Screens, Music and Audiences

Screens, Music and Audiences

Edited by

Enrique Encabo

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Screens, Music and Audiences

Edited by Enrique Encabo

This book first published 2022

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2022 by Enrique Encabo and contributors

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-5275-8584-0
ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-8584-3

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

When Thomas A. Edison, William Dickson and the Lumière brothers began experimenting with devices to provide moving pictures, they could not have imagined the prominence that screens would have in the contemporary world a century later. After those initial fairground spectacles, the splendour of Hollywood's golden age would soon arrive, and next the appearance of television, the birth of personal computers and the arrival of the internet and smartphones. Our lives in the 21st century can no longer be understood without audiovisual culture, which not only conditions our daily lives, but also the way we access and understand reality.[1]

Sound and music have not just been another part of this history, but a determining aspect as well. From the beginnings of cinema, in the silent film era, in addition to live musical accompaniment, technical experiments were carried out to achieve the synchronization of music and image.[2] And then came the great era of soundtracks, first marked by the European symphonic style, later with an experimental character and dialoguing with the musical avant-garde, as shown, for example, by Kubrick's choice of music for *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). Music–especially if it is not diegetic–is conceived as a creative element, due to the fact it is not subject to the image. However, in spite of not being subject to the image, it acquires an outstanding protagonist, coming to identify, not only its authors, but also films, characters and sagas, an aspect in which John Williams in particular stands out especially: how can we not visualize *Superman* when listening to his soundtrack? Is it possible not to see a bicycle rising toward the moon when we hear the music from *E.T.*? Would it be possible to identify someone other than Darth Vader to the chords of the "Imperial March"?

While this was happening on the big screen, in 1981 a revolution was about to take place in the area of television space: the birth of MTV and the video clip format would not only mean a new way of watching and listening to music, but also influence several aesthetic and cultural fields, even shaping a new way of audiovisual narration observable in cinema, TV or videogames. MTV would quickly become not only a music channel:

discourses, technology, affections, emotions and narrative plots would acquire new meanings for the first international generation.[3]

Along with this, the rapid development of the web, which from the initial experiments reaches the birth of web 2.0 at the beginning of the 21th century, bringing forth not only a new way of communicating, but also of producing and consuming audiovisual products, between nostalgia and the incessant search for novelties. Music acquires a new dimension: along with studio recordings, played by street musicians, heard on the radio, practising at home, experienced at a concert in a bar or at a festival, now the figure of prosumer acquires singular prominence.[4]

Precisely due to the importance of audiovisual culture in our lives, this book, formed by the contributions of eleven researchers, aims to analyze different aspects in order to better understand the relationship between image, music and audiences. It´s divided into three major sections that necessarily dialogue with one another.

The first of these, “Early Years”, focuses on the first years of the 20th century, a period in which the means of technical reproduction modified not only the ways of listening but also aesthetics and what was considered artistic. This forces us to rethink the categories of high and low culture because, as Ciaran Crilly shows in the first chapter, “'Insistent Savagery': The Machine Aesthetic in Modern Music”, the composers of the avant-garde after the First World War felt a real fascination for integrating noise-making into their works, observable in compositional styles such as neo-barbarism or futurism. We must notice that this concept of ordered messy noise of the first decades is observable in the audiovisual compositions of Stanley Kubrick or Jeff Beal, among others.

Federico García Lorca was very attentive to noise and technological advances, as were other members of the Generation of '27, who straddled tradition and fascination for the contemporary world. Manuel Broullón-Lozano analyzes, with regard to the plays written and directed by the writer himself and performed by Lola Membrives' company between 1933 and 1934, the poetic, visual and musical languages, the cultured and popular registers, as well as the internal plurality of semiotic codes and even voices, which occur in these artistic productions. José Valderrama Cabañas also focuses on the decade of the thirties, and his chapter provides very interesting information on the soundscape of Barcelona during the Spanish Civil War. The films made around the Spanish Civil War have too often abused the cliché of folk music in the time –based on

Andalusian cliches or the pasodoble– showing José Valderrama that jazz was already being consumed in Spain in the 1930s, and that during the Civil War thanks to radio, it continued to have a presence.

The second section of the book, "Music and meanings", studies the culturally constructed semiotic signs, present in films, television series and the new culture configured from the appearance of web 2.0. Precisely around this last issue revolves the chapter by Valentín Benavides, "Memes, Music, and Cinema: From the Internet Culture to the Big Screen", which studies meme culture and the dialogues it establishes with cinema and music. Aspects such as memes, lipdub or parody videos[5] lead us directly to the figure of the prosumer, who gives meaning to them by creating, sharing or reconfiguring them.

If the prosumer is important, no less important are the consumer and the market strategies that the record industry configures when launching its products for mass consumption. Adrien Faure-Carvallo analyzes music production focusing on mass-market music, placing particular emphasis on the manipulation of sound to satisfy consumers eager for constant novelties. Also paying attention to mainstream culture, Lara Ballesteros, in her chapter "This is fantastic!: A semiotic-musical analysis of the concept of magic in the Harry Potter films", analyzes the meaning of music in products such as *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Chronicles of Narnia* or *Harry Potter*, this time studying the compositional processes.

The next two chapters of this section deal with aspects that have traditionally been less studied but that deserve greater attention from researchers, such as sound, noise and silence. Silvia Segura in her text "Water Drones: On the Use of Rain Sound in Cinematic Climax" analyzes the semantic potential of "non-musical" sounds,[6] or paramusical sounds, in her case based on the presence of rain in films and its contribution to the meaning of the scenes that incorporate it. Irene Matas dedicates her chapter to silence, studying its narrative importance in the television series *Treme* (2010-2013), set in the post-Katrina era of New Orleans.

The third section of the book is dedicated to music and media in Spain. Laia Queralt's chapter in an original way studies the archetype of the femme fatale in Pedro Almodovar's film *La Mala Educación* (2004). The Spanish director, who has just shot his twenty-second film (*Madres Paralelas*, 2021), presents, through the narrative technique of flashback, a transformed and modernized incarnation of this character–not represented by a woman but by a man–, at the same time paying homage to one of the

great figures of Spanish musical cinema, Sara Montiel. The artist also has a certain presence in the text by Inmaculada Matía Polo, focussing on the television series *La Veneno* (2020), created by Javier Calvo and Javier Ambrossi, which in the musical field refers to apparently disparate genres that make sense together such as opera –Bizet's *Carmen*–, folk or Spanish rock from the 90s,

This kind of feeling of nostalgia for a time not lived is also present in the last chapter. Manuel Lagullón studies the presence of lofi hip hop in Spain, a musical culture with a special attraction for nostalgia and retro.

In short, eleven chapters that make up a mosaic offered to readers for a better understanding of the relationship between audiences, sound, music and audiovisual media, a relationship whose history spans more than a century and which continues to offer artistic products that can be analyzed from sociological, semiotic and cultural perspectives.

References

Banks, Jack. *Monopoly Television. MTV's Quest to control the music*. Oxford: Westview Press, 1996.

Encabo, Enrique. "Baby you're a star: Selfies, Lip Dubs and Parodies." In *Reinventing Sound. Music and Audiovisual Culture,* edited by Enrique Encabo, 14-28. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015.

Jenkins, Henry. *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture*. New York: Routledge, 2012.

Tagg, Philip. *Music's Meanings. A modern Musicology for Non-Musos*. New York & Huddersfield: The Mass Media Music Scholar's Press, 2012.

Tan, Siu-Lan et al. *The Psychology of Music in Multimedia.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Notes

[1] Siu-Lan Tan et al., *The Psychology of Music in Multimedia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[2] With inventions such as the Kinetophone, the Vitascope and finally the Cinematograph. As a curiosity, before the synchronization of sound and image materialized in the film *The Jazz Singer* (1927), the Spanish artist Conchita Piquer recorded in the United States what may be the first sequences in which voice and image appear together.

[3] Jack Banks, *Monopoly Television. MTV's Quest to control the music* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1996).
[4] Henry Jenkins, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2012).
[5] Enrique Encabo, "Baby you're a star: Selfies, Lip Dubs and Parodies." In *Reinventing Sound. Music and Audiovisual Culture,* edited by Enrique Encabo (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015).
[6] Philip Tagg, *Music's Meanings. A modern Musicology for Non-Musos* (New York &Huddersfield: The Mass Media Music Scholar's Press, 2012).

PART 1:

EARLY YEARS

CHAPTER 1

"INSISTENT SAVAGERY": THE MACHINE AESTHETIC IN MODERN MUSIC

CIARÁN CRILLY
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

The fourteenth edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica was published in 1956, and included a description of rock and roll music, a genre then still in its infancy, as "insistent savagery."[1] It may be easy to detect a note of disparaging subjectivity in this definition, but how different it would be were the phrase to be applied to a category of music from the early twentieth century, one in which rhythmic processes were foregrounded as a means of organising or propelling its material. The calculated employment of succinct repeated patterns, usually in the form of an ostinato, gained increasing currency from the second decade of the century. This reached an apogee in its third decade, with a profusion of works by major and some lesser-known European composers that reflected a machine aesthetic prevalent in visual art and architecture of the time. The ostinato element in such music provided the "insistence," and the sheer power of the delivery—whether by tempo, orchestration or mode of execution—the "savagery." This paper examines the artistic and cultural significance of such music, and aims to situate it in the context of a prevailing modernist ethos following the First World War.

During the 1920s, there was an abiding fashion for integrating noise-making devices into the orchestral roster and experiments with non-traditional instruments that reflected or embraced new technologies. The theremin was invented in 1920, Luigi Russolo exhibited his *intonarumori* (noise-intoners) in Paris in 1921, and by the end of the decade, Edgard Varèse had shifted to an entirely percussive soundworld in his *Ionisation* (1929–31), complete with sirens. While these advances lay the foundations for electro-acoustic advances later in the century, the aesthetisation of mechanical processes directly influenced contemporary compositional

styles. One such example is Igor Stravinsky's "opera-oratorio" *Oedipus Rex*, which was completed and first performed in 1927. The initial focus here, however, is a particular production of this work by the English National Opera at the London Coliseum in 1991. *Oedipus Rex* was staged as part of a double bill with another relatively brief early twentieth-century opera, Béla Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle* (1911). An underwhelmed reviewer for *The Spectator* magazine gave this assessment:

> I don't think that *Oedipus Rex* stands as Stravinsky's finest hour... and it didn't look as though the ENO's producer David Alden was very inspired by it... transforming what Stravinsky specified as a "still-life" classicism into some sort of statement about political power. But what sort of statement? The clues provided are pretty banal: distorted triangular perspectives; men in dark suits with numbers on their backs, lining the axis between Mussolini and Kafka; Jocasta vamping it up as Anita Ekberg in fur and lurex: an orange aquarium in which floated a large eyeball; Fate louring over the proceedings in the shape of a huge pair of gnashers — all knee-jerk stuff, frankly.[2]

Despite itemising such specifics, the reviewer does not mention a central element that has persisted in the memory of this particular audience member some thirty years later: that the narrator, delivering a synoptic and prophetic text by Jean Cocteau, took the form in this production of a reel-to-reel tape player. During the narrations—comprising a text that is always heard in the language of the "local" audience, while the opera is sung in Latin—the theatre was plunged into semi-darkness save a blinking red light emanating from the tape player.[3] This unnerving conceit accentuated an additional layer of wisdom encapsulated by the narrator, possessing knowledge and insight over and above the principal characters themselves and the chorus. The physical presence of an actor normally performing the role is supplanted by a machine in which past and future co-exist: the reel that has been played, alongside the one still to be played. The Oedipus legend, as related in the original Sophocles play and in Stravinsky's opera, is less about the dramatic events themselves than how they and and their consequences are progressively revealed to the protagonists, ultimately leading to tragedy. Jocasta hangs herself; Oedipus blinds himself with pins from her brooches.

The tape player thus signifies the inevitability of Oedipus's fate. He was cast out and left to die as a child because an oracle had prophesied that he would murder his father Laius and marry his mother Jocasta, yet he survives and the prophesy is fulfilled. For Alden's production, the reel-to-reel assumes the role of Cocteau's "infernal machine" itself. At the

beginning of his 1936 dramatic retelling of the Oedipus legend, entitled *La Machine Infernale*, The Voice states:

> Spectator, this machine, you see here wound up to the full in such a way that the spring will slowly unwind the whole length of a human life, is one of the most perfect constructed by the infernal gods for the mathematical destruction of a mortal.[4]

In the opera, Stravinsky incorporates a strategic apparatus in the guise of a simple rising minor-third ostinato, three repeated quavers plus three a minor third higher, that menacingly dominates the opening and closing scenes. This ostinato is the snare of fate—the prophecy—that Oedipus is unable to escape. The closing music is centred on the pitches G–B ♭ , a minor third lower than that of the opening, B ♭ to D ♭ (from figure 2 in the score). The final scene's climax reprises the very opening of the opera with the setting of the words:

> Ecce! Regem Oedipoda,
> foedissimum monstrum,
> monstrat foedissimam beluam.[5]
>
> [Behold! Oedipus the king,
> revealed as a monster most foul,
> a beast most foul.]

Such foretokening in the narrative fabric has precedent in the concert hall and in the opera house; one may cite, for example, the recurrence of material heard at the beginning of Tchaikovsky's Symphony no. 4 or Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. In each of these cases, the protagonists are being asked to grapple with their own destiny, but Tchaikovsky explores a more familiar symphonic trope of triumph over adversity, often expressed in the epigraph *per ardua ad astra*. There is no such redemption for Don Giovanni, or for Oedipus. By bookending his opera in this way, Stravinsky displays how the trap has been set before the drama has begun. Indeed Cocteau's spoken Prologue acknowledges this with the words: "At the moment of his birth, a snare was laid for him—and you will see the snare closing."[6]

The employment of a minor third ostinato is not a feature that is new to this work. The unmistakable precedent, in Stravinsky's music at least, is the closing part of *The Rite of Spring*, the "Sacrificial Dance" (from figure 142 in the 1947 revision).[7] Following two sections underpinned by a D–F and C#–E ostinato in turn, an A–C version persists for fully sixty-two bars

(figure 186 to 201, recording 33:42). It is then abruptly halted just four bars from the end, with no definitive outcome of the escalating momentum in sight. The first ostinato of any kind in *The Rite*, presaging "The Augurs of Spring" (figure 13, recording 03:59) by three bars, commences with a descending minor third, although it functions here entirely differently in terms of pitch relationships.[8] This interval, especially when continually repeated, has evolved into a common cipher of fundamental underlying tension in more recent scoring for audio-visual media and one that is readily understood. The composer Jeff Beal, for example, discusses how his use of a minor third ostinato in his theme tune for the Netflix series *House of Cards* (2013–18) depicts the main protagonist's "stubbornness." Beal says: "He's not going to change, he's just going to keep ploughing through everybody."[9] I have argued elsewhere how Stanley Kubrick introduces a contracting minor third device in his final film *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999) in order to depict the closing of another snare, which is magnified by the incremental reduction of the base interval from a minor third via a major second to the smallest possible interval in conventional chromatic notation, the minor second.[10] The looming menace is already present in the initial thematic idea, yet the contraction serves to tighten its grip.

Oedipus Rex is just one instance from the 1920s featuring similarly tenacious devices, many of which absorb a consciously mechanical style as a form of synthesis. We encounter earlier examples from other established composers, such as the remorseless and much-imitated 5/4 rhythmic ostinato in "Mars" from *The Planets*, composed between 1914 and 1916 by Gustav Holst.[11] These dates are a hint as to the conceptual origin of this work, which recalls the brutal artillery of the world's first mechanised war. We may go back further still, to the virtually inexorable clockwork orrery of the Baroque fugue, or the formal rigour of the *chaconne* or *passacaglia* fashionable during the same era. The most significant pre-twentieth century progenitor, however, was Beethoven, for whom musical machines were both an aesthetic and literal presence. The music box had developed during his life time, as did the metronome, patented in 1815 by Johann Nepomuk Mälzel. In 1813, Mälzel had convinced Beethoven to compose for his *panharmonicon*, a mechanical "orchestra" capable of playing large ensemble music by imitating the sounds of various wind, brass and percussion instruments.[12] While this invention remains little more than a historical curiosity, the *idea* of music as a mechanical force suggested by such contraptions may have resonated with the composer, especially in the pre-programmed regularity of the metronome.

Orchestral machines may be detected several times in his core symphonic output alone. The opening movement of his fifth symphony is fuelled by unrelenting rhythmic propulsion founded upon a most iconic motive, the descending major third (three Gs and an E ♭) that constitutes the upper part of a C minor triad, delivered and varied in two opening statements that are suspened in real time by fermatas. The four-note rhythm is so dominant that it even forms part of the movement's second/subordinate subject's melodic line in the treble and its accompaniment in the bass. A similar dominance informs the finale of the seventh symphony, and it too isolates a central rhythmic idea in two brief opening statements ahead of a breathless interplay between shrewd harmonic design and strident articulation. Such combative "rhythmic dissonances" are present in the first movement of the eight symphony, where the tonal uncertainty of the development section is matched by a compulsive emphasis on the second beat in a 3/4 metre, eventually "resolved" in alignment with the return to the home key at the beginning of the development section. There may even be a machine operating via the gentler persuasion of the development section from the *Pastoral Symphony*'s first movement, in which repetitive cross-rhythms demonstrate insistence, but with no hint of savagery. This could be a valuable lesson too for twentieth-century composers for whom mechanical activity did not always to have be so barbaric: some machines—the Rolls–Royce engine for example—favour frictionless, graceful efficiency over pure power.

As the twentieth century approached, humanity was to become more physically implicated in the technologies it was creating for social progress, with the emergence of industrial assembly lines in the mid-1800s, the automated telephone exchange in the 1880s, then Henry Ford's moving assembly line in 1913.[13] In the arts, the Italian Futurists were among the first to embrace of industrial innovations and display a willingness to harness them for aesthetic purposes. Marinetti's *Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism* from 1909 famously states:

> We affirm that the world's magnificence has been enriched by a new beauty: the beauty of speed. A racing automobile whose hood is adorned with great pipes, like serpents of explosive breath—a roaring car that seems to ride on grapeshot is more beautiful than the *Victory of Samothrace*.[14]

A preoccupation with the cultural impact of new technologies persisted throughout Europe in the aftermath of World War One, such as the political and sometimes utopian ideologies of the Russian Constructivists

or Le Corbusier's "aesthetic of purity" learned from machines.[15] In *The Rite of Spring*, T.S. Eliot had astutely heard "the scream of the motor horn, the rattle of machinery, the grind of wheels, the beating of iron and steel", despite the ballet's supposed portrayal of the commencement of a violent Russian Spring, which seemed to the composer "like the whole earth cracking".[16] Eliot, however, was writing retrospectively as his observations were prompted by a London production of the ballet in 1921, eight years after its riotous Paris premiere; it is reasonable to assume that his reaction may have been coloured by the tumultuous world events of the intervening years.

The culmination of tendencies in music that combine what Daniel Albright labels Neobarbarism, and the "cultivation of the technological present" inherent in Futurism, would arrive in a series of overtly descriptive works composed during the 1920s whose provenance could be betrayed by their titles alone.[17] Four works in particular are frequently alluded to by virtue of their temporal, geographical and aesthetic proximity.[18] Arthur Honegger's *Pacific 231* (1923), more abstractly titled his *Mouvement Symphonique* No. 1, depicts the precipitation and eventual halting of velocity on a seven-minute locomotive train journey that lends the impression of a highly mimetic film score (a lost Lumière perhaps?). George Antheil's *Ballet Mécanique* (1924) was a score that the composer insisted in his memoir "had nothing whatsoever to do with the actual depiction of factories, machinery."[19] However, the presence of sirens and airplane propellers in the original "orchestration", plus its place in the composer's oeuvre among a number of technology-inspired works, would suggest otherwise; and he did admit that if the public had "considered it purely as music... they might have found it rather a 'mechanistic' dance of life."[20] The other works often cited in this list are concerned with the sublime and oppressive power of the factory: Alexander Mosolov's *The Iron Foundry* and Sergei Prokofiev's *Le Pas D'Acier* (*The Steel Step*, sometimes translated as *The Age of Steel*), both composed in 1927. The latter was commissioned by Diaghilev for the Ballets Russes and, despite being set in post-Revolutionary Russia, it was less a critique of politics than kinetics, "the kinship between the workings of the human body and those of machines."[21] Another celebrated score that should not be disregarded is Maurice Ravel's *Boléro* (1928), which qualifies at the very least by virtue of this claim from a 1932 interview with the composer:

> I gained much of my inspiration from machinery. I love going over to factories and seeing vast machinery at work. It is awe-inspiring and great. It was a factory that inspired my *Boléro*. I would like it always to be played

> with a vast factory in the background… I do think it is an art form to make violins, horns, trombones, and all the other instruments of the orchestra sound like machinery.[22]

As he insinuates, this extra-musical stimulus is not restricted to the *Boléro* alone, with discernible machines present in both of his major compositions for piano and orchestra also completed during this period, notably the *Concerto for the Left Hand* (1930). The account of its conception, from a commission by the pianist Paul Wittgenstein who lost his right arm following active service in Ukraine in 1915, possibly connects it, like the Holst example above, to the destructive forces of the Great War.

Many of these works could be linked to forceful propulsion showcased in *The Rite of Spring,* sometimes bolstered by head-spinning metrical changes, most notably in sections such as "The Augurs of Spring", "Dance of the Earth", and the "Sacrificial Dance". Yet other passages could be more introspective. During the Introduction to Part Two, for example, four discrete components are exposed in alternation, before proceeding in combination, with what one commentator has described as "reptilian indifference" (figure 86, recording 18:37).[23] But the impression remains mechanical rather than natural, with each component assigned its own specific task in a moving musical production line. A similar strategy is explored in the first of Stravinsky's *Three Pieces for String Quartet* (1914, revised 1918) in a way that presages the irony and supremely cool detachment of art music in the immediate post-war years, bridging a gap between Neobarbarbism and Neoclassicism. The idea of the string quartet as a dialogic, collaborative group is entirely rejected as each individual player has to proceed with a dogged commitment to their own line and seeming disregard for any sense of ensemble. It seems that obstinacy—the very definition of the *ostinato*—is superseded by autonomy.

In *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis,* given as a series of lectures between 1915 and 1917, Sigmund Freud had spoken of the blows landed on human narcissism by the revolutions of Copernicus and Darwin, while tacitly acknowledging that his own "discovery" of the unconscious had further weakened Western society's sense of order.[24] Humanity had become fractured to the point of atomisation by the instrumentalism of capitalist modernity: the individual had become dehumanised as a mere instrument of production. Following the war, we entered an age of relativism and solipsism, no longer able to rely upon structures and belief systems that we had taken for granted for so long. In music, one strand of modernism appeared to struggle less with such anxieties by evolving with

a degree of inevitability. This was a lineage that might be classified as a form of "High Modernism," favoured by Theodor Adorno, and best articulated by Arnold Schoenberg when he wrote: "I am striving towards a goal that seems certain to me."[25] Schoenberg's "solution" to the problem of systematic collapse—in the context of tonality at least—was ultimately to procure another even more rigorous means of organisation. For those not committed to such a path, tonality remained, but with its hierarchical authority weakened. The underlying code of machine music may be understood in part as a technical means of generating structure and impulse in the absence of traditional tonal security, but it also served to reflect the uneasy status of the individual in Europe following the First World War. The automatons that had sleepwalked their way into battle, like the somnambulist Cesare in *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*, were now shell-shocked, wandering aimlessly, in search of orientation and purpose. The compulsion to engage in a universal framework that assuages such perplexity was acute. Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset observed in his 1925 essay *The Dehumanization of Art*, "people like a work of art that succeeds in involving them in the human destinies it propounds," evoking what the "masses" shall demand of the artwork while shying away from the enigmas of an elitist modernism.[26] Stravinsky, Ravel, et al. were thus well situated to expounded a brand of modern music in which the audience could remain in thrall.

Malcolm Turvey explores the uneasy relationship between conventional readings of modernity and avant-garde cinema of the 1920s in his study *The Filming of Modern Life*.[27] He highlights the risks of making superficial links between cinema as a technology that is both representative of and a consequence of modernity, while asserting that its delivery of a distracted mode of experience mirrored perceptions of modern life. This can result in other significant innovations being overlooked. Turvey contends that this "modernity thesis" results in "minimizing the radical aesthetic distinctiveness of avant-garde film".[28] Similarly in music, the aesthetic originality that may have been spurred by modernity and new technologies should not be obscured by the mere presence of the technologies themselves, or those titles that identify them. Erik Satie, with typical modesty, reflected on his contribution to the ballet *Parade* (1917) in collaboration with Picasso and Cocteau: "I only composed a background to throw into relief the noises which the playwright considers indispensable to the surrounding of each character with its own atmosphere."[29] The deployment of a typewriter, revolver and foghorn among other "noise-intoners" in the work's percussive arsenal do not supplant a repetitive, mechanistic and quasi-minimalistic approach in

Satie's music that permits sensitivity and flexibility, a method that would serve him so well when composing the score for René Clair's movie *Entr'acte* (1924).

More than any of the composers discussed above, Prokofiev provides an individual rite of entry for the entire field, thanks to his well-publicised inventory of characteristic compositional styles that includes the label "motoric." This attribute was neither a fad nor restricted to a particular corpus of works; nor was it limited to the 1920s. In 1944, he composed what might be considered his quintessential contribution to the symphonic canon, and a consummate aesthetisation of the mechanical style, his Symphony No. 5. The finale is a triumph of assimilation over imitation, notably in an audacious *coup de théâtre* heard at the very end of the work. As the music appears to be hurtling towards an apotheosis, with the full orchestra freewheeling in dynamic interlocking counterpoint, the whole process is reined in and the music stripped down to its inner workings—like a clock face being torn off to reveal the intricate movement of cogs and springs beneath—represented by a miniature orchestra of just eleven players. It is a moment of uneasy intimacy that serves to connect the performers and their audience, and in turn the elite to the masses: thus Prokofiev serves his function as an artist of the people while signaling his creative ingenuity.

The story of the mechanical style in music persists well beyond the end of the Second World War. While earlier examples of Neobarbarism favoured purely rhythmic elements over conventional melodies and goal-directed harmony, the first stirrings of "process" music at the core of a burgeoning minimalist style in the 1960s suggested an even more rigorous approach. This was especially true when the aesthetic journey was guided by conceptual resolve, with the most extreme manifestations being Steve Reich's *Pendulum Music* (1968) and György Ligeti's *Poème Symphonique* (1962). In the case of each, human intervention is required only to initiate proceedings: to swing the microphone in the Reich and to set off the metronomes (all one hundred of them) in the Ligeti. One of the ironies of the *Poème Symphonique*, in addition to the inaptronymic nature of its title, is the uncanny humanisation of its machines: as the metronomes unwind, the spectator is left rooting for the few that remain in motion towards the end, ultimately sympathising expectantly with the last to capitulate. Ortega y Gasset remains vindicated: we identify with the machine, or possibly one its component parts, as a paradigm of human destiny.

References

Albright, Daniel, ed. *Modernism and Music: An Anthology of Sources.* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004.

——. *Putting Modernism Together: Literature, Music, and Painting, 1872–1927*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2015.

Antheil, George. *Bad Boy of Music*. Hollywood: Samuel French, 1990.

Attali, Jacques. *Noise: The Political Economy of Music.* Translated by Brian Massumi. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1985.

Christiansen, Rupert. "Oedipus Wrecked." *The Spectator*, February 2, 1991, 39-40.

Cook, Nicholas. "The Other Beethoven: Heroism, the Canon, and the Works of 1813–14." *Nineteenth Century Music* 27, no. 1 (Summer 2003): 3-24.

Cuda, Anthony and Ronald Schuchard, eds. *The Compete Prose of T.S. Eliot: The Critical Edition: The Perfect Critic, 1919–1926.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press and Faber & Faber Ltd, 2014.

Duchesnea, Louise and Wolfgang Marx, eds. *György Ligeti: Of Foreign Lands and Strange Sounds*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2011.

Edmunds, Lowell. *Oedipus*. New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 2006.

Hill, Peter. *Stravinsky: The Rite of Spring*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Horlacher, Gretchen. "The Rhythms of Reiteration: Formal Development in Stravinsky's Ostinati." *Music Theory Spectrum* 14, no. 2 (1992): 171-187.

Knowlson, James. *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett*. London: Bloomsbury, 1998.

Harrison, Charles and Paul Wood, eds. *Art in Theory 1900-2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*. Malden, Oxford and Carlton: Blackwell Publishing, 2003.

Morrison, Simon. *The People's Artist: Prokofiev's Soviet Years*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Orledge, Robert. *Satie the Composer.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Ortega y Gasset, José. *Velázquez, Goya and the Dehumanization of Art.* Translated by Alexis Brown. London: Studio Vista, 1972.

Puffett, Derrick. "Debussy's Ostinato Machine." In *Derrick Puffett on Music*, edited by Kathryn Bailey Puffett, 231-285. London & New York: Routledge, 2016.

Rosenblatt, Nina. “Empathy and Anaesthesia: On the Origins of a French Machine Aesthetic.” *Grey Room*, no. 2 (Winter 2001), 78-97.
Stravinsky, Igor. *Oedipus Rex & Symphony of Psalms*. London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1998.
——. *The Rite of Spring*. London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1997.
Stravinsky, Igor and Robert Craft. *Memories and Commentaries*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981.
Taruskin, Richard. *The Oxford History of Western Music: Music in the Early Twentieth Century.* London and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
Turvey, Malcolm. *The Filming of Modern Life: European Avant-Garde Film of the 1920s*. Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 2011.
Walsh, Stephen. *Igor Stravinsky. A Creative Spring: Russia and France 1882–1934.* London: Pimlico, 1999.
——. *Stravinsky: Oedipus Rex*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
Wolf, Rebecca. “Musik und Mechanik bei Johann Nepomuk Mälzel.” *Archiv Für Musikwissenschaft* 66, no. 2 (2009): 110-126.

Notes

[1]As reported in the Twitter account of the BBC TV show *QI*: https://twitter.com/qikipedia/status/844224926374608897?lang=en, accessed June 11, 2021.

[2] Rupert Christiansen, “Oedipus Wrecked,” *The Spectator*, February 2, 1991, 39.

[3] The relevance of the characterisation of a reel-to-reel tape player in a theatrical context should not be ignored, with particular reference to Samuel Beckett’s *Krapp’s Last Tape* (1958). James Knowlson recounts how its potential was revealed to Beckett when listening to readings of his own works that had previously been broadcast on BBC radio: “Staring at the reels that held his own words as they revolved on the tape-deck and seeing, in a casual way at least, how the tape-recorder worked helped him to imagine a play in which different moments of time could be captured, juxtaposed and relived later”. James Knowlson, *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett* (London: Bloomsbury, 1998), 444. The red light might also recall the authority of HAL 9000, the sentient computer in Stanley Kubrick’s *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968).

[4] Quoted in Lowell Edmunds, *Oedipus* (New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), 118.

[5] Igor Stravinsky, *Oedipus Rex & Symphony of Psalms* (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1998), figure 197, 139-140.

[6] From “English translation of the Speaker’s text by e.e. cummings”, n Stravinsky, *Oedipus Rex*, x. Chicago now discourages ibid.

[7] Recording: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EkwqPJZe8ms, 30:06. This is a 2017 live performance by the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Simon Rattle. Score: Igor Stravinsky, *The Rite of Spring* (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1997).

[8] The minor third in "The Augurs of Spring" can eventually be heard as the fifth and seventh degree of an Aeolian E♭, rather than the tonic and third degree encountered elsewhere.

[9] Jeff Beal, "Jeff Beal Explains The House of Cards Theme," interview by *MusicRoom UK*, April 14, 2015, accessed June 28, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fODB8ttWY3k.

[10] Ciarán Crilly, "The Bigger Picture: Ligeti's Music and the Films of Stanley Kubrick," in eds. Louise Duchesnea and Wolfgang Marx, *György Ligeti: Of Foreign Lands and Strange Sounds* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2011), 245-254.

[11] This remains at the same pitch (G) for the first thirty-nine bars of the work, thus functioning as a pedal in addition to being an ostinato, with the arrival on C–G in the final chord implying a dominant tonal function.

[12] For further information on Mälzel and Beethoven, see Rebecca Wolf, "Musik Und Mechanik Bei Johann Nepomuk Mälzel," *Archiv Für Musikwissenschaft* 66, no. 2 (2009): 110-26, and Nicholas Cook, "The Other Beethoven: Heroism, the Canon, and the Works of 1813–14," *Nineteenth Century Music* 27, no. 1 (Summer 2003): 3-24.

[13] Surely the most fitting representation of humanity's physical integration with new technologies is provided by the scene in Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936) when a production line worker (played by Chaplin) is drawn into the turning wheels of the industrial machine itself. Moreover, he appears to be more than content with this outcome, as he is fulfilling his functional promise as yet another component in an efficient manufacturing process.

[14] Quoted in eds. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, *Art in Theory 1900-2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas* (Malden, Oxford and Carlton: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 147.

[15] Quoted in Nina Rosenblatt, "Empathy and Anaesthesia: On the Origins of a French Machine Aesthetic," *Grey Room*, no. 2 (Winter 2001), 78-97.

[16] T.S. Eliot, "London Letter", *The Dial 71* (1921), quoted in Anthony Cuda and Ronald Schuchard, eds., *The Compete Prose of T.S. Eliot: The Critical Edition: The Perfect Critic, 1919–1926* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press and Faber & Faber Ltd, 2014), 300. Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Memories and Commentaries* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981), 30.

[17] Daniel Albright, *Putting Modernism Together: Literature, Music, and Painting, 1872–1927* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2015), 5.

[18] For example, these are afforded a brief mention in a section on new sounds in music from Jacques Attali's 1977 study *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 136.

[19] George Antheil, *Bad Boy of Music* (Hollywood: Samuel French, 1990), 139.
[20] Antheil, *Bad Boy of Music*, 139. Other works of this period include *Airplane Sonata* (1921), *Third Sonata, "Death of Machines"* (1923) and *Mechanisms* (1923).
[21] Simon Morrison, *The People's Artist: Prokofiev's Soviet Years* (Oxford & New York; Oxford University Press, 2009), 8.
[22] Maurice Ravel, "Interview: 'Finding Tunes in Factories'," in ed. Daniel Albright, *Modernism and Music: An Anthology of Sources* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 308.
[23] Peter Hill, *Stravinsky: The Rite of Spring* (Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 2000), 53.
[24] "Humanity has in the course of time had to endure from the hands of science two great outrages upon its naive self-love. The first was when it realized that our earth was not the center of the universe, but only a tiny speck in a world-system of a magnitude hardly conceivable; this is associated in our minds with the name of Copernicus, although Alexandrian doctrines taught something very similar. The second was when biological research robbed man of his peculiar privilege of having been specially created, and relegated him to a descent from the animal world, implying an ineradicable animal nature in him: this transvaluation has been accomplished in our own time upon the instigation of Charles Darwin, Wallace, and their predecessors, and not without the most violent opposition from their contemporaries. But man's craving for grandiosity is now suffering the third and most bitter blow from present-day psychological research which is endeavoring to prove to the 'ego' of each one of us that he is not even master in his own house, but that he must remain content with the veriest scraps of information about what is going on unconsciously in his own mind." Quoted in https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/cross-check/copernicus-darwin-and-freud-a-tale-of-science-and-narcissism/, accessed June 14, 2021.
[25] Quoted in Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music: Music in the Early Twentieth Century* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 354.
[26] José Ortega y Gasset, "The Dehumanization of Art," in *Velázquez, Goya and the Dehumanization of Art*, trans. Alexis Brown (London: Studio Vista, 1972), 67.
[27] Malcolm Turvey, *The Filming of Modern Life: European Avant-Garde Film of the 1920s* (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 2011).
[28] Turvey, *The Filming of Modern Life*, 16.
[29] Quoted in Robert Orledge, *Satie the Composer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 224.

CHAPTER 2

"SHE SINGS AND DANCES SO WELL AND ADAPTS HER MOOD SO READILY." FEDERICO GARCÍA LORCA'S LATIN AMERICAN TOUR WITH LOLA MEMBRIVES AND HER COMPANY (1933-1934): INTERMEDIAL DRAMATURGY

MANUEL A. BROULLÓN-LOZANO
COMPLUTENSE UNIVERSITY OF MADRID

"The work you are about to hear on this airy, hazy stage…"[1]

Federico García Lorca's theatrical texts display an inner complexity that can be described from an intermedial perspective, given that they combine poetic, visual and musical languages, low and high cultural registers, alongside an inner plurality of semiotic codes and even voices, at a consummate level of excellence. Within their own limits, all written dramatic scripts allow one to decipher a dramaturgy that is implicit. But the hermeneutic, epistemologically transcendental character of this process can be complemented by close exploration of specific productions, as narrated through secondary sources —reviews, news reports, preparatory material— the dramaturgy of which authors themselves developed. Of course, we do not believe that productions that have vanished over time and are now preserved in archives through a range of descriptive materials, are the only possible ways to stage the basic dramatic text. Nonetheless, an analysis of these documents can help us approach the creative process of writers, and contribute to the history of stage performance within the huge field of the history of literature.

In this essay we consider works written and directed by Federico García Lorca and performed by the Lola Membrives company between 1933 and 1934, during the Latin American tour that took this group of artists to Argentina and Uruguay. The analysis will be facilitated by the connections established between those documents –reviews, news reports, interviews, statements, exchanges of letters, material touching on technical and staging issues, etc. –that give an account of the creative process during the production and developments over subsequent performances. In brief, we will try to outline a narrative that can reveal the nature of those performances, how they were set up as theatrical productions in their musical and stage dimensions, through the testimonies of author, company, media and audience.

"[…] the presence in Buenos Aires of the author of beautiful, powerful work…"[2]

On 13 October, 1933, Federico García Lorca sailed into Buenos Aires on board the *Conte Grande* belonging to the transatlantic liner company, Cosulich. He was accompanied by stage designer Manuel Fontanals, with whom he had collaborated after the unsuccessful première of *The Butterfly's Evil Spell* on 22 March, 1920. During the final part of the journey from Montevideo to Buenos Aires, the press and photo magazines, orchestrated by Enrique Díez-Canedo and Marino Mora Guarnido –at the time, Spanish ambassador and resident in the Uruguayan capital respectively– began their publicity campaign with interviews and an array of photos that fans cut out of newspaper pages to be autographed by the poet himself.[3]

When the liner arrived in Argentina, after he disembarked, "a cloud of people"[4] and reporters were waiting for Federico García Lorca on the quayside. News articles register interviews, press statements, handshakes, hugs, group photos with fellow countrymen and relatives from Fuentevaqueros who had emigrated to Argentina and had now come to give him an emotional welcome…[5] The poet greeted locals on the radio: "All my life I will cherish the memory of the enthusiastic welcome I've been given by the city of Buenos Aires."[6] After that, Buenos Aires society and press were captivated by the writer, as he writes to his family on 18 October: "I'm sending you these press cuttings. You'll see the hue-and-cry I've caused in Buenos Aires. […] I'm sending only a very small part of what's been published and what I've been able to collect amid all the welcomes".[7] The poet even feels overwhelmed: "I'm taken aback by the

number of parties and all the attention I'm receiving […]. It's just like when the Prince of Wales paid a visit".[8] Nevertheless, he realises how crucial it is to be seen in theatres, where he is greeted with ovations whenever he goes as a spectator. That allows him to become a presence in the city's theatre world and use the media to prepare his own première in a city of "three million inhabitants"; "it's been vitally important because I have won a huge public to my theatre".[9]

The première of *Blood Wedding* on 24 October, 1933 at the Teatro Avenida was the first to be attended by Federico García Lorca in person. However, Buenos Aires audiences had already enjoyed this work at the Teatro Maipo in a production performed by the Lola Membrives company. The reception couldn't have been better: excellent reviews and "over two hundred photos", "in bed, in my swimming trunks, peering out of a window…" –published in the press, then cut out by fans and signed with his autograph.[10] The press was fulsome in its praise with striking headlines: "Lola Membrives was back at the Avenida yesterday. FGL spoke and was loudly applauded",[11] "Long live García Lorca!".[12] Federico sends his own account to his family — perhaps embellished to convince his parents of the need to tour, anticipating rich economic rewards:

> The great Avenida is ten times the size of Madrid's Teatro Español, one [of] those vast Latin American theatres […]. The theatre has a hundred boxes reserved for the best of high society and the rest was packed out.
>
> Initially, I greeted the audience, thanking them for the welcome they'd given me, and when I appeared on stage, a voice said, "Stand up!", and everybody did just that and gave me a five-minute standing ovation. Then it was crazy, Lola Membrives was breath-taking when she spoke the "Dos bandos" in a voice that cracked the theatre walls and gave the audience goose bumps.
>
> At the end I had to speak to the audience again; Lola also spoke and went mad saying that I was "a leading young blood from Spain", and all hell was let loose. I recalled that [Eduardo] Ugarte and Ignacio [Sánchez Mejías] said that would happen in Madrid, but it actually happened here in Buenos Aires.[13]

After the glittering première, *Blood Wedding* was performed time and again. "The theatre is still full and will go on being so", Lorca continues persuading his parents by letter at the beginning of November.[14] And it was true: on 21 November the company gave it its one hundredth performance at the Avenida;[15] the audience once again summoned the author on stage and he delivered the corresponding speech of thanks with a

few words from Lola Membrives.[16] The theatre even produced a silk commemorative programme for this one hundredth performance and Federico sent one to his parents at the end of the month.[17] There was a strange extra on 26 December when the Teatro Avenida gave a special performance for the crew of the Juan Sebastián Elcano training ship, that had just docked in Buenos Aires. At this performance, for the second time on this visit, Lorca spoke to the audience from the stage and gave a warm welcome to his fellow countrymen.[18]

In the course of these weeks, the production of *The Shoemaker's Wonderful Wife* was also set in motion and alternated with *Blood Wedding* at the Buenos Aires Avenida –the première was on 1 December –and the Teatro Stadium in Montevideo. From its genesis the *Shoemaker's* was conceived as a musical in order to make the most of the talent of Lola Membrives. Lorca wrote to his parents: "As Lola sings and dances, I have included several songs and dances for her that are really beautiful."[19] Federico also praised the actor's theatrical and musical genius in his press statements: "You've seen how good Lola Membrives is in rehearsals. I say that most sincerely. There have been few actors like her. She matches the great actors of yesteryear. She sings and dances so well, and adapts her mood so readily."[20] The *Shoemaker's* was performed over fifty times in Buenos Aires.

The third occasion when the stalls at the Teatro Avenida shouted to Federico García Lorca to "say something!"[21] wasn't with *Blood Wedding*, but at the performance of *Mariana Pineda* on 12 January, 1934: "I don't know how to thank this audience enough, I owe it so much, and it will influence my life as a writer so greatly."[22] Naturally, this version of *Mariana Pineda*, featured Lola Membrives as stage director, in close collaboration with Lorca.[23]

Finally, García Lorca's farewell to Buenos Aires couldn't have been less spectacular. On 1 March, 1934, the Teatro Avenida offered a special homage to the poet, much to the delight of an audience that now knew his work well, enjoyed his poetic words and chorused the songs from his plays. A report in *Crítica* on 2 March, 1934, provides a detailed account of the soirée:

> The programme for this celebration, a homage and farewell to García Lorca comprised fragments of works offered to us in magnificent performances by Lola Membrives: the third "vignette" of the delicious, imaginative drama that is *Mariana Pineda*, truly romantic, colourful scenes from the last century, that Lorca enlivened with music from a popular