

Preface

In the public debate, the relevance of the topics of musical interculturality and musical globalization seems to have faded in many places, to be replaced by a technology-centered media discourse that shows little interest in conventional notions of culture and emphasizes the permeability, performativity, and mutability of interconnected concepts of identity. In this context the idea of globalization, influenced by the model of popular musics, which have always been “global” in their orientation and increasingly determine musicological discourses, has all too often been restricted to the economic spectrum of meanings that once spawned it; what is of interest here is less a play with or problematizing of established cultural identities, whose significance is fairly marginal in the mainstream, or the worldwide dissemination of particular idioms or genres of pop, which is often taken for granted, than a grown market of consumers that was opened up by the new distribution possibilities of the internet – a situation that seems to fundamentally change the general reception of music far beyond these popular genres.

Against this background, insisting not only on a concept of interculturality but also on an art music discourse must therefore appear doubly quixotic, a clinging to long-questionable, paling categories, especially if this shows a tendency to presuppose the critical – “culture-critical” – impulse of art that was allegedly only brought forth by the “special path” of Western aesthetic modernity. But, one could respond, is it even necessary to emphasize that the concern cannot be to transfer a “purely Western” concept of art (assuming this can be constructed in the first place) to other cultural and geographical contexts, or must we do away with the misconception that the concept of “interculturality” is predicated on an obsolete, isolationist “container model” of cultures? Such questions, which certainly demand more than simple answers, are examined in detail in Chapter 1 of this book.

A desire to point not only to such “false dichotomies,” but also to impulses in a musicological field that – with a few exceptions – can still be considered a blind spot in musicology and music theory, but also compositional practice, was sufficient motivation to undertake the studies presented here, written over the last twelve years following the publication of my 2000 dissertation under the title *Neue Musik und Interkulturalität. Von John Cage zu Tan Dun* in 2002. These studies have been brought together in a thoroughly revised, refocused, and reconsidered state. Most texts could, in the widest sense, be understood as excursuses on the previous book: they were meant to close certain gaps inevitably left by the earlier study, despite its considerable length, and also to expand the range of historical-analytical research methodologically and, to a limited extent, geographically. The relationship between East Asia (China, Taiwan, Japan, and Korea) and the West (Europe and North America) continues to play a central part, as

in *Neue Musik und Interkulturalität*, but is augmented through the inclusion of several other local contexts (Africa, the Philippines, Indonesia, and the Arab world).

Many of the compositional trends discussed in this book are characterized by a growing reflexivity vis-à-vis compositional methods and aesthetic positions toward the two opposing tendencies in cultural globalization: on the one hand, owing to an often hasty reception of European music in Asia, Africa, or Latin America, there are unmistakably clear tendencies toward a worldwide standardization of compositional practice according to Western criteria, seemingly continuing the effects of colonial power structures to the present day. On the other hand, the composition of art music and the discourses awakened by it often act as important triggers for movements of self-determination and liberation in non-Western countries – though equally as tools of pure nationalism, oppression, and exclusion. In the six chapters, I attempt to interpret such “paradoxes” of producing music in the globalized tension field against the background of contemporary historical developments, culture-political and culture-sociological situations in their many layers of meaning. The argumentation also attempts to open up perspectives on the problem of a consistently globally conceived music historiography (→ II.1) and compositional practice, but can perhaps also offer individual suggestions for answering the question of how cultural techniques and processes of globalization can, beyond the realm of music, fundamentally be understood and interpreted more precisely. In this context, the attempt to incorporate music-analytical, culture-scientific, and sociohistorical approaches serves the purpose of breaking through the methodologically one-sided application of these research paradigms found all too often in musicological disciplines. An additional expansion of methodology comes from the fact that essays on the author’s own “culturally fluctuating” compositional projects are included in the final chapter, albeit understood as a supplement and an art-specific, in many ways irreducible extension of the argumentation, not as the artistic “realization” of a theoretical model.

Needless to say, the present study does not purport to offer any concise historiography or universalist historical conception. “Perspectives” on music history are meant in the sense of selected, disparate snapshots of the tightly interwoven music histories of the West and East Asia, and certainly not a comprehensive consideration thereof. Thus, in contrast to the broadly conceived overview chapters in *Neue Musik und Interkulturalität*, I have refrained here from attempting to show any form of representative selection of compositional conceptions with the greatest possible stylistic range from a bird’s eye view, as it were; rather, I attempt to thematize exemplary sonic thought in which the fault lines of cultural, historical, or aesthetic discourses become audible and appreciable. The studies presented give particular weight to the prehistory and early history of intercultural musical reflection (→ II.3–4, III.2–3) as well as to recent developments of the last two to three decades (→ II.6, III.5, IV–VI).

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