in a very precise manner, but ultimately leave the musical detail to the dynamic interaction between performers. In *Udot-Udot* (1975), more than 800 students performed three different ostinato patterns (Ex. 3.13, left column): percussionists repeat a five-part ostinato, to which they walk in rhythmic steps in a circle; the instrumentalists sitting in the center superimpose different timbres in the proportions 5:7, 5:9, 7:9, 7:11, etc. (middle columns); the chorus is set up in groups that sing long sustained notes followed by glissandi (right column).

In the 1980s, Maceda's notation became more precise. Rhythmic complexity became a necessity because it was the only way to realize the desired transcendence of a causal time structure in compositional terms, while microtonal melodic fluctuations are often left to the players. Whereas the open concept of Maceda's scores is obvious in the earlier works, his later attempts to treat the ensembles compositionally as a "body of sound" over longer periods seem to require

²¹⁶ Ibid., 46.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 47.

²¹⁸ One might argue that recent neo-Riemannian theories of tonality have contributed to an increasingly complex image of tonality as an expansive network-like system, in which linear causality plays an increasingly subordinate role as the system transforms into late and post-tonal areas.

²¹⁹ Maceda, "A Concept of Time in a Music of Southeast Asia," 47–48.

²²⁰ Maceda, "A Search for an Old and a New Music," 166–167.

Example 3.14: José Macea, *Suling, Suling*, mm. 266–269

The musical score consists of three groups of ten staves each, representing different instruments. The top group, labeled 'Flute 1' through 'Flute 10', uses a standard staff notation with quarter and eighth notes. The middle group, labeled 'Bamboo buzzer 1' through 'Bamboo buzzer 10', uses a staff notation with vertical stems and horizontal dashes, indicating a percussive or scraping technique. The bottom group, labeled 'Flat gong 1' through 'Flat gong 10', uses a staff notation with vertical stems and horizontal dashes, with a specific instruction: 'x=dampen immediately with left hand.' The score is set in a 4/4 time signature with a key signature of one sharp (F#).

a more systematic and more prescriptive approach to notation. In *Suling, Suling* (1984) for ten *suling* bamboo flutes or ten (Western transverse) flutes, ten *pakkung* / *balingbing* buzzers or *tagutok* scrapers, and ten *gangsa* (flat gongs), the exact flute types and pitches of the gongs are left to the performers, but the rhythmic framework is precisely written out and can only be performed with a conductor (Ex. 3.14). A constant that connects these works with the earlier concepts is the organization of the music in sound surfaces or masses, as can easily be seen from the score example.

The slow transformations of the 22-minute musical textures of *Suling, Suling* are not far removed from the ongoing transitional states developed by Morton Feldman and Giacinto Scelsi during the same period. Macea's compositional discoveries have created a variety of "lessness" (see the section on Takahashi below) that, because of its complex ethno-philosophical background, is unique, but also converges with tendencies within the new music of the West that resulted from a liberation from the linear, teleological time frame formulated by different composers, often independently of each other, including Varèse, Xenakis, Feldman and Scelsi as well as Charles Ives, John Cage, György Ligeti, and Bernd Alois Zimmermann.²²¹

Macea's work ultimately shows that cultural difference need not be articulated as a conflict of materials within a composition. Rather, it may attain significance in far more fundamental layers of compositional methodology. Cultural difference influences the instruments and languages used, the highly qualified significance of writing, and the tendency to eliminate the separation between audience and performer.

Ge Ganru's *Yi Feng* (1983) and the Liberation from Culturalist Categories

In Macea's case we can observe sharply that ideas derived from Western musical modernism serve as a principal means in re-inventing local practices, putting them into a new context, and thus countering simplified and affirmative notions of musical as well as political nationalism. The following example demonstrates perhaps even more clearly how a confrontation with Western modernism might cause massive conflicts as well as provoke liberation. Confrontation may lead in productive directions toward the articulation of the culturally different.

Ge Ganru (b. 1954) belongs to the *xinchao* generation of Chinese composers who were severely restricted in their development by the Cultural Revolution. Later, this group of composers developed very independently at breathtaking speed, under a lasting impression of Europe's early musical modernism (→ II.3).²²² During the Cultural Revolution, Ge secretly learned to play the violin. Then he was sent to Chongming Island for agricultural labor from 1971 to 1974, where, despite the extreme living conditions, he founded an ensemble that played variants and excerpts from the "model works" (*yangbanxi*, → III.1). Already in 1974, he was admitted to the violin class of the Shanghai Conservatory and began studying composition there in 1977. After he had acquired Arnold Schoenberg's twelve-tone method, stimulated by the important guest seminar with Alexander Goehr in Beijing in 1980, Ge fell into a compositional crisis. He felt an unbridgeable gap between his fragmented musical biography and the coherence of twelve-tone music.

Ge's *Yi Feng* (Lost Style, 1983) for violoncello solo was a radical move toward liberation and transformed the characteristics of Chinese music in a most unusual way, such as by focusing on the timbral and microtonal shading of a single note and colorations of unpitched noise. The percussive performance techniques and free rhythms are based on traditional drum ensembles such as those from Chinese opera (→ III.5). Yet Ge aimed for a purely imaginary archaic style (to which the title refers), a style intended to lie beyond clear culturalist identities. The instrument's strings are tuned in fourths and up to one octave lower than the original tuning (F#1–B1–E2–A2), thus also greatly expanding the possibilities of playing behind the bridge. The score is notated on six staves (Ex. 3.15). At the time of the composition, Ge hardly knew any works of Western new music after 1945, except for isolated pieces by John Cage, Tōru

²²¹ See Utz, "Paradoxien musikalischer Temporalität in der neueren Musikgeschichte."

²²² Mittler, *Dangerous Tunes*, 173–177, provides biographical details and an overview of Ge's works up to the early 1990s. See also Kouwenhoven, "Mainland China's New Music (III)," 109–111.

Example 3.15: *Ge Gannu, Yi Feng* for Violoncello solo; newly edited version of the handwritten score from 1983, p. 1-2

Dedicated to Mr. Huang Su

Ge Gannu
Yi Feng
(For Solo Violoncello)

Duration: 13 Minutes

Written before the bridge B
From the Bridge A to the Tailpiece C

15"

10"

12"

20"

10"

15"

15"

25"

Copyright © 1983 by Ge Gannu, New Jersey

Takemitsu, and George Crumb. Though Ge's work may remind an "informed" listener of Lachenmann's *Pression* (1969), Ge remained unaware of Helmut Lachenmann's œuvre up to 2006.²²³

Ultimately, in Ge's case, it was not so much a matter of "countering" a massive Western influence by a "culturally different" object as of preserving, or even gaining, a stable artistic position at all within China's extremely ambiguous discourses after the Cultural Revolution. The cultural opening up of the 1980s, following the extreme restrictions between 1966 and 1976, was accompanied by a continuity of repressive discourses around suspected over-individualism, culminating in two so-called "Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaigns" (*Qingchu jingshen wuran*) in 1983 and 1987 (→ III.3).²²⁴ *Yi Feng* is, above all, a remarkable document of upheaval in recent Chinese music history, because it did not bow to those repressions. In the process, the characteristics of traditional instruments such as *erhu*, *pipa*, or *qin* (which were classified as deficient by the overwhelming majority of Chinese music makers) provided value. Their blurring and noise, and thus their cultural difference from the standardization of Western instruments, revealed great creative potential. Ultimately, this cultural difference in Ge's work served as one of several means of shaping an imaginary musical space beyond cultural and political categorization.

Yūji Takahashi: Attentive Listening and Social Interaction

To approach the compositional contexts of the Japanese composer and pianist Yūji Takahashi (b. 1938), the demand for attentive listening and hearing, which takes on a central position in Takahashi's conception, might be exemplified by reference to two idiosyncratic works: *Koto nado asobi* (2000) for *koto* and string quartet and *Tori mo tsukai ka* (1993) for *shamisen* and orchestra seem to design a music that knows no progression of time. Intersecting, presentist, rather than processual, sounds combine in an apparently free sequence, in varying character and density, not necessarily diverging, but moving as if in a free continuum in which they meet each other, seemingly incidentally. In his research on the music of Morton Feldman and John Cage, Martin Erdmann introduced the Beckettian concept of "lessness,"²²⁵ which seems to me to be very suitable for capturing a crucial quality of Takahashi's two works: "lessness" understood as the absence of clear, quasi-causal connections, conclusiveness, consequence, stringency – principles developed again and again in various ways in a range of new music during the twentieth century.

In fact, Takahashi's approach – similar to Macea's – counters the concept of discursive musical logic that has had a lasting impact on European music since the medieval *musica theorica*. To hear his music exclusively as a counterdiscourse to Western aesthetic principles, however,

²²³ "I was not aware of any notations like what I did for *Yi Feng* when I composed that piece, as China was a closed society at that time. Prior to this piece, I focused all my energy on twelve-tone music. I had only heard John Cage's piano music once, saw George Crumb's score once. After completing *Yi Feng*, I heard Takemitsu's *November Steps*. These three were the only avant-garde composers I knew of when I was in China. Forgive my ignorance, up to today, I still don't know who Helmut Lachenmann is. The above Western contemporary music materials I had access to were left in China by some Westerners who came to visit. They [were] either just scores or tapes, never both. Our understanding of what was happening outside of China was very, very limited." (E-mail to the author, 10/10/2006.)

²²⁴ See, among others, Mittler, *Dangerous Tunes*, 99, 123–124.

²²⁵ See Erdmann, "Zusammenhang und Losigkeit" and Erdmann, "Webern und Cage: Zur Genese der Cageschen Losigkeit." The German term "Losigkeit" comes from Elmar Tophoven's German translation of Samuel Beckett's experimental text *sans* (1969, English version: *Lessness* 1970). Beckett's text is based on chance procedures and was inspired, among others, by the music of John Cage.

would be an ultimately ethnocentric and culturally essentialist understanding that fails to recognize how intensively Takahashi has been working since the late 1980s on a conceptual liberation from the Western/non-Western cultural dualism. Relying on elementary phenomena of hearing, music-making, and practice, working directly from the organology of the instruments and corresponding performance methods or from models of interaction between the performers, he opens up not only transcultural, but often also wide historical, societal, and social spaces. His basic attitude is already clear from the instructions in the score of *Koto nado asobi*:

Stay out of tune as [sic] possible. Instruments don't tune together. Don't play self-assertively. Sounds are uncertain, ambiguous, faltering, transient, and a little out of control. Listen attentively but at ease to your own sound, how it begins, sustains and ends.²²⁶

Example 3.16: Yūji Takahashi, **Koto nado asobi**; “koto,” model A

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The music consists of two score pages for *koto* solo (*koto*) and a page with instructions for an ensemble of any instruments (*nado asobi*) (Ex. 3.16, 3.17). The *koto* score contains five different models, consisting of mnemonic syllables from *koto* practice, which date back to *shamisen* practice and are called *kuchi-jamisen* ("mouth shamisen"). In the Japanese version of the score (Ex. 3.16, left), model A appears in three columns: on the left are the *kuchi-jamisen* syllables in the *katakana* alphabet, in the middle the plucked string numbers in *kanji*, and on the right the Japanese transliteration of a Sanskrit *Dhārani* (mantra) which the performer recites. In the English version (Ex. 3.16, right), the *kuchi-jamisen* syllables are rendered in Romanized form and additionally transcribed onto five-line staff. Takahashi prescribes an irregular scale that deviates slightly from the traditional scales, and the performer is asked to decide "by ear" how large the microtonal deviations should be. The individual sounds or figures can either be fragmented, that is, framed by silence, or executed as repetitive loops. Similarly, the ensemble's instrumentalists respond very carefully to the sounds they hear, either adding slight microtonal alterations, playing in a distinct pitch register, or freely following the graphic symbols (Ex. 3.17).

226 Takahashi, *Koto nado asobi*, preliminary remarks.

*Example 3.17: Yūji Takahashi, **Koto nado asobi**; “-- nado asobi” for any instruments; models*

Melody instruments use the following three modes of playing:

Mode 1. A long tone slightly off pitch from what you heard. No accent, no attack.

No tonguing and varying amount of breath and changing the mouth cavity for wind instruments.

Loose bow rolling between normal and col legno positions for strings with changing speed.

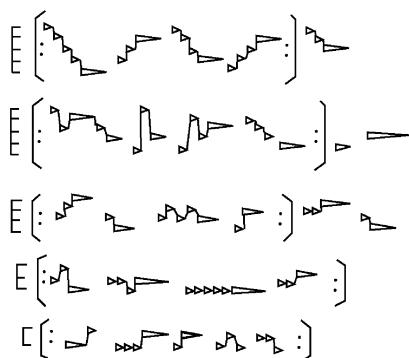
Mode 2. A different pitch than what you heard.

Short tone must be without intention like a child dropping an object in his hand.

Long tone must be prepared first by sounding faintly as if checking the pitch before playing.

Mode 3. Play one of the following fragments, different one from others are playing at the time.

Repeat any number of times. Change the fragment at will. Play unsteadily.



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In *Tori mo tsukai ka* (1993), the anti-teleological conception of time is also achieved by superimposing fundamentally independent parts, with listening attention again playing a major role. The stanza-like traditional form of the *shamisen* part is superimposed on models for the orchestra (Ex. 3.18), which are freely developed by the musicians in individual groups following the signs of the conductor. Takahashi here refers to a dense, irregular canonic texture derived from *gagaku*: this structure is found in the concentration of lines at the end of the introductory *netori* section in some pieces from the *komagaku* repertoire²²⁷ and in the extended introduction to the *bugaku* repertoire called *chōshi*, in which the styles *omeribuki* and *oibuki* are known as forms of free or strict imitation.²²⁸ Due to the narrow, but not exactly fixed intervals between the voices, heterophonic structures arise in different density and arrangement. The desired blurring is reflected in the type of notation in which dashed lines indicate heterophony. The resulting sound is described by Takahashi as follows:

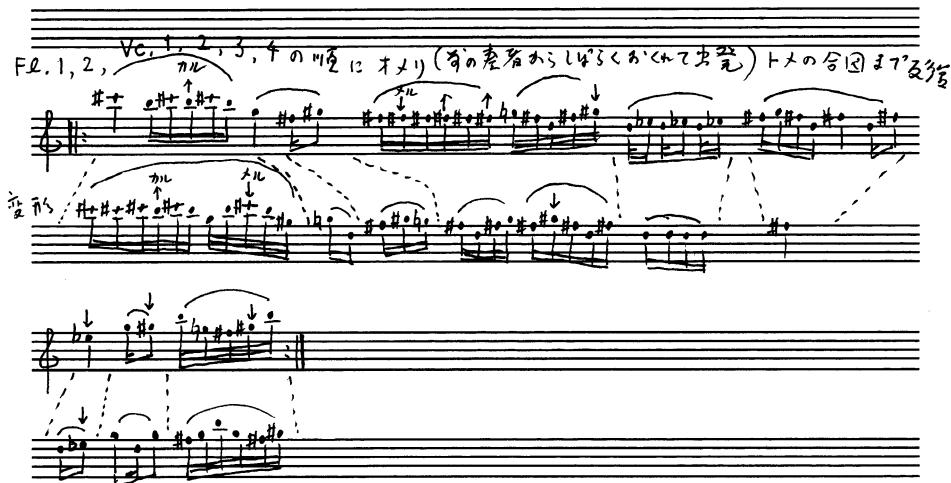
And so I am using a conventional ensemble with a conductor and a soloist but their functions are completely different. The music should be like a rolling wave. The sound comes up to the surface and then goes down. The players shouldn't try to be soloists, but contribute their sounds,

²²⁷ See Malm, *Japanese Music and Musical Instruments*, 103. In the *chōshi* introduction, the imitation is strict among the *shō* players who enter first, whereupon the *hichiriki* players imitate another musical figure. An extended version of the *chōshi* designs an A-B-A' form with *kakebuki* – *netori* (solo by the *ryūteki* flute) – *oibuki*, whereby in the *oibuki* the distances between the imitative entries are denser than in the *kakebuki*. Takahashi pointed out (correspondence with the author) that he understands *kakebuki* as glissando appoggiatura notes on the *ryūteki*, while he considers *omeribuki* and *oibuki* as free and strict forms of canonic imitation in *gagaku*.

²²⁸ See Garfias, *Music of a Thousand Autumns*, 76.

listening to [the] whole ensemble, not competing, but allowing others to come up after their own sound has been heard. They must also resist the impulse to synchronise, because it is a natural tendency.²²⁹

Example 3.18: Yūji Takahashi, *Tori mo tsukai ka*, orchestra model 1



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Since the late 1980s, Takahashi's finely calibrated compositions have been produced mainly for a small circle of musician friends, with whom the targeted social-communicative experiments could be achieved more easily than with institutionalized larger ensembles. Takahashi probably received lasting influences from related models and intellectual constellations in the musical concepts of Cornelius Cardew (1936–1981) and Christian Wolff (b. 1934) – with whom he also shared fundamental political convictions – but, to my knowledge, this influence is not yet sufficiently documented. To portray the background of Takahashi's approach more systematically, his rigorous critique of postcolonialism and political power struggles since the 1970s is fundamental. In 1976 Takahashi argued that "So long as colonialism exists politically, economically, and culturally, music cannot be a universal language."²³⁰ Despite some phases of sustained politicization,²³¹ Takahashi has always responded to an affirmative politicizing musical tone with skeptical eyes and ears. He has firmly rejected a "music for the entire human race" or a "music for everyone," as dictated by populist politics and the mass media.²³² Instead, he has demanded a skeptical attitude toward media abuse:

Music begins by doubting sounds. One tears oneself away from the charm of sounds, one cuts the stream by coming to depend upon musical elements that are not time-related. Eliminate all

²²⁹ Takahashi, "Between Good and Evil," 10.

²³⁰ Takahashi, "From Words to Music," 65.

²³¹ In 1978 Takahashi founded the group *Suiyū* (Water Buffalo), with which he sang East Asian political protest songs. See Galliano, *Yōgaku*, 234, and Takahashi, "The Resistance of the Asian Masses and Their Culture."

²³² Takahashi, "From Words to Music," 66–67.

unnecessary information and learn new techniques; repeat one thing again and again instead of indulging in the traditional dramas of time.²³³

Nonetheless, Takahashi's work in the 1970s and 1980s focused on projects with distinctly political themes. These themes contributed to the increasingly transparent texture of his scores. His well-known piano piece *Kwangju, May 1980* (1980), for example, combines remembrance of the victims of the South Korean Kwangju uprising in May 1980 with echoes of various Korean folk songs, which, like the clearly referenced *Saeya, saeya*, have very specific coded meanings in the Korean context (→ III.5, VI.3).²³⁴ *The Song of the Blue Sword* (1980) also explicitly refers to a political theme; in this work, the political parable *Forging the Sword* (*Zhu jian*, 1926) by the Chinese writer Lu Xun (1881–1936) is performed by a choir of approximately two hundred students, implicitly referring to Macea's mass settings.²³⁵ Freedom in the design of the individual parts of the score, which is determined only in its basic features and based largely on French-Chinese number notation (Ex. 3.19, → III.1), and the request for the participants' initiative, were part of Takahashi's conception as well as the spatial disposition in which a larger group of choir singers on stage was supplemented by a second group, which was placed at the corners of the hall.

There seems to be a clear distance between the political actions of these years and the introversion of the later works. Yet both periods are connected by a rigorous effort to find sensitive compositional solutions that avoid simplistic extremes. In addition, the later works can surely claim an implicit political dimension in a similar sense to what Luigi Nono claimed of his late works.²³⁶ This dimension is evident in the works of the 1990s, which show an intense engagement with traditional Japanese and other Asian genres, based on continued collaboration with soloists of Japanese instruments.²³⁷ In this context, Takahashi's critical approach received a precisely formulated ethnological and performative accent. Even in earlier reflections, aspects and paradoxes of instrumental practice – as pointed out in his article "Bach as a Failure" (1976) (→ I.1) – had been an important starting point for compositional considerations, and now they assumed primary importance: learning and deepening through the repetition of models – especially in the mold of traditional Asian learning methods – and ultimately the liberation of such models in their free combination, crucially determine Takahashi's approach to Japanese genres and instruments. A close long-term cooperation with the instrumentalists is a fundamental prerequisite for such an approach and also has an effect on how the results of these working processes are laid down in musical notation. This approach also implies a tendency to reach beyond nationally defined traditions in a manner not dissimilar to Macea's:

Instead of basing one's music on aesthetic or philosophical ideas or metaphors or a vague feeling of "Japaneseness," we can start directly from traditional techniques which are transmitted orally. You copy your teacher's playing, so it is a transmission from one body to another. And this is a very strong kind of memory, compared to intellectual understanding and transmission through

²³³ Ibid., 67.

²³⁴ *Saeya, saeya* was the signature song of the revolutionary *Tonghak* movement in the nineteenth century – the most important of many movements against authoritarian systems in modern Korean history (→ III.5).

²³⁵ See Reynolds, "A Jostled Silence: Contemporary Japanese Musical Thought (Part Two)."

²³⁶ See, for example, Metzger, "Wendepunkt Quartett?"

²³⁷ The musicians Takahashi has worked with regularly since the late 1980s include the *shamisen* soloists Kazuko Takada and Yumiko Tanaka, the *shō* soloist Kō Ishikawa, as well as Yoko Nishi (*koto*) and Keiko Kanda (percussion).

Example 3.19: Yūji Takahashi, *The Song of the Blue Sword*, Section D1

D1

1	・	<u>71</u>	<u>43</u>	・	・	<u>45</u>	<u>75</u>	・	* <u>45</u>	・	・
ヲ		イ	ケン			ヲ	3イ		シ		
5	7	i	<u>72</u>	→	i	7	3	5	→	<u>43</u>	・
カ	タ	キ	ヒト	リ		ミヲ	ステ		ル		
?	・	<u>21</u>	→	3	4	・	3	<u>45</u>	<u>75</u>	・	・
トク		サイ	シャ	カズ		カギ	リ	ナク			
3	4	5	・	<u>7</u>	4	3	・	・	・	・	・
リ	ツ	ケ		ザ	マ						
<u>54</u>	5	1	・	<u>71</u>	<u>43</u>	・	<u>45</u>	<u>75</u>	・	* <u>45</u>	・
ヤツ	ラ	アオ		イ	ケン		ヲ	3イ		シ	
7	i	・	<u>72</u>	→	i	7	3	5	<u>54</u>	3	・
ア	ア		ヒト	リ	ナ	ラ	ス				
4	5	・	→	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>	5	<u>65</u>	4	→	5	・
ク	ビ		二	ハ	ク	ヒ	ヒ	ク			
5	7	i	・	<u>72</u>	→	i	7	3	5	→	<u>43</u>
カ	タ	キ		7タ	リ	ミヲ	ステ				ル
7	<u>21</u>	2	・	* <u>4</u>	<u>54</u>	2	5	・	* <u>45</u>	<u>75</u>	・
トク	サイ	シ		モ	ナキ	モ/	3イ		カ	3ア	

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abstract means, such as notes on paper or a discussion of theory. There are certain aspects of using instruments which are broader than one tradition of music. In tracing these techniques back to the original concepts we can find something hidden in these apparently very different traditions of Asia and [the] Pacific region. [...]

I'm interested to start from how you produce the sound, instead of how you classify the sound. You make sound by contacting an instrument through your hand, finger or breath. Then there is a movement, a patterned movement, and you can start to combine those movements into larger units. [...]

Let's go back to the learning of music, the teacher and student, a one-to-one situation. The teacher plays a phrase, the student plays back a phrase. They play together. This is a copying, a synchronization of the movement of two different instruments. Another principle is response – you

play that and I play this in response. This is also a learning process which can be developed into the next phase, as in gamelan, for example [...].²³⁸

usually my approach to the traditional instruments is not from the written materials about register, timbres, playing method, etc., but through the actual collaboration with performers studying the hand movements, traditional disciplines. [...] i am trying to go back to the origin by changing the habitual playing methods accumulated through traditions. you may call it [...] anti-training. this is difficult without the cooperation of the performers for some period. also you cannot notate this part of the training on paper and send it [...] to the performers wherever they live in the world.²³⁹

These quotations make it clear how much the observational and ethnological approach helped Takahashi break away from the precarious polarities of cultural nationalism and cultural Westernization (to some degree represented by the position of the *gendai hōgaku* and preceding developments → III.1) as well as to liberate Japanese instruments from the widespread bias that assigns them a purely coloristic role: through careful observation and study of traditional performance practice, composer and performers reconstruct a kind of “physical archeology.” The performative approach becomes more concrete in that standardized sequences of body movements (*kata*) in instrumental practice and the resulting sounds are considered complementary to each other. The confrontation with the most important musical instruments of bourgeois Edo culture (1600–1867), the arched zither *koto* and the long-necked lute *shamisen*, was the center of Takahashi’s attention for many years. Especially for Kazuko Takada (who died in 2007), and later also for Yumiko Tanaka and Yoko Nishi, a large number of works, for both solo instruments and chamber music ensembles emerged.²⁴⁰ Takahashi wrote that the *shamisen* was his preferred model because it was least suited for “modernization.”²⁴¹ Through a tactile, sensualistic approach to sound production, Takahashi tried to overcome a fixed harmonic or tonal frame. His works, of course, do not spell out traditional forms. In *Sangen sanju* for *shamisen* solo (1992), for example, materials are eclectically combined from a variety of different genres to constitute the fictional genre “sanju” (the name refers to the well-known Korean semi-improvisational genre *sanjo* → III.5). With the help of a computer algorithm, Takahashi combined melodic variants of the *koto* repertoire, *ji* melodies from the narrative genre *jōruri* (→ V.1), elements from the repertoires of *gagaku* and *gamelan* as well as *rāga* and *taqsim* models.²⁴² The result does not sound eclectic at all, but suggests a close association of the traditional genres *jiuta* or *nagauta* with the *shamisen*’s

²³⁸ Takahashi, “Between Good and Evil,” 7–9.

²³⁹ Correspondence with the author, 16/06/2001 (original orthography has been retained).

²⁴⁰ Takahashi’s compositions for or with Takada include *Kaze ga omote de yonde iru* (The Wind is Calling Me Outside, 1986/94) for *shamisen* and voice, *Sangen sanju* for *shamisen* (1992), *Nasuno ryōjō* for *shamisen* and computer (1992), *Nasuno kasane* for *shamisen*, violin, and piano (1997) (→ III.5), and *Tori mo tsukai ka* for *shamisen* and chamber orchestra (1993, see above). Takahashi’s other works with Japanese instruments include *While I Am Crossing the Bridge* (1984), *Thread Cogwheels* (1990), *Bosatsu kangen dennōdate* (1992), *Yume, Tori mo tsukai ka II, Hiru wa moetsukita, Kagehime no michiyuki* (1993), *Mimi no ho* (1994 → IV.1), *Ongaku no Oshie* (1995), *Mono-Gatari, Insomnia* (1996), *Samu-shiro, Ne monogatari, Kanashimi o sagasu ut, Sōjō rinzetstu* (1997 → IV.1), *Three Pieces for Ichigenkin, Ware wo tanomete konu wotoko, Momoka momoyo, Tsuginepu to itte mita, Oinaru Shi no monogatari* (1998), *Aki no uta, Kotsu no utau* (1999), *Aomori gaeru, Sangen, Koto nado asobi* (2000, see above), *Palindrome* (2001), *To-i* (2002), *Sinubi* (2007), *Hanagatami 1* (2008), *Ariake* (2009), *Tabibito ka herazu* (2010), *Yūgao no ie, Kasuka ni* (2013), and *Bai guī yexīng huijuān* (2014).

²⁴¹ Takahashi, “Two Statements on Music,” 148.

²⁴² See Takahashi, *Tori no asobi*.

Example 3.20: Yūji Takahashi, *Sangen sanju* for shamisen, beginning

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“incommensurable” timbre, which is hardly challenged by crosscultural melodic references (Ex. 3.20).

In addition, Takahashi has taken a radical “ethnological” approach to some instruments and their repertoire based on critical source study, as exemplified by his *shō* duo *Sōjō rin-zetsu* (1997), in which he implicitly criticized nationalist tendencies in Japanese music research (→ IV.1). The great potential of Takahashi’s basic attitude unfolds in his five works for archaic instruments, which were reconstructed in the context of a project led by Toshirō Kido (National

Theater Tokyo).²⁴³ The interest in archaic instruments is consistent with Takahashi's basic approach: it enables him to (re-)construct an instrumental idiom from instrumental movements for instruments whose playing practice has not been handed down to today through an unbroken tradition.²⁴⁴ In *Unebiyama* (1992) for five-string zither and incantation, for example, various stages of a "discovery" of the instrument by the musician are composed out (→ V.1): starting from elementary movements of the hand and fingers – the individual strings are explored one after the other in a careful tactile manner – the arpeggio over all five strings is suddenly "discovered" as a combination of these individual sounds, and the player is led into a trance-like state – a reference to the shamanistic context of the original instrument.

For all his concentration on concrete aspects of performance practice, Takahashi's composition is, on the whole, rather pluralistic. This is evident not least in the variety of contexts invoked by his music: his cautious treatment of the re-composition of European and Asian music and text materials, his intense engagement with Buddhist philosophy and practice in the 1990s, as well as his identification with artists such as José Maceda, Ossip Mandelstam, Pier Paolo Pasolini, or Sofia Gubaidulina, with whom aesthetic affinities are visible and to whom Takahashi dedicated works.

The multifaceted relationship between aural tradition and writing in Takahashi's œuvre, the complexity and originality of his intercultural references, and his negation of the simplifications of cultural essentialism assign him a prominent role within an intercultural history of twentieth-century music. Not least, his procedures make it clear how complex the task can be to place non-written components or various juxtaposed forms of transcription in a balanced and appropriate relationship to one another in an intercultural context. His scores mix elements of traditional Japanese notation with five-line staff notation and various verbal and graphic instructions in hybrid score forms in which the prescriptive element of conventional notation takes a back seat in favor of a documentary, descriptive, or physical-haptic iconography. This implies an adequately "informed" interpretation with reference to the "aural practice" thematized by the composer.

Discussion

The examples discussed in this chapter point us to the insight that a break with an ethnocentric and one-sided historiographic model is inevitable in the analysis of social and music-historical developments in Asia – and has to be re-applied to the West as well, possibly following the model of entangled histories (→ II.1). Recourse to cultural difference, however, can be risky in this context, or even misleading for historiographical analysis, if based solely on stereotypes and an essentialist, post-nationalist concept of (music) culture. In contrast to Takemitsu's essentialization of musical sounds (to some degree characteristic of his generation), the construction of an imaginary archaic by Ge Ganru (in an entirely different context, less shaped by long-term entanglements with Western modernism) suggests a possible way of rejecting such stereotyping – along with other approaches to intercultural musical composition that we will

²⁴³ See Kido, *Reconstructed Music Instruments of Ancient East Asia*. Takahashi's works for reconstructed instruments include *Zanshi no kyoku* (Gauze-Silk-Chant, 1988) for the twenty-five-stringed Chinese zither *se* and recitation, *Dream of Heaven* (1989) for *se*, *Unebiyama* (Mount Unebi, 1992) for five-stringed zither and incantation, *Tori no asobi* (Birds' Play, 1993) for seven-stringed instrument, and *Mangalasutta* (1996) for an ensemble of archaic instruments and voices. See also Takahashi, *Astray Among Decayed Strings*.

²⁴⁴ For more detail, see Takahashi, "Two Statements on Music."

encounter in the following chapters (→ III.5–6, IV, V). To be sure, the compositional relevance of cultural difference cannot be denied. But we need to be aware that culturally coded idioms, instruments, or voices are subject to historical, political, and social change: they are unstable, and the form in which they confront us must always be open to discussion. For both Western and non-Western composers, the relevance of cultural difference is inseparably linked to a reflection on the inner historicity, ambiguity, and provisional nature of musical cultures.

Certainly, an intercultural music history cannot ignore actors like Takahashi or Macea. Their concepts are characterized by complex interventions in theory and practice aiming at a reflection of performance situations in the compositional process. Further similarities in the approaches of the two composers may have become evident: the importance attached to fundamental ethnomusicological areas – although very differently accentuated – such as the practice of instrumental performance, the categorization of timbres, or the cultural encoding of sounds and instruments. This leads both composers to an intensive examination of the relationship between music and society, reflected in highly individual compositional projects and approaches, and to the rejection of simplistic compositional solutions such as references to folkloristic material.

Yet, differences in their procedures have become clear. The primary difference seems to be that Takahashi ultimately rejects the principle of cultural essentialism as a whole and directs his attention to very specific detail phenomena, whose particularity he leaves untouched. By contrast, Macea certainly claims a supra-regional, if not universal substance in an attempt to counter the causal logic of Western music. This difference may be explained by a difference of age, but certainly also by the very different social situations in the Philippines and Japan: Macea's postcolonial discourse is illuminated by Takahashi from a postmodern perspective, as it were – a “postmodernism” that began in Japanese cultural criticism during the 1960s, if not earlier. The diversity and particularism of Takahashi's œuvre may seem analogous to Masao Maruyama's analysis of Japanese intellectual history. In 1961, Maruyama analyzed the history of thought in Japan, in opposition to the widespread construction of essential Japanese peculiarities, as an extremely plural discourse that “failed to form a spiritual tradition serving as a point of crystallization or coordinate axis,” and thus brought about a situation in which a variety of “ideas, modes of thought, and worldviews remain historically unstructured side by side.”²⁴⁵ In contrast, the understanding of José Macea as a “national” Filipino artist to this day shows that his attempt to construct such a coordinate axis, however open and complex, necessarily risks popularizing a leveling out of differences through cultural essentialism.²⁴⁶

It has become clear once again that an intercultural music history can no longer be satisfied with conventional methods of musical analysis if it is to deal with specific problems such as the relationship between aural and textual components of the compositional process. An exclusively “immanent analysis” of the works presented here must clearly remain insufficient,

²⁴⁵ Maruyama, *Denken in Japan*, 23, 24 (“In Japan hat sich keine als Kristallisierungspunkt oder Koordinatenachse dienende geistige Tradition zu bilden vermocht”; “Ideen, Denkformen und Weltanschauungen historisch unstrukturiert nebeneinander bestehen bleiben”). See Janz, “Multiple Musical Modernities?” for a contextualization of Maruyama's thought with Eisenstadt's theory of “multiple modernities” (→ II.1).

²⁴⁶ See the accompanying text to the VCD *Kuwadro – José Monserrat Macea, National Artist for Music* (Cultural Center of the Philippines, 2002), in which, after a short presentation of Macea's compositional and ethnomusicological achievements, one can read: “In all these, fiercely nationalistic aesthetics pervades the spirit of this music visionary, forward-looking and confident, burning with a breath of life into an ideal springing forth from the soul of the Filipino.”

since, as we have seen, the musical text is often merely a documentary or mnemonic sketch, or represents an intermediate stage or plan (though sometimes quite precisely formulated) for execution. In addition, both composers very consciously and in a complex way manipulate cultural codes and meanings that can be deduced only through a correspondingly culturally “informed” hearing from the sounding result. For this music, new techniques of a “contextual analysis” must be found. There is no question that the works and conceptions of Takemitsu, Ge, Maceda, or Takahashi, and many other composers working on similar interfaces of cultural categorization, are decisive touchstones for alternative music historiographies.

5. Intercultural Narrativity in East Asian Art Music since the 1990s

Can art music actually create such a high degree of differentiation between questions of recognition, alterity, or hybridity, as outlined in the first chapter (→ I.3)? Caution is generally advised when applying social, political, and literary concepts to musical contexts. The increasing difficulty for art music to claim social relevance was already mentioned at the beginning of this book (→ I.2). In contrast to more semantically and semiotically constricted literature and the symbolic reception processes instigated by visual arts, the communication of multi-coded messages seems fundamental to the medium of music and sound. Lawrence Kramer once described this quality of music as a “semantic chameleon.”²⁴⁷ Even more recent tendencies of topic theory or research into musical metaphoricism rarely posit unambiguous principles of musical communication.²⁴⁸ Such ambiguity initially seems an advantage in the field of interculturality. In the sense of a conception of music (prominently described by Kramer) as a “cultural practice” (→ I.2), it should be emphasized that this ambiguity is limited through reception history and other mechanisms by a wealth of “meta-musical” dimensions such as genre conventions, their *topoi*, and connotation. These contexts may allow a construction of musical narrativity, which of course is always to be weighed critically against alternative cognitive processes and cultures of hearing, since they are profoundly socioculturally and historically encoded.

Robert Samuels – following Jean-Jacques Nattiez – distinguished between two basic assumptions that allow, or even require, speaking of musical narrativity: on the one hand, a musical process must describe a continuous, irreversible change over time, and on the other hand, it must bring together identifiable musical characters to create an overarching meaning. This meaning cannot be reduced to individual components.²⁴⁹ In this chapter, I will present some striking case studies of works by East Asian composers since the 1990s for whom these criteria of musical narrativity undoubtedly apply. By focusing on works that combine Asian and European instruments, the following analyses to some degree reinforce associations of these instruments

²⁴⁷ Kramer, “Hercules’ Hautboys,” 149.

²⁴⁸ Zbikowski, *Conceptualizing Music*, Thorau, *Vom Klang zur Metapher*, and Mirka, *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*.

²⁴⁹ Samuels, “When Must One Speak of Narrativity in Music?” with reference to Nattiez, “Can One Speak of Narrativity in Music?” and Abbate, *Unsung Voices*. Narratological concepts have received a great deal of attention in recent years, particularly in the interpretation of music from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, though hardly ever in reference to newer music, with the exception of the remarkable dissertation Meelberg, *New Sounds, New Stories*. Foundational studies from the past years include Maus, “Narratology, Narrativity,” Samuels, “Narrative Form and Mahler’s Musical Thinking,” Imberty, “Narrative, Splintered Temporalities and the Unconscious in 20th Century Music,” and Almén, *A Theory Of Musical Narrative*.