The unbearable sound: the strange career of musicoclashes, , Iconoclash. Beyond the images war. Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT Press, 2002 : 253- 280

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Denis LABORDE, «The unbearable sound: the strange career of musicoclashes», in Bruno LATOUR & Peter WEIBEL (eds.), Iconoclash. Beyond the images war. Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT Press, 2002 : 253- 280.

THE STRANGE CAREER OF MUSICOCLASHES

Denis Laborde

MUSICOCLASH IS A VERSATILE SYNTAGMA, taking the form of an oxymoron or a pleonasm depending on the stakes, the contexts, and the speakers involved. It is so variable that within even a single generation it can target a well-established, stable object, and suddenly turn it into an embarrassing legacy. These different facets of *musicoclash* are, in fact, often synchronous, for polemics is the essence of its being: it is simultaneously perceived by some as an oxymoron, by others as a pleonasm. The idea that iconoclasm may be seen as a virtue enrages the first, who include the dogmatists worried about the normative collapse of the West. These are two contradictory terms, they argue, which will never suffer even a hypothetical alliance. Yet the expression "iconoclastic virtue," which carries such positive connotations as to make it seem pleonastic, has surreptitiously crept into our speaking habits, and we employ it as a form of praise.

In July 2001 at the Festival of Aix-en-Provence the Orchestre de Paris performed Verdi's opera, Falstaff, to great acclaim. In *Le Monde* an article entitled *A "Falstaff" endowed with iconoclastic and refreshing virtues* praised "the virtue that lay in this iconoclastic stripping of the old caricatures to reveal the simultaneously fascinating and dangerous singularity of the 'extraordinary stranger'."[1] This gesture, which stripped down Falstaff and restored his original identity (that is, what today's critics perceive him to be), was seen to possess "iconoclastic virtue." Once it is appended, in its adjectival form, to the substantive "virtue" – which has the effect of neutralising it – the term "iconoclasm" thus becomes equated with truth, purity, and fascination. The two words united in a laudatory pleonasm thus form an entity describing the audacity of a gesture which "stripped the old caricatures," and thereby revitalized a dull festival. Here we have a good example of *musicoclash*. Once the old icon was destroyed, it reappeared in a new garb on the stage of the Théâtre de l'Archevêché. We are back to the starting point, but the perspective has changed; what an odd circle this is!

Musicoclash?

It would be pointless to think too long over the term *musicoclash*. A participant in the dance of neologisms which this exhibition sets in motion, it is an amused echo to the *iconoclash* devised for this occasion by the specialists of the visual image. My *musicoclash* is nothing more than the acoustic version of the visual *iconoclash*; which amounts to saying that it is a welcome notion indeed. In essence it is a gesture – claimed to be musical in nature[2] – which produces disorder inside a system of representation of the world. Whether this disruption is deliberate or not is of little importance, what matters only is that this gesture creates trouble; that a great deal of fuss is made over it; that it is debated; and that it is often heavily, although not always openly, sanctioned. The flood of words concerning it, broadcast in the media or stored in archival deposits, is considerable. Thus Machaut was suspected of heresy, Bach was ostracized from Leipzig's community as early as 1729, the jazz composer Bardo Henning was made responsible for perverting the German national emblems on the occasion of the *Tag der deutschen Einheit* (Day of German Unity) of 1998, the pop singer Serge Gainsbourg was accused of turning the Frenchmen's *La Marseillaise* into "a drug addict's ditty." In late summer 2001, crowds of demonstrators assembled in front of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France to protest against the outlawing of raves; while at the same time closely-fought political debates were shaking the Assemblée Nationale which had set out to devise an "adapted legislation" for techno's musical trances. These are a few instances of *musicoclashes* to be found in this exhibition. One might also add the daring creations of a John Cage or a Carl Michael von Hauswolff, who both explore the moment when music becomes silence; or, in the punk mode of excess and saturation, the Sex Pistols' audacious pieces. These episodes are *musicoclashes* in that they raised debates which exceeded a strictly musical frame.

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_ *Le Monde*, 10 July 2001.

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_ The claim that an object is a *musicoclash* may be made by the author or it may be attributed to an intention to act by commentators. In both cases, if a musical work affects me to the point of hearing it as a *musicoclash*, then I have activated a function of empathy which makes me react when I listen to it or to the commentaries made about it. I take this particular type of emotional involvement to be aesthetic. Since this aesthetic behavior is intentional, it is artistic, according to a demarcation revived by Gérard Genette. I therefore speak of an artistic rather than of an aesthetic commitment. (Gérard Genette, *L'Œuvre de l'art. La relation esthétique*, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1997).

Whether the argumentative strategies drew on religious or artistic, moral or political domains matters little; whether insult, perjury or provocation, outrage or blasphemy were alleged; what matters is that they were discussed. An action must be incriminated and words must incriminate. There can be no clash if the gesture is taken as a pleasant joke. On the contrary, a *musicoclash* may be best recognized by the attentive and sustained censorship it attracts from legislating powers drafted in for the occasion. In all these cases, what is debated when a *musicoclastic* gesture occurs is whether a reference – whether it is religious or artistic, moral or political – may, or may not, be culturally appropriated. These debates question foundational symbols, signs of belonging, and ritual forms which have shaped a shared culture and which are suddenly challenged by the violence of a gesture dissatisfied by the status quo.

This behavior appears repeatedly throughout the centuries and its traces abound in the archives of the Western world. The origins of this recurrent behavior could no doubt be tracked down in the human brain. Paul Churchland[3] or Pascal Boyer[4] could certainly help us locate the seat of this behavioral determinism. But this would imply a close examination of the human genetic inheritance and a different kind of epistemology would be required for this task. This is not my intention here, for I seek to explore not so much the reasons why such iconoclastic gestures take place, but rather to identify the different forms of its recurrence. The *musicoclastic* performance of a piece matters less to me than the way in which it functions. The examples chosen for the exhibition thus all function in similar ways, lending them a "family resemblance" of sorts. This common trait enables me to bring together otherwise hardly comparable musical gestures such as those which appeared in various contexts throughout the history of the West. In all cases, it proved necessary to recover the dynamics of argumentation, to account for the conflict of contentions which turned these "musical objects" into polemical objects. While "iconoclastic virtue" appeared to some as a hydra to be fought at all costs, it represented for others a path leading to human emancipation. These are so many episodes of the battle of oxymoron versus pleonasm.

Should we take sides in this dispute? But then, which gesture should we designate as the iconoclastic one: the artist's, which creates, or the institution's, which forbids? I was in Paris when *Tetras* was created, a piece composed by Iannis Xenakis in 1983 for the Quatuor Arditti. In the chorus of praise which followed the performance, I heard some commentaries: "It is no doubt interesting, but, you see, for me it is not really music." On 13 and 14 October 1997, the *Hebbel Theater* in Berlin programmed fourteen minutes of an opera in progress, *Three Tales* by Steve Reich, one of the "fathers" of minimalist music. I heard the same polite criticisms: "It is an expensive price to pay to hear the same note for a whole evening." On 17 September 1985, in the salle Pleyel, Paris, the orchestra and choir of La Chapelle Royale interpreted the Passion according to Saint Matthew by Johann Sebastian Bach under the direction of Philippe Herreweghe. After an alto aria sung by counter-tenor René Jacobs, a spectator suddenly stood up and left the hall, exclaiming "This is a massacre!" But where was the massacre located? Was it in Herreweghe's and Jacobs' attempt at an historicist interpretation of the piece; or was it in the blanket condemnation without which there would not have been a *musicoclash*?

The Satanic Beat

The violence of the reactions is inevitably proportional to the depth of the offense suffered, that is, of what the *musicoclastic* gesture challenges, be it of a religious or artistic, moral, or political nature. In recent times, Malcolm McLaren and his Sex Pistols brandished punk rock as a banner with which they came banging with rage and obstinacy against all the thresholds of tolerance – religious and acoustic, moral and

4 _ Pascal Boyer, *The Naturalness of Religious Ideas*, University of California Press, Los Angeles, 2000.

3 _ Paul Churchland, *The Engine of Reason, the Seat of the Soul: a Philosophical Journey into the Brain*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 2000.

political – of their fans. But this punk rock with its incandescent iconoclasm was not only heard by its followers; and many did not remain content with expressing a polite indifference. In fundamentalist Catholic milieu, for instance, these excesses were perceived as bearing the mark of the devil, and as having contaminated all forms derived from rock music. It was up to each individual, therefore, to brandish the sword and combat this blasphemous scourge with all their strength. This, in essence, was the appeal made by the Association Notre-Dame du Pointet in a pamphlet entitled *Rock music, hobby or invitation to satanism?* which it distributed widely in the east of France during the autumn of 2001:

> "In most kinds of music, melody is fundamental; this is not the case for rock music. Rock music is a 'music' (?!) based on a rhythm characterized by the beat, that is, an incessant repetition of pulsations combined with syncopated rhythms, performed by the drummer and the bass […]
>
> The different rhythms of rock music reproduce (and therein lies the greatest danger) the rhythms used by the sorcerers of African tribes and in voodoo rites to exasperate the nervous system and even to paralyze the mental process of consciousness.
>
> Depending on the beat chosen, this or that kind of agitation is obtained, albeit always in the presence of impurity: hence the different kinds of rock music.
>
> Since all forms of rock music are based on sorcerers' rhythms, when we listen to even the mildest kind of rock music, we are listening to witchcraft's ritual of sex, perversion, and revolution, with all the consequences that it entails […]
>
> There is no middle ground. Let us therefore eliminate this 'music', this truly satanic scourge of our homes, of our evenings with friends, of our wedding balls … there is no innocuous rock music. There cannot be any 'Christian' rock music. The beat itself is anti-Christian. Rock music, even when it is soft, oozes indecency and satanism."

Wagner in Jerusalem!

A *musicoclash* can thus feed a moral crusade. But it can also excite the most vivid passions when it questions the religious respect which surrounds our most tenacious taboos. This is what happened on 7 July 2001 when conductor Daniel Barenboïm, at the head of the Berlin Staatskapelle orchestra, offered to play two extracts from *Tristan and Isolde* as an encore to the spectators who had just given a standing ovation to his interpretations of Schumann's *Fourth Symphony* and Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*. Barenboïm's proposal was met with horrified cries.

"I shouted 'shame on you' very loudly. I think I was the first," said retired Hebrew University Professor Yeshayahu Nir.[5] "No Nazi musicians here!" people screamed after him. "Democracy!" objected others, "if you do not want to listen to Wagner, you can leave the room!" Faced with this explosion emanating from the experience of great suffering, the musicians of the Berlin orchestra, most of them Germans, could barely conceal their discomfort. Then doors banged loudly as some spectators left the hall, choosing to protest by defecting. Daniel Barenboïm directed Wagner in Jerusalem, breaking an ancient taboo.

The headlines of the *Jerusalem Post* on 9 July ran "Wagner encore denounced as 'cultural rape'." Yossi Talgan, the director of the *Israel Festival,* condemned the manner in which this was done: "Sneaking Wagner in through the back door, as it were, is not good manners" *(idem)*. *Le Monde diplomatique* solicited from Edward Saïd a long article which appeared the following October, dealing with democracy, openness, friendship, and art. Just before the concert, on Wednesday, Barenboïm had given a news conference and this news conference was suddenly interrupted by the ring of a

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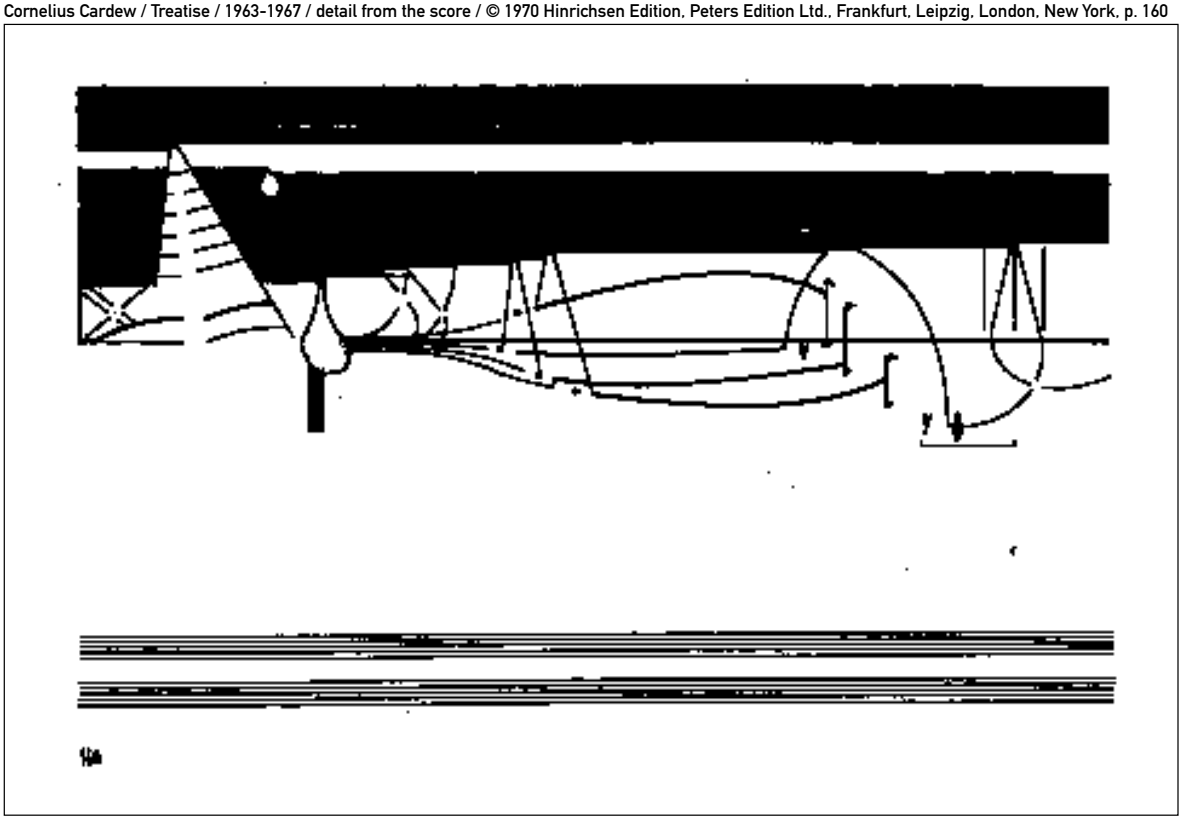
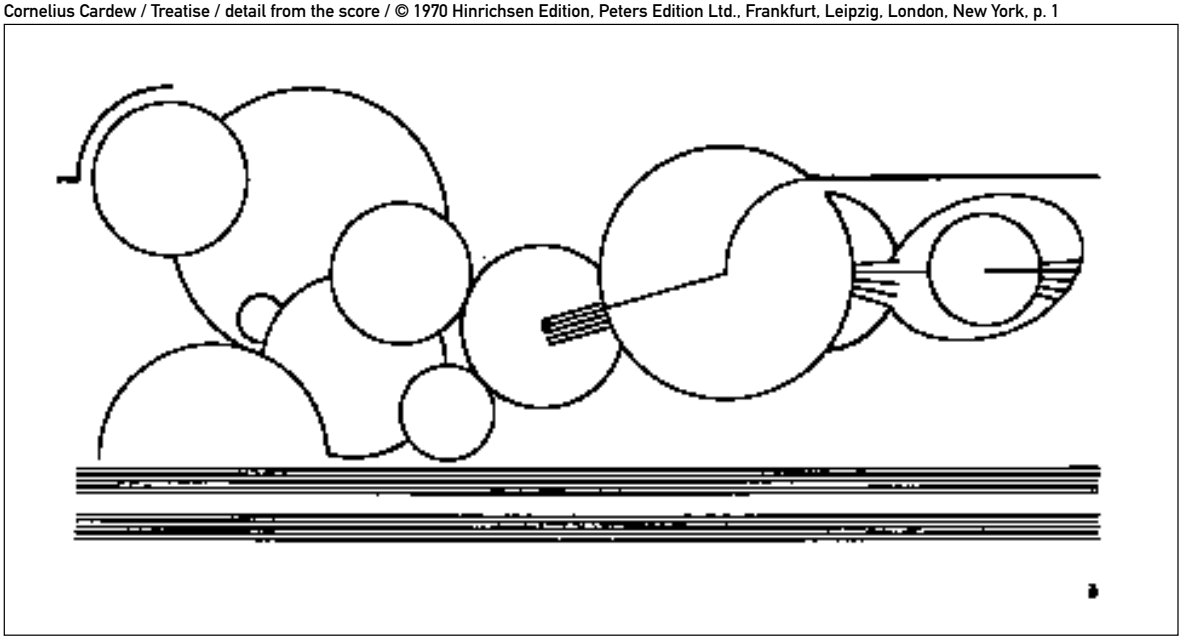
_ *Jerusalem Post*, 9 July 2001.

Cornelius Cardew / Treatise / 1963–1967 / detail from the score / © 1970 Hinrichsen Edition, Peters Edition Ltd., Frankfurt, Leipzig, London, New York, p. 160



Cornelius Cardew / Treatise / detail from the score / © 1970 Hinrichsen Edition, Peters Edition Ltd., Frankfurt, Leipzig, London, New York, p. 1



cellular phone set to chime *Die Walkyrie*. "I thought: If it can be heard on the ring of a telephone, why can't it be played in a concert hall?" Barenboïm said.

Showing Sounds?

In the case of music, no three-dimensional object can be supplied for the witnesses to judge. When I evoked these *musicoclashes*, I referred to situations. The *musicoclash* works like an actor-network, but its object is hard to grasp since sounds can never be frozen. Music plays at the moment it is played, incidents happen during its interpretation; condemnation, when it takes place, comes afterwards. Then polemics burst forth and the succession of sounds previously heard is endowed with antagonistic meanings. But, by the time the arguments are exchanged, the sounds themselves have disappeared. How to situate the place, and the timing of the *musicoclash*? It does not lay in the sounds. It does not lay in the concert. Neither does it lay in the antagonistic discourses.

Musicoclash is all of this at once: the composition, the performance, and the condemnation; the work itself, the commentary which comes with it, the coercive measures, and the stances taken toward it. But how can all this be accounted for? I have opted, in most instances, for an acoustic staging of these *musicoclashes*, thanks to the technical team of the ZKM. The sounds in question are heard (in contemporary recordings, it must be said …) at the same time as the texts which manufactured these *musicoclashes* are read. All this mingles in the acoustic space into an artistic and argumentative cacophony which attempts to give an impression of the effect produced by so many disputes.

However, many of the musical works which caused scandals at the time when they were created have since become part of our cultural heritage. They are no longer heard today as the iconoclastic pieces they once were. An effort of the imagination is now required to summon up the *clash*, for a *musicoclash* is not a structural property of the piece under attack, it is instead an attributed characteristic. And a characteristic belongs more to the vocabulary employed to describe an object than it belongs to the object itself.[6] I therefore cannot show an iconoclastic music without showing that it was iconoclastic, since a sound does not say anything by itself.

Even if we put the most terrifying sounds through the most sensitive measuring instruments we obtain – be it in the city where Heinrich Hertz (1859-1922) once taught – no more than a curve which reveals nothing of the causes of the *musicoclash*. The spectroscopy of an acoustic wave only shows us what we want it to show. It would be pointless to expect that a kinematics of oscillation or a decibel measurement lead us to a "scientific proof" and help us argue in causal terms. A sound does not say anything by itself. To understand a *musicoclash*, one cannot dispense with the analysis of discourses, the attribution of strategies and of reasons for acting; that is, the identification of a "combination of desires and beliefs."[7] It is impossible to forgo the language of reasons and argue instead in the language of causes. A *musicoclash* only enters peoples' deliberations when musical sequences are discussed, or when opinions are expressed. I have classified the items showcased in this exhibition under three headings – religion, art, and politics – but these are not watertight categories, and they may overlap.

Religion

A characteristic of the relations between the ecclesiastical institution and musical practice which runs through history is the considerable effort of the hierarchy's highest authorities to establish and control a proper usage of sounds. This was effected notably by the solemn resolutions taken by councils for fear of heresy. How indeed could one prevent the devil seeping into our hearts through the medium of music? The fear

6 _ Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking*, Hackett pub. Co., Indianapolis, 1978.

7 _ Ruwen Ogien, *Les Causes et les raisons. Philosophie analytique et sciences humaines*, Editions Jacqueline Chambon, Nîmes, 1995, p. 35.

was so great that Saint Jerome, and with him most liturgists, suggested that the medium be altogether banned. After all, God was pleased neither by the voice nor by the melody, but by the purity of the intentions. This suggestion may have reassured those who sang out of tune: as long as their intentions were pure, they would go to heaven. But this could also lead to a more radical stance: if intention was all that was necessary, why not proscribe liturgical singing? Why bother with sounds in the first place? The Fathers of the desert themselves had affirmed that a communion of intentions was sufficient. The question was serious enough to warrant attention from the most brilliant minds of the time, from Saint Augustine to John XXII, through to Boetius and Saint Ambrose. This exhibition displays some of the suggestions and resolutions made over the centuries. But first of all, let us pause and examine a mysterious interval, long believed to have possessed diabolic powers.

Diabolus in Musica

From the early days of medieval polyphony, theoreticians of music were preoccupied by a particular interval, intrigued as they were by the position it occupied between two "naturally perfect" intervals: the perfect fourth (two tones and half a diatonic tone) and the perfect fifth (three tones and half a diatonic tone). Between these two "naturally perfect" intervals appeared an unbearable dissonance: three tones, or the tritone (F-B). It is an augmented fourth or a diminished fifth, whichever way one wishes to see it, but it is in any case neither a perfect fourth nor a perfect fifth. How could such an interval fail to attract the attention of the nomothetes? It was suspected by them of being a foreign body in the natural harmony of sounds; suspected of weakening our vigilance and our powers of organisation. Hagiograph and musician Hucbald de Saint Amand (c. 840-930) identified this interval early on as *diabolus in musica*.

Anonymous / Danza macabra [Dance of Death] / S. Vigilio, Pinzolo (Trento), Italy / 1539 / frescoes / from: http://utenti.tripod.it/antrona

This strange interval was not only a mark of the devil, it was the devil itself. As such, it was therefore banned from all forms of Gregorian chant, later also from polyphonic organum and from the twelfth century *ars antica*. In liturgy it was carefully avoided, fought with determination, and painstakingly chased away. But while the Church spent so much energy to thwart its nefarious influence, the common folk reveled in it, defiantly singing songs about defrocked monks, notably in Carinthia in the eleventh century, in Tyrol, and in Bavaria, where they were referred to as *Carmina Burana*.[8] These songs constituted the common repertoire of vagrants and goliards, of outlawed clerics and scholars who drifted from town to town, leading a life of drinking, feasting, gaming, idleness, and prostitution; all this at the very time when urban space was in the process of structuring and enclosing itself. In the profusion of *Carmina Burana* which populate this exhibition, here is for instance the *Sic mea fata canendo dolo* interpreted by the Clementic Consort. In this piece tritones proliferate.

Leaving the margins, the *diabolus in musica* thus became integrated into the common references of our music. Its referential function was soon employed for the needs of musical rhetorics. We will see later that when Bach composed his Saint Matthew Passion, he made use of the melodic tritone as a rhetorical tool. The tritone thus progressively lost its

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_ The name derives from the convent in which these manuscripts were discovered in 1803, at the time when Bavaria's convents were secularised.

Hartmann Schedel / Liber chronicarum / 1493 / CCLXI /
from: Hartmann Schedel, Weltchronik von 1493, Stephan Füssel (ed.), Taschen, Köln, 2001

former ghastly symbolic connotations. No longer the devil itself, this interval became an allegory. No one was surprised to find the devil tuning his violin to a tritone interval, *diabolus in musica*, in Camille Saint-Saëns' *Danse Macabre* (1874). It played there the role of a *leitmotif*, which took on the function of a commonly shared reference. In a "Dance of Death," such a reference is not surprising. The *diabolus in musica* is recognised by everybody, but it has shed its frightening literal meaning to become a mere reference to it, intended to operate in a familiar narrative. It is no longer an icon. Or is it?

The Passageway of Charivari

Carmina Burana proliferate here. An aggressive and burlesque cacophony of enormous proportions will be found in the passageway at the entrance of the exhibition. Here, each visitor will simultaneously hear the melismas of the Apocrypha's Greek Sibyl announcing the Coming of Christ (Eusebius of Caesarea, third century C.E.); psalms of the Milanese Church sung following Saint Ambrose's precepts "according to the customs of Oriental regions;" alleluias of the Roman Church of the seventh and ninth centuries; musical pieces by troubadours and Minnesänger, minstrels and jugglers; commentaries of treatises by the Fathers of the Church; Papal bulls, etc. For indeed, the Church attempted to solve the troublesome tension inherent in music, intended as an incentive to pray, but which could equally elicit emotions. Was it possible to pay attention to the words sung without being affected by the pleasure of singing? This was the crucial problem to be solved, if any answer other than a simple *flatus vocis* was to be brought to theophany. Saint Augustine summed up this tension in his *Confessions*:

> "Thus I vacillate between dangerous pleasure and healthful exercise. I am inclined – though I pronounce no irrevocable opinion on the subject – to approve of the use of singing in the church, so that by the delights of the ear the weaker minds may be stimulated to a devotional mood. Yet when it happens that I am more moved by the singing than by what is sung, I confess myself to have sinned wickedly, and then I would rather not have heard the singing."[9]

The task of the legislator therefore consisted of a relentless effort to repress such disruptive pleasures. This applied, it must be noted, to vocal, and not to instrumental music. Plainsong was a purely vocal music to which a tight ecclesiastical discipline applied, as opposed to profane instrumental music. As Saint Ambrose (340-397 AD) unambiguously stated, instruments were inherently sinful:

> *"Hymni discuntur et tu citharem tenes! Psalmi canuntur, et tu psalterium sonas aut tympanum! Merito vae, qui salutem negligis, mortem eligis* (During the recitation of the hymns, you hold a cithara! During the singing of the psalms, you play psalterion or drums! This is really contemptible, for in neglecting salvation, you choose death.)"[10]

Not unlike our latter-day Sex Pistols, jugglers and minstrels were identified as "Satan's ministers," working on behalf of the demon. They were accordingly disgraced by Charlemagne and ostrazised by the Church. Henri d'Autun thus inquired,

> "May a juggler hope for eternal life?
> … to which he replied:
> Certainly not, for they are all ministers of the Devil."[11]

In the thirteenth century, Berthold von Regensburg (1210-1272) described minstrels as so many "tiuvels blâsbelge," or devil's bagpipes (*Predigten* I:319). What kind of legitimacy could a profane music thus hope for, if it was performed by such *ministers*? None at all. In 1229, the Council of Paris set out the principles according to which heresy was to be fought. Among others, churchmen were forbidden to keep minstrels.

10 _Latin Patrology 14:716

9 _ Confessions, Book X, chapter XXXIII. See http://www.ccel.org/a/augustine/confessions/confessions_enchiridion.txt [translation by A. C. Outler].

11 _ Latin Patrology 172:1148

Legislation was therefore the institution's preferred weapon, but it was not the only one. How indeed, could it afford not to enroll the power of images?

Iconography on the subject abounds, since everybody could *observe* for themselves the deviant behavior and the risks taken by these musicians of the devil. In 1310, Gervais du Bus wrote his *Roman de Fauvel*, a novel about a horse-shaped demon whose name was made up from the initials of the sins he embodied – Flattery, Avarice, Usury, Vileness, Envy, Cowardice (in French *Lacheté*). The manuscript's illustrations abound with representations of scenes of excess when a charivari is evoked, or the marriage of Fauvel with Vain Glory. Jugglers and minstrels were associated with all the representations of Dances of Death, as in this illustration by Hartmann Schedel in his *Weltchronik* of 1493. In Hildegard von Bingen's *Book of Prayers*, the devil's head comes out of the mouth of an oboe. Such representations appeared not only in manuscripts. They were also inscribed on the capitals of churches (e.g., in Vezelay, France), on their porticoes (Marienkirche, Berlin), or on walls, for instance in the famous Danse Macabre shown in the church of San Vigilio in Pinzolo, Italy. To these examples might be added the well-known paintings of Hieronymus Bosch (c.1453-1516), such as *The Concert in the Egg*.

Ars Nova

Should we be surprised to find that such legislative obstinacy was a recurring tendency of the oldest institution of our Western societies? As soon as a daring new musical style came knocking on the churches' doors, the institution responded by producing a body of prescriptions aimed to protect it from heresy. With time, what was once daring began to subtly permeate our day-to-day habits and became a part of them. In the early fourteenth century, the Church was shaken by deep crises, including the clampdown of the Order of the Templars, the Great Western Schism, and the Pope's move to Avignon. On the musical level, progress in graphical notation resulted in a more complicated combinatory of sounds. *Ars nova* was originally the title of a treatise of musical notation published by Philippe de Vitry (1291-1361), who was to become Bishop of Meaux. This progress in graphics in turn led to a whole new system of composition. The tenor which had previously buttressed the *motet antique* disappeared, becoming only one among many other elements of an increasingly complex polyphony. Soon enough, the whole body of precepts of the *ars antiqua* came under threat, a system which had been brought to such a level of perfection at the end of the thirteenth century by Léonin and Perotin that it was believed to enable the construction of the most respectable acoustic architecture for God's glory.

Contesting the monotonous nature of its uniform modes, and the excessively restrictive principle of isorhythm, Guillaume de Machaut set out to subvert the rules of *ars antiqua*. He introduced playful syncopations and ataxic hoquets into his profane music but also in his Mass of Notre Dame. The tenor voice was from now on to be absorbed into polyphony. Rhythms were inextricably jumbled together, and double leading tone cadences proliferated. How long would the Church tolerate this slow drift of musical practices away from the basic rules of composition which structured the *ars antiqua* for which it was responsible? Pope John XXII finally issued a bull in 1324-1325, *Docta sanctorum*.

In the first place, the learned authority reiterated a few elementary rules of musical enunciation:

> "[If] psalmody was ordered in God's church, it was to excite the devotion of the believers […] But a number of disciples of a new school who fuss with the measuring of the tempora, aim at new notes, prefer to invent their own music rather than sing the old; church music is sung in semibreves and minimae pierced with these little notes. For they cut up melodies with hoquets, smoothe them with descants, sometimes force upon

> them vulgar tripla and moteti, which leads them sometimes to look down upon the foundations of the antiphonary and of the gradual, and to ignore what they are building upon; to ignore, if not to confuse, the tones they fail to distinguish, since the multitude of their notes obscures the decent ascents and tempered descents of plainsong, in which the tones distinguish themselves from each other. They run without resting, they inebriate our ears instead of relieving them; they mimic by gestures what they wish others to hear, with the consequence that they spurn the devotion they should have sought and instead they display publicly a want of mastery which should have been avoided."[12]

Everywhere the same jurisprudent effort was made, the same concern to repress acoustic pleasure and to put a halt to the incessant slipping of the norms. Yet, once the body of prescriptions had been clearly established, once the doctrine had been reasserted with great strength and pomp, nothing prevented yesterday's audacious gestures, once condemned, proscribed, and repressed, to become part of today's ways of doing. Machaut, for one, ended his life endowed with a canonicate in Rheims, part of the benefit of clergy bestowed upon him by Pope John XXII.

Other condemnations were issued against other offenses, which required other councils, such as that which took place in Trent to deal with the reformation, summoned three times between 1545 and 1563 by Pope Paul III on Charles V's initiative. Other judgements were made throughout history, including that which Michael Praetorius (c. 1571-1621), the cantor of Wolfenbüttel, placed as an epigraph to his *Polyhymnia Caduceatrix* (1619):

> "Wiehen und Bellen, Myern und Scheyen, mit Zeen Klappen, heulen und bellen, die elende schreckliche Music von Zettergeschrey der hellischen heissen Capell."[13]

The world of reformation did not escape the legislating determination of the powers in charge of administering services, causing much trouble to one of our latter-day heroes, Johann Sebastian Bach.

A Sacrilegious Johann Sebastian Bach?

When he arrived in Leipzig in the spring of 1723, Bach was preceded by a dubious reputation. This is suggested by three clues. First, he was grudgingly recruited at the end of an exceptionally long procedure (nearly a year) and only because Leipzig's favorite candidate, Telemann, had refused to leave Hamburg. Further, Bach was made to sign a contract of fourteen points which defined his tasks as well as the features of service music. Finally, the resolutions adopted by the successive consistories which had previously employed him contained numerous reprimands, for instance in Arnstadt. Bach was then 21 years old, he had just been recruited and he was already summoned, accused of modulating unremittingly, preventing the believers from concentrating on the words of the service. On 21 February 1706, the consistory repeated its warning:

> "We blame him for having recently introduced a number of surprising *variationes* into the accompaniment of the chorale, to have peppered melodies with alien sounds, and to have thus troubled the community of the believers. If he wishes in the future to introduce a *tonum peregrinum*, he will have to continue on this same tone, and to avoid moving rapidly to another, or even, as he has recently done, to go to the extent of proposing a *tonum contrarium*."[14]

Having heard of such decisions, Leipzig's consistory and council understandably took the precaution of making Bach ratify a contract on 5 May 1723, whose seventh point read:

13

_ "Braying and barking, mewing and squealing, chattering of teeth, this sad dreadful music of painful cries of Hell's incandescent choir."

12

_ This passage is translated from Klaus Stichweh's rendering of a text by Amédée Gastoué (1987).

14

_ BDII, 16

> "7° to contribute to the maintenance of good order in the churches, I will arrange the music in such a way that it shall not last too long, that it shall be of such a nature as not to seem to belong to a theater *(opernhaftig)*, but that it shall rather inspire its listeners to piety."[15]

Six years later, on 15 April 1729, Good Friday, at one o'clock in the afternoon, Leipzig's believers came to St. Thomas' church, not to listen to a concert, but to attend vespers. The church was full and the assembly started singing the chorale *Da Jesus an dem Kreuze stund* (Then Jesus was crucified), which opened the liturgical service.

At this point what became the "Bach" Passion began, whose opening chorus is a solemn *via crucis* displaying an unheard-of acoustic architecture: E minor, slow meter 12/8. Both orchestras, both organs sounded in unison. The believers were in the center of the nave. The choir members were split into three groups; near the altar, supported by the orchestra, the first group sang in a double fugue in four voices the words of the Daughter of Sion: "Kommt, ihr Töchter, helft mir klagen. Sehet den Bräutigam. Seht ihn als ein Lamm !" (Come ye daughters, share my mourning. See Him! The Bridegroom Christ. See Him! A spotless Lamb). The bass persevered on the rhythm of a slow dance. At the back of the church, at the other end of the central nave, a second choral group responded to this appeal: "Wen? Wie? Was? Wohin?" (Whom? How? What? Look where?). Above this dialogue, the youngest pupils of the *Thomasschule* constituted a choir *in ripieni* which sang in unison the chorale *O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig am Stamm des Kreuzes geschlachtet* (O Lamb of God unspotted, there slaughtered on the cross). The assembly joined in. This opening chorus lasted by itself nearly ten minutes. It announced the evangelical narrative: The Last Supper (Mat. 26:1 -35) and the Arrest of Jesus (Mat. 26:36-56). Recitatives alternated with crowd choruses, chorales, and arias. After the figured chorale *O Mensch bewein dein' Sünde groß* (O man, thy heavy sin lament) which concluded this first part in the same way it began, the assembly struck up the chorale *Herr Jesus Christ, dich zu uns wend*. Surrounded by silence, the priest, Christian Weiss, ascended the pulpit. Each attendant paid careful attention to his sermon.

At the end of the sermon, both orchestras and the two choirs prepared for the double interrogation of Jesus, first by Caiaphas (Mat. 26:57-75), and later by Pilate (Mat. 27:1-30). Recitatives, arias, crowd choruses, and chorales succeeded each other once again. Guilty of blasphemy for having proclaimed himself Son of God, Jesus was condemned to death by the Sanhedrim presided by Caiaphas. Pontius Pilate, Roman governor of Judea (who was far from suspecting what this insignificant episode of local life would signify for the destiny of the world), confirmed on appeal the verdict of Palestine's High Court of Justice. Jesus was to be crucified, such was the destiny reserved to heretical agitators. The sentence was executed (Mat. 27:31-50) after the judgement was pronounced, the burial (Mat. 27:51-66) succeeded the crucifixion. Bach's *Saint Matthew Passion* ended on the word "Ruh" (rest) with a chorus in C minor. Vespers were not yet over.

The assembly started singing Jacobus Gallus' motet *Ecce Quomodo moritur* followed by a psalmody of the verses of the passion. Only after the priest's orison did the believers take leave by singing the chorale *Nun danket alle Gott*. Given that the performance of Bach's composition takes approximately three hours, the whole religious ceremony must have lasted four hours, or a whole afternoon. And this despite Bach's promise to keep his pieces short. We have seen above that the seventh point of his contract specified that he would "contribute to the maintenance of good order in the churches, […] arrange the music in such a way that it shall not last too long." Should one see this as a provocation?

Worse still, the second part of this seventh point obliged Bach to compose service music that "shall be of such a nature

15 BD I, 92

as not to seem to belong to a theater *(opernhaftig)*, but that it shall rather inspire its listeners to piety." Yet, what did Bach do, at the moment when Jesus, betrayed by Judas, was arrested in the night of Thursday to Friday by a riotous mob of guardians of the Temple?

He reunited both choirs in a double fugue, on a tempo *vivace* at 3/8, a rare metre. Both choirs wanted to get the best of Judas. They hailed the divine power: may it open a blazing abyss to engulf the traitor! The rhythmic accents exaggerated the first syllable of the words articulated on a ruthless ternary metre: "Sind BLITzen, sind DONner in WOLken verSCWUNden?" *(Have lightning and thunder their fury forgotten?)*. The continuo was embroiled in a sinister battery of semiquavers. From one end of the nave to the other, both choirs echoed in response to each other, the successive entries increased fourth by fourth, the words "Blitze" and "Donner" were spelled out in the stretto by the two choirs at a quaver's interval. The *arsis* became general, the semiquavers proliferated, and suddenly, on the word "Blut" (blood), there was silence. "The dramatic effect is of an extraordinary power: thunder has struck, the universe is struck with surprise."[16] Was Bach not taking the risk of going over the top? Instead, he insisted.

Jesus was now in the position of the accused before the Sanhedrim. As president Caiaphas accused him of blasphemy, He sang alone. The orchestra which had just accompanied Jesus' arioso recitative had become quiet. The continuo itself became silent. Struggling with the difficult intonations of the melodic line, Caiaphas sang a capella, threw in the word "Gotteslästerung" (Blasphemy) on an interval of a diminished fifth, this famous tritone, *diabolus in musica* (see above). As the *turba* requested the death of Jesus, the eight voices of the choir replied to each other in bundles of dissonances: G-G sharp, F-F sharp, E-E flat, B flat-B. As it proposed that Barrabas be liberated, it spelled out his name with strength on a diminished 7 chord, despite the treatises' recommendations that each 7 chord should be prepared, since it is a dissonance. For the crucifixion of Jesus, a fugue in four voices was sung, whose subject gave a series of tritones to hear. *Diaboli* proliferated in this passage, rhythmed by syncopations and doubled with chromatic movements; so many dispositions unanimously condemned by the treatises on "Geistliche Musik." These dissonances would leave lasting memories.

The events which took place on this Friday 15 April 1729 in Leipzig's Saint Thomas Church were only made public a few years later, in 1732, when Christian Gerber published his precious *Histoire des cérémonies religieuses de Saxe*. In the clamor of the two orchestras playing at both ends of the nave, in the chaos of the two choirs responding to each other in waves of dissonances, while in the center the congregation struck up their Lutheran chorales, one believer was becoming irate. Christian Gerber saw her stand up suddenly and leave the church, crying out: "Behüte Gott ihr Kinder! Ist es doch, als ob man in einer Opera oder Comödie wäre."[17]

This time, Bach had overstepped the mark. By composing a musical work for a spectacle rather than for a Good Friday service, he had deliberately broken with the second part of his contract's seventh point: not to compose anything which might resemble opera music. Under the pretense of composing a musical piece for the Passion, he let effusion, that is, confusion, take hold of the believers' hearts. In short, he brought opera into Saint-Thomas. The scourge had been thought to be moribund. Ever since the bankruptcy of the Opernhaus in 1723, the works of darkness (as opera was still referred to) had seemingly been forever barred from the city.[18] Yet, with the initiative of a disrespectful cantor, they had made a spectacular return in the very heart of the sanctuary. Would there be a "Bach affair" in Lutheran Leipzig, itself under the tutelage of the (very) Catholic court of Dresden, capital of the Electorate of Saxony?

In the end there was no Bach affair, but instead a formidable mechanism of disqualification unfolded. The measures taken against him between Easter 1729 and 1730

16 17 18

_ Jacques Chailly, *Les Passions de Johann Sebastian Bach*, PUF, Paris, 1963, p. 333.

_ May God protect your children! It is as though one were at an opera or a comedy. God safeguard your children, for it is as if we were in an opera or a comedy (Gerber, 1732, p. 284).

_ At least in the pietist strand, which drew its arguments from the *Pia Desideria*, published in 1675 by Philipp Jacob Spener. In 1682 Anton Reiser, pastor of Hamburg's Sankt Jacobi church, published his acrimonius treatise, *Theatromania, oder die Werke der Finsternis in denen öffentlichen Schauspielen*. To this came in response a playful Theatrophania, published in 1683 by Catholic actor Christoph Rauch: *Theatrophania, entgegen gesetzt der so genannten Schrift.*

speak by themselves: Bach was no longer allowed to choose the chorales to be sung at office (the task being taken over by the predicator), the number of competent pupils in the choirs of Saint-Thomas would be reduced, while their contribution to musical service was extended to five churches, the recruitment of instrumentalists for the orchestra would become exceptional, and the cantor's salary was reduced.

Bach protested, addressing to the *Communal Council* on 23 August 1730 a "[b]rief but indispensable presentation of what should be understood under well-ordered church music, with a few modest considerations on its decadence" (BD I, 22). Without a reply, he attempted in vain to leave Leipzig. He thus remained, but from then on refused to compose for services. This is exactly what was expected from him: that he conscientiously fulfill his responsibilities as teacher and as cantor and that he stop composing for good. All the causes for the conflict between Bach and Leipzig converged towards the same point: the control of services music. For indeed, to exercise mastery over cultural utterance signified nothing less than to manage the representations of the divine Word. The stakes were not small in the framework of Lutheran theology, a theology of the word, in which the ministry's sole task was to serve God's word.

This was the cause of the *musicoclash* of 15 April 1729 in Leipzig. The sound of words had concealed the divine Word. Where a memory of service had raised a ritual utterance to the status of a tradition, Bach created a rupture, he introduced something unexpected. He surprised and upset; his manner of saying was shocking. The emotional sway of his music disrupted the requisite ascetic attitude on this Friday of contrition. How then could Bach not be suspected of deliberately causing trouble, or, which amounts to the same, of contesting the consistory's power by making his Passion according to Saint Matthew an offensive and playful parody?

Art

Could it be that we are prisoners of our idols, slaves of our icons, and hostages of our heroes? Let us now return to the "iconoclastic virtue" in its pleonastic sense. Our conception of history has shaped our perception of this world of art endowed with aesthetic sacrality. From the Western perspective, the whole history of art – meaning here, music – appears as the exhilarating account of the great battle fought by the leaders of an "art liberation movement" against the necrophagous, conservative forces of society. In this struggle, artists swear by progress only, pouring scorn on all the rest: "The musician who has not felt for himself – and by this I do not mean understood, but felt – the necessity of dodecaphonic language is USELESS; for this signifies that his whole work falls short of meeting the requirements of his times."[19] In this history, every artist has to innovate in order to become a hero.[20] Yet there can be no innovation without risk, nothing new will be created without audacity, and audacity, in order to be rewarded, requires from the artist that he or she claims to be the starting point of a new story. "If contemporary music continues to change in the direction in which I am changing it, an increasingly tangible liberation of the sounds will be achieved."[21] In this perspective, iconoclasm is so closely connected with innovation that it becomes its semantic equivalent. It thereby acquires such an advantageous reputation as to make it a virtue, while simultaneously thrusting the creator into the avant-garde. "One might say that in the future, music will become spatial music. It is, to a large extent, already so in my work."[22] Our histories of music are filled with emblematic figures made into so many *incipits*: Guillaume de Machaut, Claudio Monteverdi, Johann Sebastian Bach, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven, Claude Debussy, Arnold Schoenberg. Every one of these sanctified names represents the success of a daring idea; it is the result of a gradual acceptance of an iconoclastic behavior into our

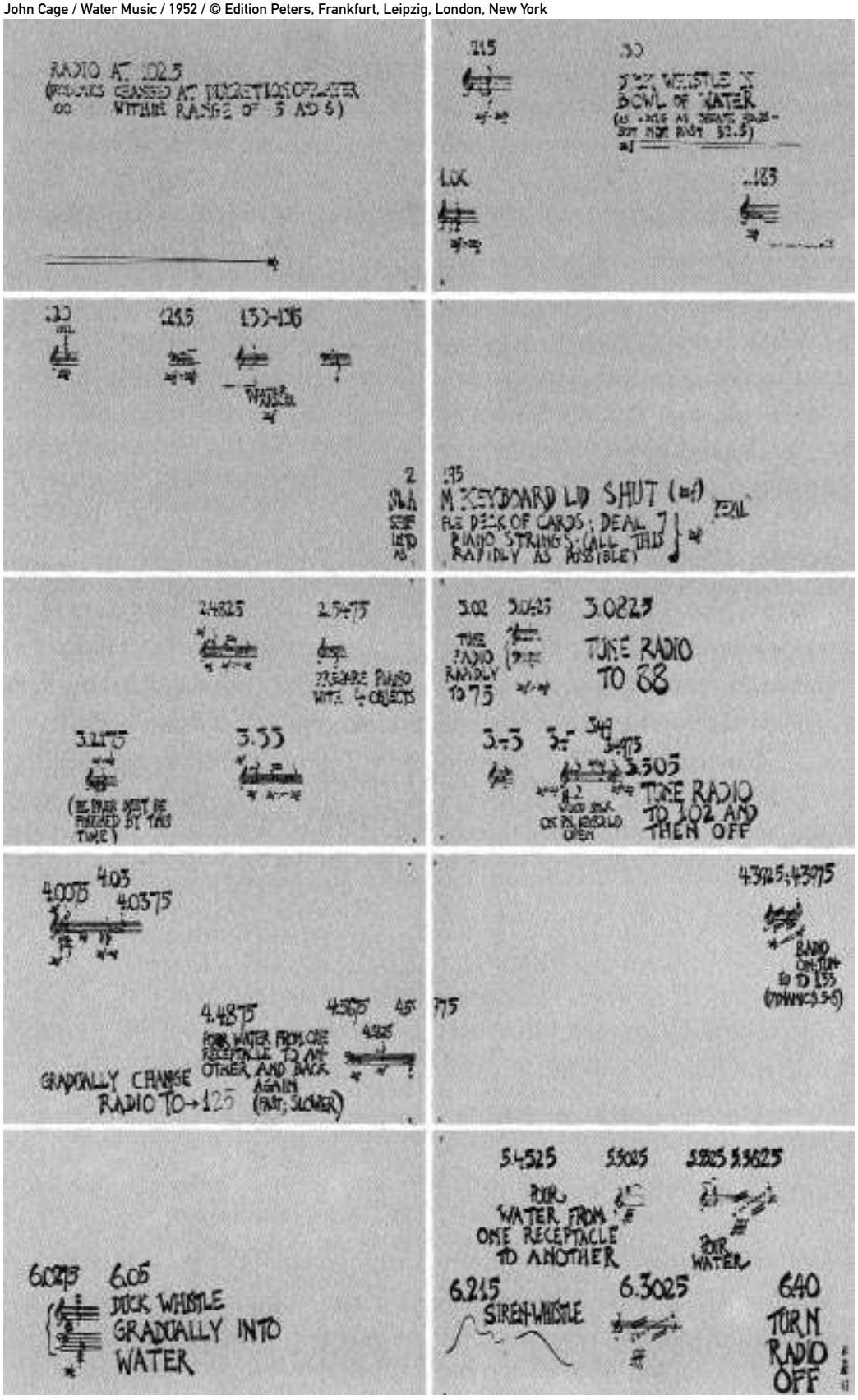
19 _ Pierre Boulez, *Penser la musique aujourd'hui*, Denoël – Gonthier, Paris, 2000, p. 149.

20 _ This point of view was put forward by François Flahaut and Jean-Marie Schaeffer in an issue of the magazine *Communications* that attracted a lot of attention. It is astonishing that music is not mentioned in this important issue devoted to artistic creation. François Flahaut, Jean-Marie Schaeffer, La Création, in *Communications*, 64, Le Seuil / Eheless, Paris, 1997, p. 64.

21 _ John Cage, *Silence*, Denoël, Paris, 1970, p. 115.

22 _ Karlheinz Stockhausen, De l'Evolution de la musique, in Cécile Gilly and Claude Samuel, *Acanthes An XV. Composer, enseigner, jouer la musique d'aujourd'hui*, Editions Van de Velde, Fondettes, 1991, p. 23.

John Cage / Water Music / 1952 / © Edition Peters, Frankfurt, Leipzig, London, New York



common way of perceiving the world of sounds. It is in other words a "legitimated deviance"[23] which takes place within a category perceived by all as a possible occurence of the predicate "work of art."[24] Only then does the artist get credit – albeit belatedly, since we still operate within a jurisprudential system – for having opened prospects to the future itself. The artist takes on here the role of a demiurge: "I speak and contemporary music changes."[25] In the course of this exhibition, we will meet some of these demiurgic heroes, each of whom was the source of a *musicoclash*. Let us begin with a few *musicosplashes*.

Musicosplashes (Water Musics)

In a city as centered on its waterfront as London is, *Water Music* has long been a recognized musical genre. In summer 1717, King George I decided to go sailing on the Thames. To accompany him, George Frideric Händel composed a serenade similar to the ones he had written for the open-air concerts in the gardens of Vauxhall, Marylebone, or Ranelagh. Could he have suspected that his *Water Music* would travel down the ages, that it would be enrolled by twentieth century creators to support their most daring undertakings? Sumptuous boats sailed to the music of instruments made to float for this occasion. The only risk there had to do with fluvial navigation, not with the music itself, which was destined for celebration and pomp. *Water Music* by Händel would become established as an inalienable reference to the Western classical repertoire. Any attempt to alter it would be interpreted as a *musicoclash*, a situation John Cage took advantage of when he set out in 1952 to restore the original meaning of the piece's title.

Cage composed his own *Water Music*, but this time, "unlike Händel's, it really splashes," he confided in a letter to the musicologist Nicolas Slonimsky.[26] The work was composed for a pianist using, along with his instrument, a radio, whistles, vessels filled with water, and a pack of cards. There was no musical citation of Händel in the piece or any explicit references to it save for its title, *Water Music*. The title itself carried a very different semantic meaning than Händel's, since it announced a radical musical program. John Cage introduced sounds into Western music that had until then remained foreign to it. A "new music" was born from this *musicoclash* which set its author in a liminal position. As early as 1937, he had composed with water *The Future of Music Credo*. With *Water Music*, water became a percussion instrument, paving the way for more experiments. In 1958, Cage returned to the theme of water with *Water Walk*, a piece for Solo Television Performer composed for piano, radios, and auxiliary sources of sound. Composers on the search for uncharted acoustic spaces started experimenting with the theme of water. In this period, the form of performance known as "happening" became popular among musicians, actors, and painters, and thereby encouraged the merging of different art forms. In 1964, artist Mieko Shiomi composed another *Water Music*: 1. Give the water still form. 2. Let the water lose its still form. In this work, she devised a new way of using water in her own creations:

> "A record is covered with any water soluble material, such as clay or water soluble glue, etc. Play the record on a record player and drop a small amount of water over the record. The needle will pick up music from spots dissolved by water. Adjust quantity and location of water to obtain desired pattern of music and non-music."

Beyond the *musicosplashes*, the fusion of artistic practices on the theater's stage signified a profound change. It became impossible to distinguish music from plastic art: theatre became the eponymous form of artistic commitment. Around the same period, Yoko Ono combined music and plastic art in her *Waterdrop painting:*

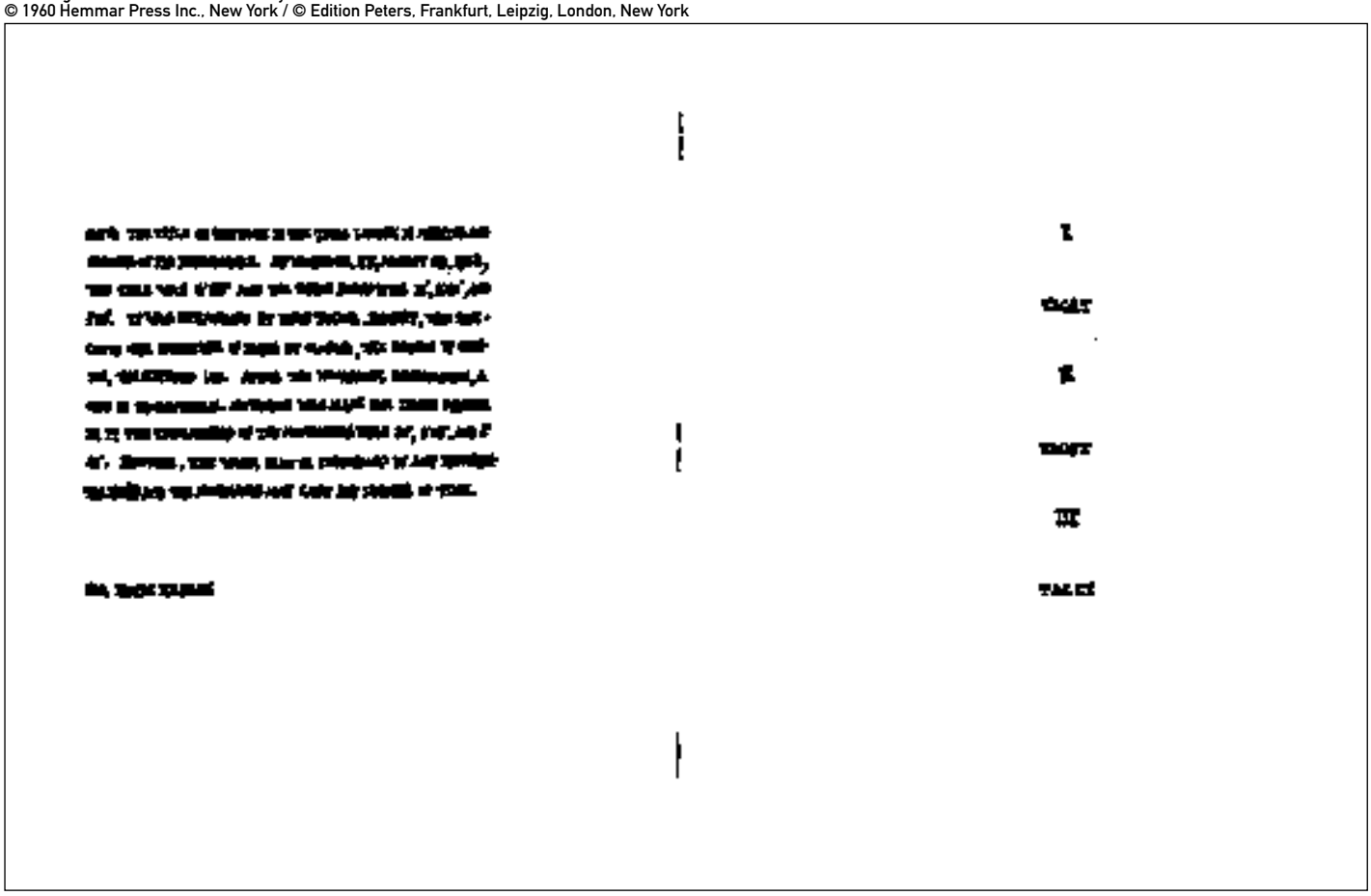
24 _ Jean-Marie Schaeffer, *Les Célibataires de l'art. Pour une esthétique sans mythes,* Editions Gallimard, Paris, 1994.

23 _ Howard Becker, Outsiders. *Etudes de sociologie de la déviance*, Editions Métaillié, Paris, 1985.

25 _ Cage, op. cit., p. 135.

26 _ David Revill, *Roaring Silence*, Arcade, New York, 1992, p. 160.

John Cage / 4'33" / 1960 / score for any instrument or combination of instruments /



"Let water drop.
Place a stone under it.
The painting ends when a hole is drilled
In the stone with the drops.
You may change the frequency of the waterdrop to your taste
You may use beer, wine, ink, blood, etc.
Instead of water.
You may use typewriter, shoes, dress, etc.
Instead of stone."[27]

Silence (the Sound of the Avant-garde)

These *musicosplashes* created an effect because they introduced a secular element into the sanctuary of artistic performance. But the most radical *musicosplash* of all was the one that destroyed the icon by reducing music to silence. In 1952, Cage entered Bruno Latour's category of the " 'A' people."[28]

One year earlier, John Cage had drawn precepts of musical composition from the *I Ching*, the book of Taoist prophecies. His idea was to make the unpredictable delivery

27 _ 1961, autumn

28 _ See Bruno Latour's essay in this catalog.

of sounds a new style of musical composition. His programmatic intention was made clear in the title: *Music of Changes* (1951). He continued experimenting with *Imaginary Landscape 4*, a piece composed for twelve radio receivers, which aimed to dissolve the notion of a work of art in a network of interactions whose development could not be predicted in advance. With this attitude, Cage intended to relativize the nomological importance of the score. It was not until 1952, however, that Cage produced *4'33"*, a radical gesture now remembered in all histories of music.

The piece *4'33"* is a solo intended – as the score specified – "to be performed in any way and by anyone." The work is divided into three movements: I, II, III. Under each of these numbers, which figure at the top of the score, the author has written TACET, silence. The score was performed for the first time in Woodstock, New York, on 29 August 1952 by the pianist David Tudor. It did not have a title at the time. On stage, the pianist remained silent for 33 seconds in the first movement, 2 minutes 40 seconds in the second movement, and 1 minute 20 seconds in the third movement, which explains the title *4'33"*. The work was largely perceived as a hoax, and was greeted as a "post-modern joke." Yet, this gesture eventually created a following of its own. Below are the full instructions:

> "In a device equipped with maximum amplification (no feedback) perform a disciplined action. With a few interruptions. While establishing total or partial links with the others. There should not be two interpretations of the same action, this action should not either be the performance of a 'musical' composition. The first performance was the writing of this manuscript (first inscription only)."

Although this work has become a reference, there exists to this day no available recording of it. Here again, the composer took on the role of the trend-setter. Once Cage's piece had become established as a foundational gesture, all related gestures were judged by reference to it. This was the "minimalist gesture" *par excellence* and even the four path-breaking American minimalists – La Monte Young, Terry Riley, Steve Reich, and Philip Glass – could not surpass it. Examples of pieces inspired by Cage's gesture which feature in this exhibition include Carl Michael von Hauswolff's *abstract model for something that, in Intervals, Occurs all the time* which challenges our ability to stay awake. Central to this piece is, of course, the interval. This is also the case in Keith Humble's *Nunique* cycle (1968-1995), which includes *The Anonymous Butchery:*

> THE ANONYMOUS BUTCHERY
> For a large number of people.
> Material: Each person has a large piece of white paper.
> Duration: 15".
> Everybody slowly hides their faces behind the paper. They delicately shake the paper – no sounds! They drop the paper all together.

Karlheinz Stockhausen also contributed to this new exploratory movement. In his cycle *Aus den sieben Tagen* (1968), he composed *Illimité* in response to the Taoist philosophies summoned by Cage in *4'33"*. Here is the score:

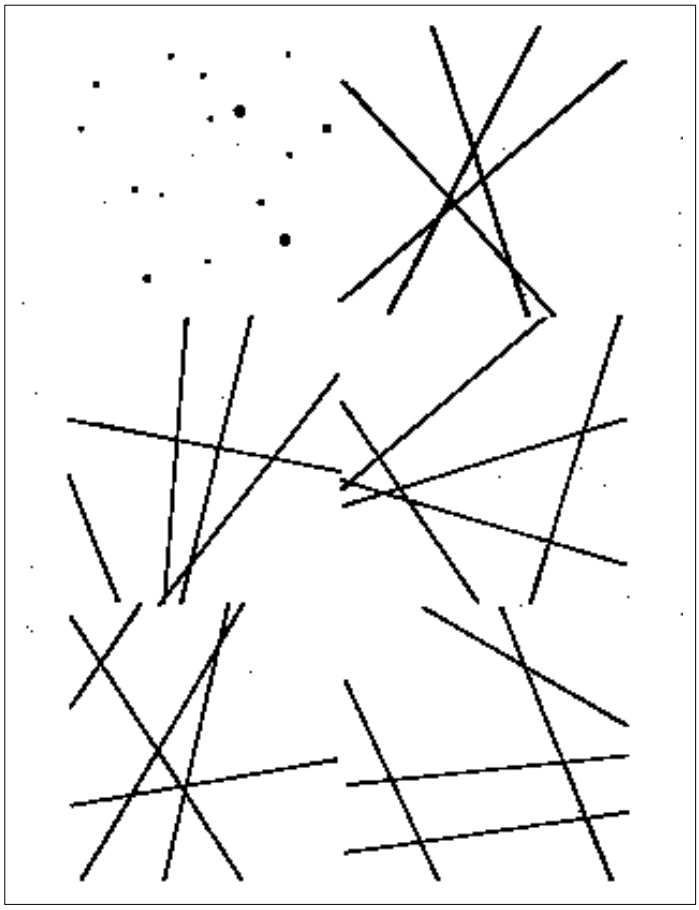
> "Play a sound being certain that you have all the time and all the space."

The idea of relegating musical theory probably made students of music academies rejoice, but not everyone was pleased. This kind of "score" created problems, notably in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, where archivists wondered whether this manuscript belonged in the "scores" file or in the "literature" one. This was such a serious dilemma that the correspondence between the curator and the publisher Otto Harrassowitz from Wiesbaden can be found inserted in the score *(cote 8° Vm Pièce 997)* kept in the Bibliothèque Nationale's Département de la Musique. Its *Post Scriptum* reads:

> "P.S.: With regards to Stockhausen's *Aus den sieben Tagen*, does this work include music? Our edition includes only literary texts."

Otto Harrassowitz made inquiries with Stockhausen and replied to the curator:

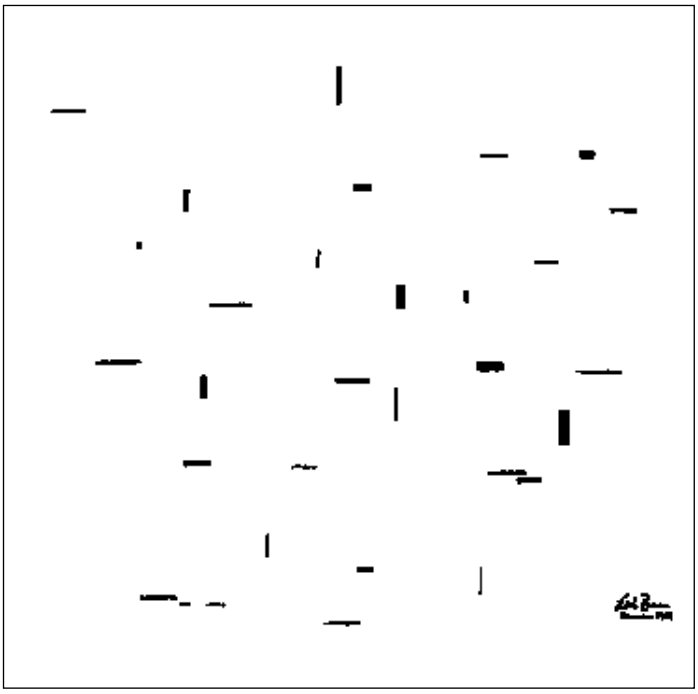
> "There is no musical notation for this piece which is meant to be interpreted only on the basis of the explanations given by M. Stockhausen in the edition you possess."



John Cage / Variations I: Extra Materials / 1958 / the score / © 1960 Hemmar Press Inc., New York / © Edition Peters, Frankfurt, Leipzig, London, New York

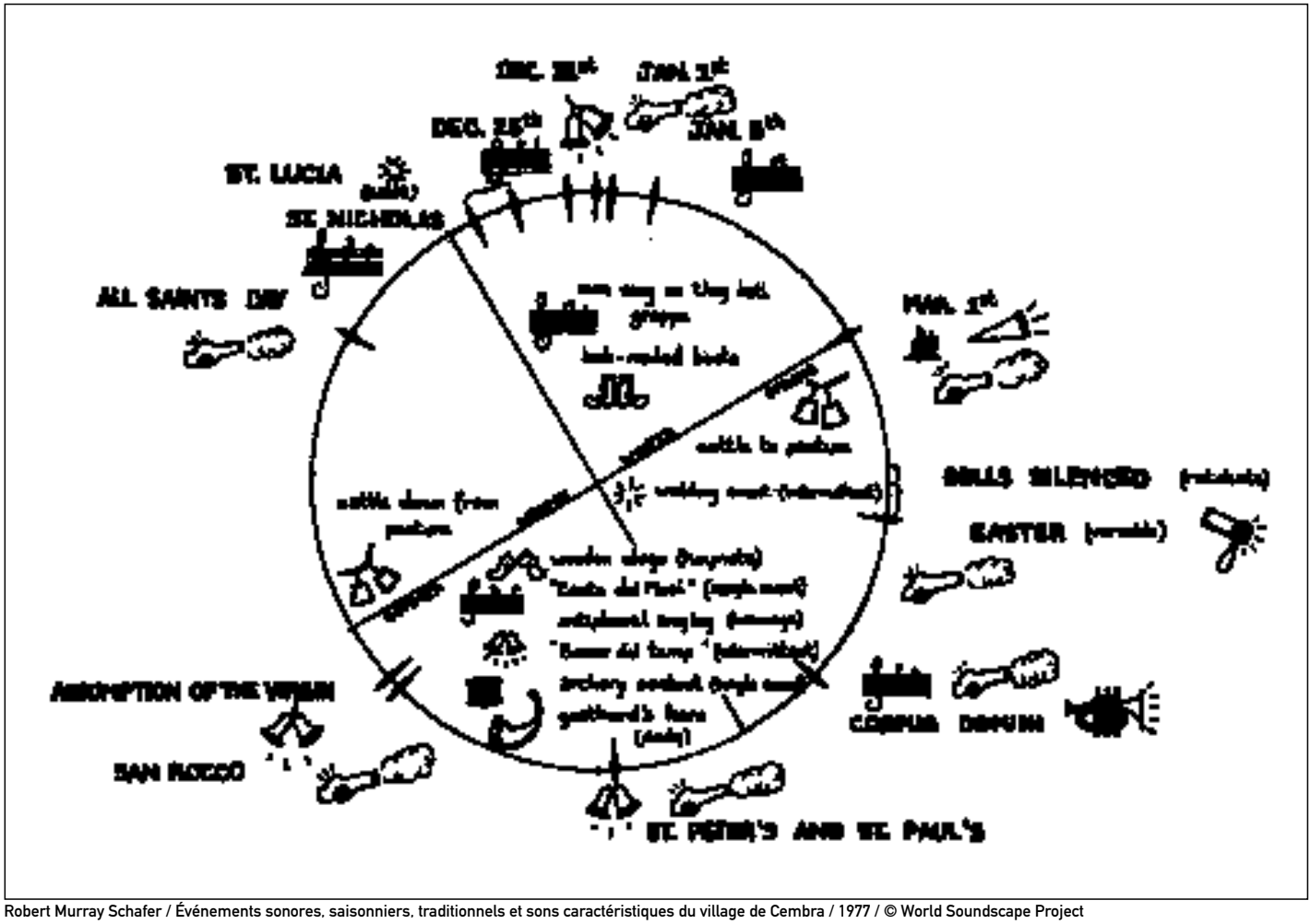
This is why, in the *Stockhausen* file of the Bibliothèque Nationale, *Aus den sieben Tagen* is classified as belonging not with the "musical works" but with the "literary texts" of the composer. The disappearance of musical writing had resulted in the removal of the piece from the scores file.

This disappearance of musical writing is precisely what Earle Brown blamed Cage and Stockhausen for, before he proposed his own *musicoclastic* approach, whose argument was closely akin to that of Morton Feldman, considered to be the "father" of the graphic score. According to them, each composer should make their graphic transcription more ambiguous in order to favor *in situ* actions. Brown thus composed *December 52,* whose score includes no conventional sign and which remains a mystery to this day. He was careful not to give any clues for its interpretation. It is the interpreter's task to give meaning to these signs and, guided by intuition,



Earle Brown / December 52 / 1952 / detail from the score / © Edition Peters, Frankfurt, Leipzig, London, New York

to put them into music. Brown upheld the roles and the functions of the actors of the musical drama, but he modified the link between them so as to bring about unexpected acoustic events. The signs he traced are so many challenges to the creative imagination. The composer is only the catalyst of a collective commitment, the work does not belong to him or her anymore as he or she is no longer its author, but only its origin. The same can be said of Morton Feldman with regard to his work for piano, *Intersection III* (1953), or *Projection 4,* for piano and violin (1951). These are enigmatic scores, in which the role of the composer is similarly undermined, and which favor the work's realization *in situ*. Many examples of this approach can be found in this exhibition, including Mauricio Kagel's *Diaphonie*, Dieter Schnebel's *Mo-No, musique à lire,* Christian Wolff's *For 1, 2 or 3 People*, Cornelius Cardew's *Treatise*, Louis Roquin's *Come Battuto,*



Robert Murray Schafer / Événements sonores, saisonniers, traditionnels et sons caractéristiques du village de Cembra / 1977 / © World Soundscape Project

Tom Phillips's *Palindrome*, Milan Grygar's *Partition architectonique,* and Roland Kayn's *Galaxis*. But even if these scores are classified as prints, what about the Cartes du Tendre drawn by Murray Schaeffer, for instance in his *Evènements sonores, saisonniers, traditionnels et sons caractéristiques du village de Cembra?* In this piece he conveys a tangible and undecipherable part of his program of acoustic ecology, but what are we to do with it?

Bang on a Can

If Cage, Stockhausen, and Hauswolff prompted a number of *musicoclashes* by studying the limits between sound and silence, it is by making as much noise as possible that Michael Gordon, David Lang, and Julia Wolfe created their festival *Bang on a can*, 1987, in New York, which was quickly adopted by the whole city.

The movement created its fathers, such as John Cage and Steve Reich. This time rupture was not so much sought after as renewal: the daring gestures of these founding fathers had to be taken "further." The three friends invited John Cage to the very first festival *Bang on a can* (10 May 1987) because Michael Gordon was convinced that "his ideas [have] changed the face of the earth in ways we cannot begin to suspect."[29] *Bang on a can* thus chose to administrate a musical heritage, but not in the twentieth century manner that froze a musical repertoire in scores and libraries. There, the repertoire was "embodied." It was in the gesture, and the gesture has to be iconoclastic in order to exist. Our aim was to "get rid of the deadwood," explained Julia Wolfe, who endeavored to build up a repertoire of *musicoclastic* actions.[30] Here we have a musical theory kept not in the conservatory but in behaviors.

> "*Bang on a can* started as a joke," Julia Wolfe continued. "We named the festival like this because we thought there would be no other one. Many people came the first year, including John Cage and Steve Reich. We worked hard on broadening our audience beyond the circle of New Music lovers. Even if the festival has developed, it has remained dedicated to composers with new ideas, with an adventurous mind."[31]

The "Festival of Iconoclastic Gestures" turned out to be a much bigger success than its promoters had expected. David Lang claimed to have "created *Bang on a can* to encourage audacity wherever it can be found and to attract a new audience capable of appreciating it."[32] But the mimetic violence of the iconoclast gestures proved appealing.

Bang on a can now consists of an annual season, a soloists' ensemble (Bang on a Can All-Stars), an orchestra in residence (Spit Orchestra), recordings, radio program, and commissions for new creations. Where is the iconoclastic gesture now located? The three friends intended to "fight conservatism in all branches of music,"[33] but has the audience, by showing so much interest, neutralized the *musicoclash*?

The *musicoclastic* gesture that once challenged our strongest beliefs has become part of the way in which we relate to sounds. David Lang composed *Grind to a Halt,* intended to be, "for the San Francisco symphonic orchestra, a great noisy piece that scratches."[34] But *Grind to a Halt* no longer makes anyone itchy. Once again, the "iconoclastic virtue," a syntagma in which the substantive neutralizes the adjective, has become a landmark in the history of music. The "post-modern joke" now belongs to the history of the moderns.

Politics

Each nation manufactures its own sacred objects. Considered to be unalterable and timeless, these objects "cement" the nation, holding it together, they are what *re*-presents it, what

30 _ Lelong, op. cit., p. 368.

29 _ Stephane Lelong, *Nouvelle Musique,* Editions Balland, Paris, 1996, p. 186.

31 _ Lelong, op. cit., p. 368.

34 _ Lelong, op. cit., p. 248.

33 _ Lelong, op. cit., p. 250.

32 _ Lelong, op. cit., p. 248.

gives it symbolic existence. These objects encapsulate a shared culture, a collective memory, and a common fate. The anthem, the flag, the charter (or the football team when it wins) are a few of these objects endowed with a sacral character. In every society, the authorities whose task is to inculcate the people – which include schools, the media, a political life rhythmed by commemorations, military culture, and sport – continually work to establish those symbols as sacred *items*. These authorities elevate a number of objects to the level of national symbols, they manufacture emotional commitment to each of them, and they orchestrate their exegesis to ensure they are read in a consensual way. Among these objects, the national anthem occupies a central position. The anthem cannot be regarded as a simple musical piece. It is of course "music," but it is at the same time something else entirely. One might say that the anthem is to civic practice what the creed is to confessional practice.

Endowed with a sacred character, the anthem is that which no one can touch, an inalterable object representing a whole nation, be it on the football pitch, the battlefield or during national holidays. Precisely for this reason, because they have been endowed with the quality of "institutional sacrality," anthems are a favorite target of *musicoclastic* gestures. When people want to show their hatred of a State, they burn its flag, they whistle at its anthem in disapproval. This happened for instance on 7 October 2001, in the Parisian Stade de France during the France-Algeria football match, the first match to be played between the two teams since Algeria's independence in 1962. Every effort had been made to show that the stakes of the game were of a purely sporting nature, and to display the good relations between the players: before the match, both teams had posed together for a photograph. This did not prevent the *Marseillaise* from being vociferously booed by a large section of the public, to the extent that it became inaudible. Was this *musicoclash* premonitory? The fact remains that young Algerian supporters swarming onto the pitch at the 75th minute put an end to the match. The *musicoclash* had indeed been premonitory.

Gainsbourg's Reggae Marseillaise

In 1979, the singer Serge Gainsbourg composed a reggae version of *La Marseillaise*. "This is a profanation," the editorialist Michel Droit immediately exclaimed in the *Figaro-Magazine*.[35] The matter was serious. While on a concert tour, in Strasbourg, Gainsbourg had to face a squad of parachutists. In January 1980, the magazine *Les Nouvelles Littéraires* published twenty-two negative reactions to the song, a whole collection of insults and curses:

> "Gainsbourg has no right to touch and demolish something that belongs to the heritage of the French."
>
> "One has no right to disrespect the national anthem and the flag when one has the honor of being French. Since Gainsbourg is physically filthy, he is probably equally filthy in his mind."
>
> "I cannot stand Gainsbourg's *Marseillaise*. Not only does he sing it badly, but on top of this, he is a foreigner, he is not even French."
>
> "With the *Marseillaise*, Gainsbourg has produced a drug addict's ditty. It is scandalous. In the name of freedom, we allow dreadful things to happen."
>
> "No one has the right to distort a national anthem to make pop. If artists do not know what France is, let them ask the old."

Had Gainsbourg forgotten that the national anthem, just like the flag, monuments, or commemorative plaques constitute emblematic and inalterable entities? "These objects 'are worth' what they represent."[36] They become intangible as a result of a whole process of interiorization instilled by many networks that shape the individual on a daily basis and whose efficiency is displayed by the example of Simone Veil.

35 _ *Le Figaro*, Magazine, 1 June 1979.

36 _ Jacques Cheyronnaud, Un blasphème très contemporain: "La Marseillaise" de Gainsbourg, in *Mentalités*, 2, 1989, p. 156.

Asked by journalist Jean Toulat whether *The Marseillaise*'s lyrics should not be changed for a less bloody version, the MEP was unable to express an objective point of view: the anthem, she claimed, "belongs to my memory and my culture. Actually the lyrics and the music are not important to me; what counts, when I hear *La Marseillaise* or when I sing it with others, are all the references to the times since early youth when I heard or sang it in the past."[37] Modifying a national anthem does not simply mean altering its musical characteristics, it also implies working on this part of ourselves which was formed by reference to this anthem. Anthems do not, however, necessarily inspire everyone with the same feelings. Pierre Bergé, then president of the Paris operas and chairman and managing director of Yves Saint-Laurent, expressed a different point of view in response to Jean Toulat's question: "When I was a child, my parents used to forbid me to sing *La Marseillaise*. They found the lyrics scandalous. I have always shared this opinion and have never managed to bring myself to utter them."[38] The anthem can thus be culturally appropriated in a multitude of different ways. It is the object of a process of differential polyphonic actualization in which collective memory meets individual experience. This explains the sacral character which surrounds it as well as the instinctive reactions that can be triggered off by a modification of the symbol. These are conditioned responses, which helps explain why the arguments criticizing or glorifying Gainsbourg's gesture had very little to do with the musical characteristics of his work. This was true even of the arguments made by those who condemned the racist turn of the criticisms:

> "So here is Gainsbourg's crime, not to have been born in our sweet France, the country of freedom!"
> "I am also a patriot, but not to the point of reproaching others for being Jewish. This is unacceptable."
> "That the French can become so indignant about an adaptation of the national anthem proves that stupidity and racism persevere, and that they have little sense of humor."

Can an artistic gesture, or the anathema that targets it, be fought with moral or political arguments? Gainsbourg's greatest merit is probably to have used an anthem to reveal the xenophobic feelings latent in French society. His *musicoclash* led to the emergence in the public debate of arguments which were all racial in nature. Annoyed by the rendering of a musical performance, its opponents searched for its origin in that of its author. They could have criticized its technical characteristics: reggae ostinato in the background, suave feminine voice singing "Aux armes citoyens," the author half-speaking, half-singing the national anthem's lyric between two drags on his cigarette ... But instead, the criticisms were directed at the "filthy individual," the "foreigner," the "un-French," the "drug addict," the "Jew." A shift thus occurred in the course of this *musicoclash*. The profanation now lay in the fact that a Jewish author appropriated a national anthem and turned it into a work of art. The abuse publicly showered on Serge Gainsbourg along with the parachutists' blows had the effect of bringing out his Jewish origins.

Hymnenstreit (Tag der deutschen Einheit, Hannover, 3 October 1998)

In February 1998, Bardo Henning, a jazz composer from Berlin, was commissioned to write a musical piece to be performed at the official ceremony of 3 October, *Tag der Deutschen Einheit,* the day of German unity. Since 1990, the German national holiday takes place every year in the capital of the Land whose Minister-President heads the Bundesrat. In 1998, the president of the Bundesrat was Gerhard Schröder, Minister-President of Lower Saxony; the ceremony was thus to take place in this Land's capital, Hannover. That year, by coincidence, 3 October fell one week after the 27 September

38 _ Toulat, op. cit., p. 15.

37 _ Jean Toulat, *Pour une Marseillaise de la Fraternité*, Editions Axel Noel, Paris, 1979, p. 27.

Bardo Henning / Hymnencollage [Anthem Collage] / 1998 / video, audio, information columns / Performance zum Tag der Deutschen Einheit [Performance on the Day of German unity] / Haus am Lützowplatz, Berlin / © photo: Pico Risto, Berlin

Bardo Henning / Hymnencollage [Anthem Collage] / 1998 / detail / Performance zum Tag der Deutschen Einheit [Performance on the Day of German unity] / Haus am Lützowplatz, Berlin / © photo: Karin Dammers, Berlin

elections for the chancellorship, in which Gerhard Schröder opposed Helmut Kohl.

In July, the first rehearsals of the musical work took place in Hannover. The youth orchestra discovered parts of the work at the same time as the presidents' representatives and a few journalists. The fact that it was jazz music did not shock anyone, this is why Bardo Henning was chosen for this project. What shocked was rather that in the beginning of the work's second half, Henning cited eight notes from *Goodbye Johnny,* the famous song composed in 1939 by Johannes R. Becher which was adopted as the GDR's national anthem in 1949. From there, the polemics in the press grew so intense that it became one of the main topics in the campaign for the 27 September elections. The piece was discussed in the first pages of newspapers (which deal with politics) rather than in the last pages (which deal with culture). Had the musical work ceased to be "art" to become "a political question"?

Bardo Henning intended to evoke Germany's history in music. His technique of composition was parody, and parody is based on citation. His work comprised three movements: 1. *Variationen zum Thema Deutschland;* 2. *Variationen zu "Sed Diabolus,"* von Hildegard von Bingen; 3. *Der Deutschen Reiselust gewidmet*.

The first title is not academic. When Beethoven composed variations, for instance, he called his work *33 Variationen über ein Thema Diabellis*. Johannes Brahms called his work *Variationen über ein Thema Haydns*. Bardo Henning, however, did not compose "Variationen *über* das Thema Deutschland" (Variations *on* the theme of Germany), but called his work *Variationen zum Thema Deutschland* (Variations about the theme of Germany). How should this subtle difference be interpreted? In this composition, Germany is not a theme for variations, but an icon: variations about the theme of Germany to celebrate the unification that is now commemorated on 3 October. The author hence imagined a kind of collage, combining in the same work different elements and different thematic motifs. The metaphor could have been perfect, but it was not quite. Let us have a look at the work itself.

The first movement, *Variationen zum Thema Deutschland,* is a piece composed for big band and string orchestra. Its themes are drawn from Joseph Haydn's famous *Kaiserquartett* (which inspired the FRG's anthem) and the song

Goodbye Johnny, written by Peter Kreuser in 1939 (and which Hans Eisler and Johannes R. Becher made into the GDR's anthem in 1949).

The second movement, *Variationen zu "Sed Diabolus,"* is composed for big band, string orchestra, and choir. Here, the theme is based on a composition by the mystic and visionary Hildegard von Bingen, whose 900th birthday was celebrated the same year. "Der Teufel als ein hinterhältiger Typ, lacht sich ins Fäustchen darüber, daß er kein Werk Gottes unberührt läßt."[39] Henning's second movement is clearly illustrative: the devil's laugh can be heard.

The third movement, *Der Deutschen Reiselust gewidmet,* is a festive composition. Citations abound in the piece, of a stylistic nature, borrowed from different dances (tangos, cajun, reggae, riff, salsa ...). This movement is performed at a wild pace, and one gets easily carried away by the melody of the sounds. Here, Henning portrayed a diverse and multicultural Germany.

In the huge controversy which flared up about Henning's work, nobody commented on the wild dances of the third movement, or the devil's laugh inspired by Hildegard von Bingen's chant in the second movement. It is the first movement that turned out to be the most controversial.

„Acht Takte der Hymne von Hanns Eisler und Johannes R. Becher zur Verhöhnung all der Opfer des DDR-Unrechtsregimes," the headlines of the newspaper *Neues Deutschland* ran. What should have been "a cultural horizon of garden gnomes" (Franz Müntefering) became "a completely unacceptable suggestion." Chancellor Helmut Kohl himself reproached these variations for being a "attempt to change a piece of identity."[40]

Public opinion split into two camps. On one side, the SPD and its left-wing allies (lead by Schröder) considered that Henning's piece was a work of art and that politicians should not interfere with artistic creation. After all, "it is only music."[41] On the other side, the CDU/CSU coalition (lead by Pastor Peter Hinze), putting forward the symbolic character of the occasion, protested that in such a ritualized context, art and politics could not be considered separately. This camp fused the two spaces of reference when it claimed that "quoting the anthem amounts to rebuilding the wall."[42] The Greens shifted the debate, arguing that this quarrel demonstrated the violence of national passions, and that political power ought to fight violent passions. Thus anthems should simply be abolished, and Germany should set the example. Gerhard Schröder chose the first approach, calling, in his official speech on 3 October (he had won the elections a week earlier) for the necessary "respect for the composer's creative freedom." On the same day, President Roman Herzog himself attempted to create a fragile balance and reconcile antagonistic positions by claiming that "the country is now strong enough to cope with this."

Once the conflict was over, people made a point of forgetting about it. Before this outcome, however, everyone was asked to comment on the musical work without having even heard it. Impressive amounts of opinions were poured into the press, radio, and television. The commemoration was a national event which rapidly became a political matter, to such an extent that Edmund Stoiber, Bavaria's representative, decided not to attend the ceremony in Hannover. Gerhard Schröder put an end to the conflict in a clever way. When he spoke after the concert, he preceded his official speech by three words in Bavarian dialect: "A sciane Musi" (a beautiful music). In this way, he paid tribute to the musicians and the composer, while hinting at Bavaria's Minister-President, his fiercest opponent in this conflict. The hint was bound to make the political representatives attending the ceremony laugh, or at least smile. Schröder thereby brought the citation down to what it really was: a part of a musical work, just as the GDR was a part of German history. Schröder's words put an end to the controversy and opened the debate to the realm of politics in which it has always belonged.

41 _ *Berliner Tagesspiegel*, 4 October 1998.

40 _ *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 22 September 1998. Translation: "Eight beasts of the hymn from Hanns Eisler and Johannes R. Becher to mock all the victims of the unjust GDR regime."

39 *The Devil is an underhanded guy, he laughs slyly because he has left none of God's works untouched.*

42 _ *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, 5 October 1998.

Rap, Gabber, Hardcore, Trip-Hop, Indus, Trash Metal

The representatives of the toughest trends in today's music are not afraid of making use of anthems. The older among us probably remember Jimi Hendrix's interpretation of the American anthem in Woodstock, which went down in history. This took place in 1969: Hendrix, clutching his guitar, suddenly struck up *The Star-Spangled Banner.* It was without doubt a *musicoclash*, a critical gesture at a time when the war was still raging in Vietnam. Jimi Hendrix, however, never clarified his intentions: "I don't know, man, all I did was play it. I'm American so I played it. I used to sing it in school, they made me sing it in school, so, it's a flashback," he declared. Thirty years on we are still discussing the artist's intention, as though it was going to determine whether his song should be taken as a tribute or a blasphemy. There can be no *musicoclash* unless there is a debate on the attribution of intention.

When the Sex Pistols recorded their first single, *God Save the Queen,* there was on the other hand no ambiguity concerning their intentions. From 1975 onwards, they fascinated a large audience with their outrageous behavior on stage and their "aesthetics of saturation," which included decibels as well as at society's moral and political codes, EMI signed them up. On 1 December 1976, Bill Grundy invited them as guests to the TV show *Today* and asked them to say offensive words. The guitarist Steve Jones willingly complied, showering insults on the early-evening audience of *Thames TV.* The press cried out, indignant. The Sex Pistols made it to posterity, a *musicoclash* had taken place. A year later, in 1977, Glen Matlock left the band and was immediately replaced by another bass guitarist, Sid Vicious, whose first task would be to learn to play the bass.

From early on, the Sex Pistols targeted the symbols of Great Britain, from *Jubilee Day* to the anthem. On 7 June 1977, following in Handel's footsteps, the Sex Pistols played their wild trance music on the Thames. The event could not be passed over in silence. As the band – Johnny Rotten, Steve Jones, Paul Cook, and Sid Vicious – reached the embankment, they were arrested by the police. The Pistols' jubilee river trip was a fiasco – but it is remembered as one of the seminal events

Sex Pistols / God save the Queen /
March 1977 / single, 7'', front cover / A&M / from:
http://www.angelfire.com/ok/TarpedoTribe/kollectorz.html

Sex Pistols / God save the Queen /
March 1977 / single, 7'', back cover / A&M / from:
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Sex Pistols / God save the Queen /
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of the punk era. The band's manager, Malcolm McLaren, and his then wife, Vivienne Westwood, now one of the world's most famous fashion designers, were among those arrested. The anthem however remained an ambitious target for them. After they recorded their own punk version of *God save the Queen* in 1977, the Sex Pistols organized a mock signature of the contract in front of Buckingham Palace and were violently driven away by the police. The band was banned, its record censored. In Great Britain, they were considered to be dangerous individuals, while they became idols for the United States' "massive independent music underground." Those in power, however, are sometimes not without humor. Twenty-five years after their Thames outing to mark the Queen's silver jubilee, the Sex Pistols may be about to reunite to celebrate her golden jubilee. The gig is supposed to take place on 3 June 2002, when the Queen celebrates her fifty years on the throne.[43] The Sex Pistols are now Buckinghams's guests of honor for the Queen's new jubilee! Where is the iconoclastic gesture now located?

Despite many attempts in all areas of today's music, no group has managed to reach the Sex Pistols' reputation. The final section of the exhibition takes us through enraged rappers' loudest clashes and their unfailingly powerful poetic virtuosity, visual violence, and blasphemous energy (NTM, Minister Amer, Ministry, Nine Inch Nails). Opposite them stands techno. In this music without lyrics, another form of *iconoclash* arises from the social customs which go with it and the various forms of deviance that are phantasmatically associated with it. Are raves now destined to take the place once filled by carnivals? In this case also, it is impossible to freeze the *musicoclash*. Our DJs recycle our grandparents' vinyl discs on their decks. All the gestures which had been forbidden up to this day now become the new repertoire of techno creation. Thus, new icons are born from the transformation of reflex gesture into a *musicoclastic* one before becoming an expert gesture.

Sex Pistols / image from Sid Viscous / from: www.almac.co.uk/personal/brian/sexp.html

The Seven Musicoclastic Posts

Seven "*musicoclastic* posts" have been set up randomly throughout this exhibition. Seven musical extracts are put at everyone's disposal, without any commentary other than a brief text explaining the context in which they were created. It is up to each visitor to decide whether the virtuoso and occasionally out of tune chants of Florence Foster Jenkins interpreting Mozart approximately, or the wild rhythms of the band Oskorri caricaturing symbols of the kingdom of Spain are *musicoclashes* or merely entertaining parodies. Each visitor can decide whether the Inuits' vocal games have been excessively edited for a "musiques du monde" collection, or whether or not the explorations carried out by Mauricio Kagel or Paul Pörtner in the Siemens electronic music studios can be described as "music." The visitor is finally given the opportunity to decide whether Vincent Barras and Jacques Demierre's *Ma Merd'de* is a "work of art" or a joke. Listening to the famous choir of Verdi's Nabucco in the distorted interpretation given by Alvin in his *Crystal Psalms*, intended to commemorate the *Kristallnacht*, will however remind us

43 _ *BBC News*, 19 December 2001.

that a citation is not necessarily offensive, for instance if its intention is judged to be legitimate.

The barriers separating art, politics, and philosophy are indeed very thin. What is constantly at stake is a whole system of representing the world. By freezing the *musicoclastic* gesture, by looking at this moment of uncertainty when anything could happen and when everything sometimes happens, although not at the same moment, I have attempted to show that what I call a *musicoclash* is not an inherent feature of the musical work but rather a cultural construction born of our reactions to it. There can be no escape from anthropological holism.

This explains the variability of judgement passed on a piece in the name of truth: the fact that the Sex Pistols can be banned one year and invited twenty-five years later. For indeed, a judgment varies as much as the truth in the name of which it is formulated. "Men do not find truth, they make it," as historian Paul Veyne put it.[44] It follows that "the truth is that truth varies."[45] This is what we have to bear in mind when we go through the *musicoclastic* areas of this exhibition. We have to think that we have two ears – one that hears, and one that thinks – and remember that the type of attention we pay to sounds is not a matter of hearing, but of listening.

With Both Ears

Listening involves more than merely registering sounds, it is also a thought and words. My hearing ear hears a series of sounds, while my thinking ear interprets them according to the information available in my cultural universe, where I find a "good reason" to think what I think. The way we relate to sounds never stabilizes once and for all. It changes and it requires learning a new vocabulary which enables me to describe a series of sounds, to employ *propositions*[46] – this precious notion which Bruno Latour revived after reading Whitehead – which allow me to bring this series of sounds into peoples' deliberations. The attention we pay to any *musico-clash*, therefore, not only depends on our Eustachian tubes, it also has to do with understanding. Listening is the result of a process of constant learning which continuously organizes our perception of sounds.

If I am shocked when I listen to the ataxic hoquets scattered throughout Guillaume de Machaut's Mass of Nôtre Dame, the emotion I feel does not stem from the fact that Machaut spoke a heretic language which brought him opprobrium from the ecclesiastic powers of his time. It stems from my finding signs of heresy in his performance. The question is not about whether Machaut was a heretic, it is about me being disturbed by his hoquets to the point of seeing in them the sign of a diabolic inspiration, and of making Machaut a heretic. I will let the reader appreciate the subtle difference.

It is this difference that the metaphor of the two ears seeks to demonstrate.[47] Between Machaut's Mass and the acoustic vibrations that reach my ears, a conceptual, anticipatory scheme intervenes that organizes audition in a certain way. If we see "heresy" in Machaut's piece, it means that we have placed ourselves in such a condition so as to locate "heresy" in this piece and be upset by it. A *musicoclash* takes place only insofar as it constitutes an answer, of a cultural nature, to the culturally constituted questions we ask (ourselves). We have thus needed both our ears – the hearing one and the thinking one – to make our way through this argumentative, aggressive, and burlesque cacophony, because a sound means nothing by itself.

Translated from French by Charlotte Bigg

45 _ Veyne, op. cit., p. 127.

44 _ Paul Veyne, *Les Grecs ont-ils cru à leurs mythes?*, Édition du Seuil, Paris, 1986, p. 12.

47 _ This formulation is borrowed from the work of Gerard Lenclud in which he compares the way XVIth century travelers and today's ethnologists see the societies they observe: if "no one would think of denying, not even post-modernists who hate progress, that today's ethnographs observe the societies they study 'better' than the travelers looked at the people they depicted [...], the merit of these ethnographs, in comparision to travelers, goes to their eye that thinks, and not to their eye that sees, as all eyes that see, in the XVIth as in the XXth century, attain the same perceptive performances." (Gérard Lenclud, Qu'est-ce que la Tradition?, in Marcel Détienne, *Transcrire les Mythologies*, Albin Michel, Paris, 1994, pp. 25-44. Concerning audition, see Roberto Casati and Jérôme Dokic's analysis on the passage between hearing faculty and auditive sensations. Roberto Casati and Jérôme Dokic, *La Philosophie du son*, Éditions Jacqueline Chambon, Nîmes, 1994, p. 29.

46 _ "Propositions are neither utterances, nor things, nor some intermediate state between both. They are first and foremost agents." (Bruno Latour, *L'Espoir de Pandore. Pour une version réaliste de l'activité scientifique*, La Découverte, Paris, 2001, p. 148.).