one strand of artistic practice, but rather one that appears in many areas, and is focused on intensely *also* in musical compositions. Said differently, reading sci-fi can allow for the experience of different temporalities, like Lucier.

Taking this one step further can allow for an articulation of Maerzmusik's curatorial concept to emerge. This is namely that Polzer seems to be focusing the festival's programming on exploring ways in which musical techniques relate to and interact with society. This is instead of the traditional approach to this festival and others in the field, whose curatorial concept is focused instead on discrete works, and, through the use of e.g. a festival theme, becomes a way of helping mediate these works to the festival audience. In this later case, such issues of the relationship between a work and society thus emerge either explicitly in a composer's work, or implicitly through the reproduction of certain values and practices. By foregrounding this aspect of music's relationship to society, Polzer also seems to be taking this definitional power for himself.

This is seen clearly in this evening, whereby the various works exist in an indexical relationship to the larger direction of programming set by the curator. This creating of a subjective narrative of the curator is what then allows for him to easily mix works from different disciplines and that have different artistic concerns; their meaning becomes re-stabilized through the higher order of the curatorial concept, here an evening of Donna Haraway.

5.7   Curating and the Maerzmusik Festival

5.7.1   Curating Concerts

Theatre scholar Hans-Thies Lehmann distinguishes between three kinds of text; the linguistic text of the theatre play, the text of the staging or mise-en-scène, and the performance text, explaining that the latter is produced through the interpellation of the former two (2006, 85). He explains that in post-dramatic theatre, the performance text has undergone a shift in its understanding; it has expanded to encompass the realization that the entirety of the performance situation, of the different various sense-giving actants that make up the theatrical situation, constitute this performance text, rather than it just being narrowly defined as the discrete actions onstage (ibid.). Post-dramatic theatre is less about a change in how works are staged, and more about exploring the repercussions of this more fundamental expansion of the understanding of the performance text, which encompasses both the entirety of the theatre event, and is regulated by the individual viewer.

In a similar fashion, Polzer does not go so far as to change what can be understood as the analogy to the linguistic text—the score—of the individual works, for this would not be supported by a musical community that places an extremely high

value on fidelity and *Werktreue* (see also section 5.4.2). Rather, adapting Lehmann's diagnosis of director's theatre [*Regietheater*], Polzer is discovering "the means and devices that are inherent to [ed.: the concert] event without regard to the text" (Lehmann 2006, 50). Text here should be understood as the notational score, not e.g. the choice of scores, which is another area in which Polzer asserts his expressivity, as discussed earlier. This can be observed for instance in the examples above, where Polzer seems to discover the expressivity of the "means and devices" that already exist in his palette of options while designing a concert evening. As has already become established in director's theatre, he moulds and manipulates the dramaturgy in such a way as to have it change the performance text so drastically as to strongly influence the perception of the programmed works in a particular and subjective direction. Polzer could thus be said to be shifting the focus of the concert from an emphasis on fidelity to the "linguistic text" of the work to an emphasis on the performance text through the addition of a carefully-constructed mise-en-scène.

Just as with the early development of the role of the dramaturg discussed in relation to Lessing, Polzer's work becomes about both presenting a performance to an audience in such a way as to affect them, but also about addressing the issue of creating a *transgression*, not just showing the audience what they want, but what they *should like*. The way Polzer selects works, transitions between them, selects venues, stages the concert, and contextualizes it with the catalogue are all carefully conceived out of a logic of the material itself, but also out of an interest in ensuring that an event of affective upheaval and transgression occurs in the performative realization of the event. This is an assertion of authorship over the event on the part of the concert's organizer over the individual works or artists.

Section 3.4.1 established the equivalency between curating as a practice of co-creating the event of critical knowledge production and dramaturgy as the practice of creating a performative event of affective upheaval and transgression. Their chief differentiating figure was argued to be the marginality in the institutional hierarchy of the term dramaturg (or even the director of a singular production) in contrast to the prominency of the curator, who is historically put in control of an entire festival or institution. Polzer, in his assertion of control of programming, mise-en-scène, and thematic framing of the entirety of the festival, can therefore be understood to have a curatorial practice.

The working definition here of curatorial practice is thus that it is a quasi-artistic form of expression using the means of concert organization. This emphasis on the performance text of the concert event as itself an expressive output of the curator is analogous to the understanding of curating developed in Chapter 3. Both deal with the practice of constituting an event of knowledge-production as a mediating figure responsible to many different stakeholders. This definition also makes for a compelling comparison with historical examples from the field of curating,

in particular the perhaps best-known practitioner of this approach to exhibition-making, Harald Szeemann. As has been shown in section 2.3.1, Szeemann was one of a group of pioneers in the visual arts in this regard, creating exhibitions that were highly subjective in their choices of thematic and works, and particularly in later years also emphasizing the role of the artwork as subservient to a larger thesis of an exhibition.

5.7.2   Maerzmusik's Curatorial Shift

Curatorial Instead of Artistic Concept

Documenta V was the culmination of a shift that had been taking place in the art world away from a focus on individual works in an exhibition and towards understanding the total of the exhibition as an expression of its curator-as-author. Both group exhibitions and installations by individual artists made up the material that Documenta presented. While artists would have control over certain areas of the exhibition, it would itself be understood as a product of its curator. The way that Szeemann framed and juxtaposed the individual works together in the exhibition was in order to realize his own curatorial concept, thus *using* the works in order to make a statement through their composition.

How Szeemann chose to lead this exhibition can help clarify the relationship between the curating of individual *concerts* by Polzer and the claim that he is curating the *entire festival*, which is made up of his "composed concerts," but also of concerts where individual artists are entirely in control (i.e. where his assertion of authorship is less obvious), as well as other events like exhibitions, installations, and symposia.

While there is a distinction that can be made between events selected by Polzer but showcasing entirely one project, and on the other hand events that show a number of works by the same or different artists, in a mise-en-scène developed by the curator, this comes down only to a differentiation between "composing" the festival as a whole and "composing" the collection of works on a specific evening. As was the case with Szeemann before him, Polzer's involvement in composing concerts and their mise-en-scène *as well as* his working-with artists to help them realize their own projects, be they evening-length performances, exhibitions, etc. during the festival, must be understood together in order to form the curatorial concept for the entire festival.

Once again in the case of Szeemann, the art world's focus at the time on the individual works in an exhibition was made possible by the presumption of works' relationship to an art history, which created the more universalist backdrop against which they could be measured. This could be seen e.g. with Bode's original vision for Documenta as a survey of contemporary art trends. Szeemann's curatorial concept on the other hand was based on a thematically-driven, subjective choice of artists

and works, a radical departure from this more art history driven approach to the exhibition.

Similarly, Maerzmusik occupies a unique position in the field of music festivals because of its similarly theme-driven, subjectively-oriented program. Other major festivals such as Donaueschingen, Ultraschall, or the Darmstadt Summer Course focus more on supporting the communities of composers that have developed around them. This is despite ostensible thematic foci such as digitalization or gender issues (in Donaueschingen and Darmstadt respectively), which should be understood more as emerging out of their perceived responsibility towards these communities (as well as arts funding bodies), rather than themes or topics around which festivals are built from the ground up.

Maerzmusik is subtitled "Festival for Time Issues." Polzer uses this as a license to explore how societal and political concerns can be refracted through the genre of music. He writes for instance in the preface to the 2018 festival that "[t]his 'Festival for Time Issues' proposes to probe the current state of affairs through the lens of time and through listening" (Odo Polzer, Siepen, Barthelmes 2018, 5). "Time and listening" are for him not in the first instance related to a history of music or of the musical avant-garde (i.e. the capitalized New Music), but rather to what he (subjectively) judges to be immanent issues of broader societal import such as the Anthropocene, or minority rights—related also to the topic of "decolonizing time" that will be focussed on in section 5.8. The purpose of programming is no longer to position works in a grand new rereading of music history together. It is rather to bring them together into a new narrative for understanding society, *set by the curator*.

Maerzmusik is exemplary of a shift in the leadership of music festivals similar to what was observed with Documenta V and Harald Szeemann: a shift from a focus on the artist and their artwork in a transcendental relationship to music history, to a focus on the artwork as existing in relationship to the frame set by the curator, an individual subject.

Because the curator, as a mediating figure, a figure responsible for the programming both of the part and the whole, is shaping this event inseparable from its performance, they become essential to the production of the event per se, in their constitution of a framework. This framework consists of the ideological, thematic framing of the festival, as well as the *specific* practice of how this is realized in conjunction with the artists being programmed (hence the focus on some of these methods earlier). The curator becomes a powerful co-actor in the constitution of the performative event, asserting over it a definitional, meaning-generating power.

Where is the Resistance?

A crucial difference between the historical example of Szeemann and Documenta 5 and Maerzmusik is the latter's lack of an analogous pushback against or resistance to the curator's annexation of an enormous amount of definitional space. Szeemann was famously criticized both by artists invited to exhibit at Documenta 5 as well as by the consensus of curatorial discourse after him of assuming too dominant a role in defining the meaning of the exhibition.

In the catalogue to Documenta 5, Daniel Buren would accuse Szeemann of "exhibiting an exhibition." His position was that artists' works functioned only as "pigments" for the larger "painting" created by the curator—Szeemann. Works exist in a degraded position, as the curator selects them according to their suitability for the larger exhibition work and its central thesis (Buren 1972, 29; see section 2.3.1). Documenta artists were in other words concerned about this experienced loss of autonomy over the ability to contextualize and set the meaning of their own work. This debate would set up a showdown over the ultimate ownership of the exhibition and the ability for each side to be able to control both it and its ability to create a meaning for their works.

Comparing this to the situation with Maerzmusik begs the question: where is the resistance? Buren and other Documenta artists would retroactively become known as early practitioners of institutional critique in the visual arts field, which remains a major topic today. While criticism and the visual arts exist in a different relationship today than they did fifty years ago, the concern here is a different one.

The composers and performers affected by this usurpation of Polzer of the definitional space of the concert do not see their artistic expression as affected by it because for them it occurs on a different register. Their focus lies on guaranteeing a high-fidelity performance, or otherwise one that fit with music-internal notions of quality. This means that the transformation of Polzer's festival into one centred on the exploration of ideas about society refracted through the lens of musical practice is one that territorializes a space not previously occupied by artists regarding musical meaning production.

This sets up an interesting tension going forward: In the visual arts, this tension between curator and artist occurred not just because of the sharing of the same symbolic space of the exhibition, but also because the practice of both artists and curators began to resemble each other, as both took an interest in art as an expression of ideas and their mediation (O'Neil 2012, 18). While many of the artists that are programmed by Polzer are either dead or otherwise unconcerned with his practice of inserting them into a mise-en-scène or festival theme, Polzer's practice itself is part of a broader movement of musical practitioners that are, similar to their analogues in the visual arts, beginning to see the design of the concert experience as itself an important element of musical expression.

Returning to Chapter 4 on the Munich Biennale for New Music Theater, that chapter explored how a young generation of musical practitioners are finding ways of addressing the theatricality of musical practice, going beyond a focus on exclusively sonic material within a preset frame (e.g. of the traditional concert or opera stage). They are very much concerned with the mediation and contextualization of their works, due in large part to their more conceptual approach to musical production. It could be said that the trend towards musical practitioners considering the contextualization of their works as integral to their artistic expression is inversely proportional to the degree of freedom for acting within an unclaimed symbolic space for an approach such as that of Pozler.

As the amount of new kinds of music theatre practice grows, i.e. the amount of musical practitioners who feel invested also in the contextualization and mediation of their works as constituent of its effect on the audience, then Polzer's ability to "compose evenings" or even festival concepts himself becomes either more limited, or begins to intersect with the former group in ways not dissimilar to what has already been shown with Szeemann. It would then not be amiss to speculate that criticisms such as those expressed by Buren of Szeemann's "exhibition of an exhibition" from so many years ago are set to increase as the field of contemporary music moves more in this direction, setting up a similar kind of battle over control of meaning of the musical event, as has formed the basis of the field of curating in the visual arts.

5.8   Decolonizing Time

It is worth exploring one last thematic strand of Polzer's Maerzmusik festivals, namely their relationships to the issue of decolonization and what Polzer calls "decolonizing time." Since the beginning of Polzer's tenure, the festival has carried the subtitle "Festival for Time Issues," implying that it is attempting to shift its thematic scope to include a broader, more transdisciplinary investigation of the relationships between perceptions of temporality and societal structures. A further semantic shift has occurred in the festival's messaging and programming over the past three editions, in which it has increasingly trained this focus on "time issues" to specifically issues of capitalism, modernism, and colonialism as they relate to both the production of temporalities and subjectivities, as well as various ways of exploring these issues through artistic practice.

At the latest during the 2017 edition, decolonizing time became an important concept in the festival programming. This becomes clear through the prominent placement of a statement by Donna Haraway on what decolonizing time means for her in the 2017 and 2018 readers (pages 5 and 8–9 respectively), as well as the fact that Polzer played the same video of her making this statement as the opening