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TRADITION – NOVELTY – RENEWAL.  
The Presence of the Past in 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Music

by KATELIJNE SCHILTZ

*Very deep is the well of the past. Should we not call it bottomless? For the deeper we sound, the further down into the lower world of the past we probe and press, the more do we find that the earliest foundations of humanity, its history and culture, reveal themselves unfathomable. No matter to what hazardous lengths we let out our line they still withdraw again, and further, into the depths.*

Thomas Mann, *Joseph und seine Brüder* (*Joseph and his brothers*)

When inviting me to the Reworkings-conference, Pedro Memelsdorff asked me to set the ground for a number of methodological, epistemological, historiographical, and artistic reflections. Obviously, this is a vast and complex topic. In this essay, I shall focus on ways in which 20<sup>th</sup>-century composers deal with music of the past in general, and with music from the Middle Ages to the Baroque in particular – this also being the core repertoire of the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis.

Let me start with a general yet crucial observation. In the music of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, traces of early music abound across stylistic and ideological divergences; they occur both in avant-garde and in more conservative circles – in the œuvre of Igor Stravinsky, Arnold Schönberg, Anton Webern, Olivier Messiaen, Luigi Nono and Karel Goeyvaerts, to name just a few. It would go beyond the scope of this essay to give an overview of tendencies, directions and ideologies.<sup>1</sup> Rather, I wish to reflect upon this phenomenon from a broader perspective. To what purpose did composers connect with the music of the past? How is this music being made fruitful for their own work? To what extent can the study of the musical tradition help a composer to sharpen his own language and – paradoxically – to foster novelty? But also: when a composer seeks to legitimise his own approach via a comparison with and/or assimilation of musical techniques from the past, how far can this go; in other words, where are the boundaries of the analogy? And finally, what does the practice of re-working tell us about the composer's notion of the past?

Far from being able to give clear answers, I rather want to raise some issues about the conditions and *raison d'être* of reworkings. My aim is to show that in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the practice of reworking is intimately linked with

<sup>1</sup> I refer to the following publications that deal with this topic from a methodological perspective and/or via a number of case studies: Giselher Schubert (ed.), *Alte Musik im 20. Jahrhundert. Wandlungen und Formen ihrer Rezeption*, Mainz: Schott, 1995 (Frankfurter Studien 5); Christian Thorau, Julia Cloot and Marion Saxer (eds), *Rückspiegel. Zeitgenössisches Komponieren im Dialog mit älterer Musik*, Mainz: Schott, 2010; and the special issue „Recycling and Innovation in Contemporary Music“, *Contemporary Music Review* 3 (2010), ed. by Lisa Colton and Martin Iddon.



developments in the field of musicology on the one hand – thus also affecting the history of our discipline – and with the history of performance practice on the other (even if, as I will show, the fundamental focus in both cases is a different one). I have incorporated quotations from composers like Nono and Stravinsky, as they often epitomise some of the central topics we are dealing with when talking about reworkings in general. As a matter of fact, Nono's work was one of the reasons why I got interested in the reception of early music in the 20<sup>th</sup> century many years ago.<sup>2</sup> During a lecture that he delivered in 1960 at the famous Darmstädter Ferienkurse für Neue Musik, Nono tried to show that the texture of two of his compositions – *Il canto sospeso* (1955–56) and *La terra e la compagna* (1957–58) – was inspired by compositional techniques from the past, especially from the Cinquecento. More precisely, Nono illustrates his theories about the distribution of the phonetic material of a text, which is a central element in his two works – *Il canto sospeso* is based on letters of condemned antifascist fighters; *La terra e la compagna* on poems by Cesare Pavese – by a comparison with motets and madrigals by Giovanni Gabrieli and Carlo Gesualdo. Nono was especially interested in the ways polyphony could be a medium for exploring and heightening the phonetic and semantic qualities of a text, for combining and recombining words and sounds, thereby making full use of assonance, alliteration and verbal rhythm – and it is exactly this potential that Nono explores in *La terra e la compagna* and *Il canto sospeso*.<sup>3</sup>

In other contributions as well, Nono showed an acute awareness and knowledge of the music from the past.<sup>4</sup> His engagement in early music was manifold. We know that his teacher Gian Francesco Malipiero encouraged him to study sources in the Biblioteca Marciana. Furthermore, he read theoretical treatises – his copy of *Scriptorum de Musica mediæævi* contains a great deal of handwritten annotations – and analysed contrapuntal structures. Especially his „Esercizi didattici“, which are kept at the Archivio Luigi Nono in Venice, are very instructive in this respect, as they contain a series of exercises dealing not only with modal, contrapuntal and melodic aspects, but also with compositional principles such as polychorality.

<sup>2</sup> See my „An Avant-Garde Look at Early Music. Luigi Nono's Thoughts on Sixteenth-Century Polyphony“, *Ars Lyrica* 18 (2010), 1–17.

<sup>3</sup> Other repertoires he includes in his analysis – albeit not that extensively – are polytextual motets as well as music from Bach and Mozart.

<sup>4</sup> See especially the work by Stefan Drees, „Renaissance-Musik als Inspirationsquelle für das Komponieren Luigi Nonos und Bruno Madernas“, in: László Dobszay (ed.), *The Past in the Present. Papers Read at the IMS Intercongressional Symposium and the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Cantus Planus, Budapest & Vysehrad 2000*, Budapest: Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music, 2003, two vols, I, 545–558 and idem, „Die Integration des Historischen in Luigi Nonos Komponieren“, in: Thomas Schäfer (ed.), *Luigi Nono. Aufbruch in Grenzbereiche*, Saarbrücken: Pfau, 1999, 77–95 (about *Fragmente – Stille, An Diotima* [1979–80] and *Rissonanze erranti. Liederzyklus a Massimo Cacciari* [1986–87]).



It is against this background we have to understand a talk Nono gave in 1959, one year before the lecture in Darmstadt, in which he expounds a composer's relationship with the past. His contribution is so central that it is worth quoting a substantial portion of it:

Es herrscht heute [1959] – auf dem Gebiet des Schöpferischen wie auf dem des Kritisch-Analytischen – vielfach die Tendenz, ein künstlerisch-kulturelles Phänomen nicht in seinem geschichtlichen Zusammenhang einzufügen: es also nicht betrachten zu wollen in Beziehung zu seinen Ursprüngen und zu den Elementen, aus denen es sich gebildet hat, nicht in Beziehung zu seiner Zugehörigkeit und Wirksamkeit im aktuellen Dasein, nicht in Beziehung zu den innewohnenden Möglichkeiten, in die Zukunft zu strahlen, sondern betrachten zu wollen ausschließlich um seiner selbst willen, in sich selbst und nur in Beziehung zu jenem bestimmten Moment, in dem es sich manifestiert. Man lehnt nicht nur jede Einordnung in die Geschichte, sondern man lehnt unmittelbar die Geschichte selbst ab.<sup>5</sup>

This fervent plea was first and foremost meant as a critique against the music of John Cage, who in his works focused his attention on what is happening in the present, and who in his music from the 1950s and 1960s opposed the museumlike preservation of music from the past. By arguing for music that focused the listener's attention on the present moment, Cage indeed called into question virtually every aspect of music, such as the act of composing, the act of performing and the act of listening. So with this testimony Nono gives proof of his historical consciousness, of the need to understand and shape his own language via the traces of the past. He has underlined the necessity of a composer's dialogue with the past, which could at the same offer new and fresh opportunities for the future. For Nono, studying early music opens up a heuristic and innovative potential.

In this context, it is worth underlining that Nono's occupation with the music of Gabrieli and Gesualdo also seems to have been by inspired by developments in the field of musicology. Indeed, as it happens, Giovanni Gabrieli's eight-voice motet *O magnum mysterium* (which was published in his *Concerti* from 1587) had appeared in a modern edition in 1956 (as part of the composer's *Opera omnia*), i.e. during the completion of *Il canto sospeso* and only a few years before Nono's Darmstadt lecture. What is more, as we can judge from Nono's personal music collection, he even possessed an LP with a recording of this motet by the Gregg Smith Singers.<sup>6</sup> So Nono's study of Gabrieli and his ideas on how to make that composer's techniques fruitful for his own œuvre must have been stimulated both by written (i.e. the score) and sounding (i.e. the recording) ma-

<sup>5</sup> I am quoting from the German translation of the Italian text; the translation was made by Nono's then student Helmut Lachenmann. See: Luigi Nono, „Geschichte und Gegenwart in der Musik von heute“, in: Jürg Stenzl (ed.), *Texte. Studien zu seiner Musik*, Zürich: Atlantis-Verlag, 1975, 34–40.

<sup>6</sup> Nono's music collection is now online on the website of the Fondazione Archivio Luigi Nono: <http://www.luiginono.it/en/catalogues> (03.02.2016).



terial.<sup>7</sup> The same goes for Gesualdo's *Il sol, qual or più splende*, which Nono mentions in his lecture. In 1958, Wilhelm Weismann had published a modern edition of the madrigal as part four of Gesualdo's *Sämtliche Werke* (Hamburg: Ugrino Verlag, 1958); and between 1950 and 1965 the Quintetto Vocale Italiano (directed by Angelo Ephrikian) issued Gesualdo's six books of five-voice madrigals on a series of LP's. So it seems safe to conclude that Nono conceived his just-mentioned works in a fruitful dialogue with musicological research on the one hand and performance practice on the other.

Nono clearly is not alone with his fascination with the past. As is well known, near the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Anton Webern undertook a careful study of the contrapuntal techniques in the second part of Heinrich Isaac's monumental *Choralis Constantinus* for his doctoral dissertation at the University of Vienna under the direction of Guido Adler. The result was published in a modern edition in the series *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich* (1909), which though not without mistakes is still used today.<sup>8</sup> And to give some more examples: Steve Reich's fascination with various aspects of medieval music, especially Parisian organum, dates back to undergraduate days. Although his often confessed interests in this regard are essentially intuitive rather than scholarly (as is often the case with contemporary composers' sources of inspiration), Reich certainly took some trouble to acquaint himself with the compositional technicalities. As he writes, his *Proverb* (1995) is not only „an homage to Pérotin“, but also „the first time where I really do a piece about another composer“.<sup>9</sup> *Proverb* resulted directly from a request by the singer-conductor Paul Hillier, who had previously conducted Reich's multimedia work *The Cave*.<sup>10</sup> And in the prefatory matter to the score, Reich states that „all singers sing non-vibrato throughout. A background of singing Medieval and Renaissance music will usually be helpful“.

Other 20<sup>th</sup>-century composers had their reasons to delve into the music of the past, too. Olivier Messiaen's interest in Claude Le Jeune's collection *Le printemps* (Paris, 1603) had a two-fold reason. He was not only attracted by the rhythmic handling of the text (the so-called „vers mesurés à l'antique“), but given Messiaen's lifelong passion for ornithology, he was especially charmed

<sup>7</sup> Music for Antiphonal Choirs (LP: Verve Mono MGV 2137; Stereo MGVS 6151; released 1960). The recording was remastered, released in 2006 as part of the Sony Classical Great Performances-series and announced as „A Stereo Spectacular“.

<sup>8</sup> See Katelijne Schiltz, „Aus einem Hauptgedanken alles Weitere entwickeln! Die Kanons in Isaacs *Choralis Constantinus* II“, in: Ulrich Tadday (ed.), *Heinrich Isaac*, München: edition text+kritik 2010 (Musik-Konzepte 148–149), 120–134.

<sup>9</sup> For an excellent analysis, see Ronald Woodley, „Steve Reich's *Proverb*, Canon, and a little Wittgenstein“, in: Katelijne Schiltz and Bonnie J. Blackburn (eds), *Canons and Canonic Techniques, 14<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Theory, Practice, and Reception History*, Leuven: Peeters, 2007 (Leuven Studies in Musicology 1), 457–481.

<sup>10</sup> See also Paul Hillier's collection of writings by Steve Reich: *Writings on Music, 1965–2000*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.



by the many birdsongs Le Jeune's *Printemps* contains.<sup>11</sup> Italian avant-garde composers were also busy studying their national heritage and integrating it in their works. Gian Francesco Malipiero's edition of Monteverdi's complete œuvre was not only a major step in the study of this composer, but also left indelible traces in Malipiero's own output,<sup>12</sup> with *San Francesco d'Assisi* (1920–21) being important evidence of this cross-fertilization.<sup>13</sup>

In many of the just-mentioned cases, composers wittingly or unwittingly seek the foundations of their compositional language in their national heritage.<sup>14</sup> This is an aspect that should not be underestimated. The musical revival of the past should indeed also be understood against the background of the search for national identity as a general historical phenomenon, of which the roots go back to earlier centuries.<sup>15</sup> When, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the London Academy of Ancient Music aspired „to restore the ancient English church music“ and instrumentalised Georg Friedrich Händel – after all a German composer – for this purpose, this was clearly done with a nationalistic agenda in mind.<sup>16</sup> The genesis of the „Denkmäler“-tradition in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the German realm should be understood against a similar background.<sup>17</sup> And in France too, the early music-revival had a decidedly nationalistic character. Especially in Paris, a whole range of activities and institutions – such as the „École de Musique Religieuse et Classique“ and the „Société de concerts des instruments anciens“ (under the direction of Camille Saint-Saëns) – was initiated in order to promote early music. Especially noteworthy is the „Ligue

<sup>11</sup> Isabelle His, „La Renaissance à défaut d'Antiquité. Olivier Messiaen analyste du *Printemps* de Claude Le Jeune“, in: François Lesure (ed.), „... La musique, de tous les passetemps le plus beau“. *Hommage à Jean-Michel Vaccaro*, Paris: Klincksieck, 1998, 235–249.

<sup>12</sup> *Claudio Monteverdi. Tutte le opere*, ed. by Gian Francesco Malipiero, Wien: Universal-Edition, 1926–42; repr. 1954–1968.

<sup>13</sup> The list of composers is long. To name just two further examples that have been the subject of recent musicological research: Stefan Drees, „Kontrapunktische Materialbefragung als Modus historischer Vergewisserung. Luigi Dallapiccolas Relektüre der Vergangenheit“, in: Ulrich Tadday (ed.), *Luigi Dallapiccola*, München: edition text+kritik 2012 (Musik-Konzepte 158), 46–65; Melanie Wald-Fuhrmann, „Altneue Musik. Zur Auseinandersetzung Isabel Mundrys mit Dufay, Scandello und Couperin“, in: Ulrich Tadday (ed.), *Isabel Mundry*, München: edition text+kritik 2011 (Musik-Konzepte Sonderband 11), 51–72.

<sup>14</sup> See also John C. G. Waterhouse, „The Italian Avant-Garde and the National Tradition“, *Tempo* 68 (1964), 14–25.

<sup>15</sup> For an overview, see Ludwig Finscher, „Was ist Alte Musik?“, in: Schubert (ed.), *Alte Musik im 20. Jahrhundert* (see n. 1), 9–18.

<sup>16</sup> See also the recent collected volume by Xavier Bisaro and Rémy Campos, *La musique ancienne entre historiens et musiciens*, Genève: Droz, 2014, esp. the contributions by Fanni Gribenski („Présenter la Musique ancienne. Les Avatars du concert-conférence à Paris dans les années 1880–1890“), Florence Gréteau („Les Instruments anciens en France au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Le Role du Conservatoire et les initiatives privées“) and Alice Tacaille („Un Moyen Âge inouï. De la Partition au concert en France, 1933–1950“).

<sup>17</sup> For a recent examination, focussing on the German lied in the context of early nationalism, see Andrea Lindmayr-Brandl, „The Modern Invention of the ‚Tenorlied‘. A Historiography of the Early German lied setting“, *EMH* 32 (2013), 119–177. She also shows how the repertoire was politicised in the Third Reich.



de la Patrie Française“, which organised concerts and lectures in cooperation with Vincent d'Indy and the Parisian Schola Cantorum. The French music from the Middle Ages to the French revolution that was performed was said to embody *the* French tradition. What is more, the special focus on sacred vocal polyphony from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, as it was promoted by the ecclesiastical and political authorities, was closely connected with an interest in the rebuilding of the catholic church after the revolution and after the empire.<sup>18</sup>

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Where does this fascination with the musical past come from? As we have seen, it is far from an „invention“ from the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Or, as Richard Taruskin puts it: „Appeals to ancient precedents to justify stylistic, technical, and aesthetic innovations in music have a much longer pedigree than that [i.e. the 20<sup>th</sup> century]“. <sup>19</sup> But as I would like to argue, since the very beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, composers often took great pains to stress that they do not want to break with the tradition, but – on the contrary – that their music is in fact a logical consequence of music history. The Second Viennese School, i.e. the circle of Schönberg, Berg and Webern set an example for this way of thinking. When reading their texts, one can see how their thoughts about the music from the past (from plainchant to late-romantic music) is guided by the question how and to what extent that music carries the roots of later developments. Anton Webern's brief „history of music“, as he presents it in his *Der Weg zur Neuen Musik*, is written from this perspective (and it should be stressed here that his approach is intimately linked to the teleological historiography from the 19<sup>th</sup> century). In other words, one of the reasons why Webern and his colleagues were so interested in early music was its potential for the future.<sup>20</sup> When for instance stressing the „Fasslichkeit“ and „Zusammenhang“ (i.e. the comprehensiveness and coherence) of Isaac's *Choralis Constantinus* in general and its canons in particular, Webern is at the same time advocating the logic and stringency of twelve-tone music, thus projecting early music's characteristics into the future and using them as legitimising argument.

Webern had a doctoral degree in musicology from the University of Vienna. Many other composers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were in close contact with musicologists and their work (by that I mean both editions as well as books and

<sup>18</sup> See also Dieter Gutknecht, „Musikwissenschaft und Aufführungspraxis“, in: Hartmut Krones (ed.), *Alte Musik und Musikpädagogik*, Wien: Böhlau, 1997 (Wiener Schriften zur Stilkunde und Aufführungspraxis 1), 199–222.

<sup>19</sup> Richard Taruskin, „'Alte Musik' or 'Early Music'?“, *Twentieth-Century Music* 8 (2012), 3–28, 5.

<sup>20</sup> See also Markus Grassl, „Webern Conducted Bach best of all'. Die Wiener Schule und die alte Musik“, in: Markus Grassl and Reinhar Kapp (eds), *Die Lehre von der musikalischen Aufführung in der Wiener Schule. Verhandlungen des Internationalen Colloquiums Wien 1995*, Wien: Böhlau, 2002, 509–524, 515: „Der Blick auf die ältere Musik ist von der Frage gelenkt, inwiefern sie den Keim der späteren geschichtlichen Entwicklung in sich trägt. Weberns Durchgang durch die abendländische Musikgeschichte vom Gregorianischen Choral bis Schönberg erfolgt genau unter dieser Perspektive.“



articles), not only in European circles, but also and especially in the USA. Stravinsky for example was acquainted with the work of Edward Lowinsky;<sup>21</sup> he possessed a modern edition of Isaac's just-mentioned *Choralis Constantinus* (thereby stressing that „between his musical thinking and writing and my own there is a very close connection“); Stravinsky also had a copy (which he annotated extensively) of Carl Parrish's *A Treasury of Early Music: An Anthology of Masterworks of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Baroque Era* (New York: Norton, 1958), of Dom Gregory Suñol's *Introduction à la paléographie grégorienne* and of Davison's and Apel's *Historical Anthology of Music*, which was published for the first time in 1946.<sup>22</sup> Willi Apel's work in general must have played an important role for many composers. His edition *French Secular Music of the Late Fourteenth Century* too seems to have been a frequently used source, of which individual pieces or groups of works inspired 20<sup>th</sup>-century composers such as Stravinsky, Karel Goeyvaerts and many others.<sup>23</sup> It might be worth mentioning here that no less a figure than Paul Hindemith wrote the foreword to that edition.

When thinking about the role model function of anthologies (not only for musicologists, but for performers and composers as well), I also suspect the monumental *Anthologie sonore*-series could have played a catalysing role in this process. This Thesaurus of Early Music was recorded between 1933 and the mid-1950s in France, initially under the artistic direction of Curt Sachs. We know for example that Stravinsky owned the *Anthologie sonore*.<sup>24</sup> This is an area that deserves further research, and it would be interesting to investigate whether and how this project had an impact on composers' approach of the musical past.<sup>25</sup>

Via their study of early music, composers sometimes discovered a kind of spiritual kinship with their colleagues from the past. Stravinsky was attracted by the passionate character of Gesualdo, whose music inspired the composer more than once. Not only did Stravinsky reconstruct the lost Bassus and Sexta Vox of three of Gesualdo's motets *Da pacem Domine*, *Assumpta est Maria* and *Illumina nos* (at the occasion of the celebration of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary),

<sup>21</sup> See also Stravinsky's appraisal as it was published in Lowinsky's collected essays *Music in the Culture of the Renaissance and Other Essays*, ed. by Bonnie J. Blackburn, two vols, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989: „Professor Lowinsky's method is the only kind of ‚writing about music‘ that I value.“

<sup>22</sup> Archibald T. Davison and Willi Apel, *Historical Anthology of Music*, two vols, Harvard, MA: Harvard University Press, 1946.

<sup>23</sup> Willi Apel, *French Secular Music of the Late Fourteenth Century*, Cambridge, MA: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1950.

<sup>24</sup> Taruskin, „Alte Musik‘ or ‚Early Music‘?“ (see n. 19), 9.

<sup>25</sup> See also the work of Martin Elste, „Mittelalter auf alten Schallplatten. Die Anfänge der Rekonstruktion mittelalterlicher Musizierpraxis“, in: Jürgen Kühnel et al. (eds), *Mittelalter-Rezeption III. Gesammelte Vorträge des 3. Salzburger Symposions „Mittelalter, Massenmedien, Neue Mythen“*, Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1988 (Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik 479), 421–436 and Martin Elste, „Bildungsware Alte Musik. Curt Sachs als Schallplattenpädagoge“, *BjBHM* 13 (1989), 207–247.



but he also recomposed (as Stravinsky called it) some of Gesualdo's madrigals, which were published in the *Monumentum pro Gesualdo da Venosa* (1960).<sup>26</sup> As Joseph Straus wrote, by so doing, the „composer takes a familiar object from the shared world of our inherited musical culture and, by altering it and presenting it in a new context, forces us to hear it in a new way“.<sup>27</sup> Another example is Ernst Krenek, who in his little monograph on Johannes Ockeghem expresses a „solidarity“ between himself and the 15<sup>th</sup>-century composer.<sup>28</sup> According to Krenek, Ockeghem has often been rejected for being too cerebral; and this, Krenek writes, is exactly the kind of critique avant-garde composers are often confronted with. So Krenek tries to draw a parallel here between both artists' reception, their reputation and their position in society.

But apart from personal predilections, it is often a specific technique that 20<sup>th</sup>-century composers found attractive about music from the past. I have already mentioned the textural qualities of polyphony (in the case of Nono), organum and *vers mesurés à l'antique*. For many composers, the rhythmic complexities of the Ars subtilior-repertoire and of mensuration canons turned out to be of particular interest. Perhaps not surprisingly, especially in serial music and in post-war music, the principles of isorhythm seem to have caught many composers' attention. The Belgian composer Karel Goeyvaerts for example wrote several essays and letters about 14<sup>th</sup>- and 15<sup>th</sup>-century music and tried to link its techniques, its mathematical coherence and rigorous temporal dimensions to contemporary music.<sup>29</sup> One of those essays contained an analysis of Machaut's motet Nr. 6 *S'il estoit nuls que pleindre / S'amours tous amans joir / Et gaudebit cor vestrum*, which had been published in Apel's *Anthology*.<sup>30</sup> Pierre Boulez also mentioned Machaut as well as Vitry and Du Fay in relation to their use of rhythm, and La Monte Young compared the tendency to musical stasis in modern music with isorhythmic motets (and organa). The hoquetus-technique enjoyed a revival in a surprisingly great number of works by composers such

<sup>26</sup> On these works, see Thomas Kabisch, „Zwischen Gesualdo und Reihentechnik. Alte Musik im Kontext der Poetik des späten Stravinsky“, in: Schubert (ed.), *Alte Musik im 20. Jahrhundert* (see n. 1), 113–130.

<sup>27</sup> Joseph Straus, „Recompositions by Schoenberg, Stravinsky, and Webern“, *MQ* 72 (1986), 301–328.

<sup>28</sup> See Ernst Krenek, *Johannes Ockeghem*, London: Sheed & Ward, 1953 (Great Religious Composers), 12.

<sup>29</sup> See also Karel Goeyvaerts, „Die Kompositionstechnik im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert in ihrer Beziehung zur Gegenwart“, in: Mark Delaere (ed.), *Karel Goeyvaerts. Selbstlose Musik. Texte – Briefe – Gespräche*, Köln: Musiktexte, 2010 (Edition MusikTexte 12), 158–163; Wolfgang Gratzer, „Machaut, ein Zeitgenosse?“, in: idem and Hartmut Möller (eds), *Übersetzte Zeit. Das Mittelalter und die Musik der Gegenwart*, Hofheim: Wolke, 2001, 237–272.

<sup>30</sup> For a critical evaluation, see Hartmut Möller, „Seriellles Komponieren und Konzepte von ‚mittelalterlichen Konstruktivismus‘“, in: Schubert (ed.), *Alte Musik im 20. Jahrhundert* (see n. 1), 131–155.



as György Kurtag, Harrison Birtwistle and Louis Andriessen.<sup>31</sup> The seeming parallels and analogies between those chronologically distant repertoires notwithstanding, there are methodological and epistemological problems involved with such statements, especially when such analyses get the status of theoretical texts, i.e. when they become the basis for a construction of a history about, say, medieval constructivism in serial music.<sup>32</sup>

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Musicological work was one way for composers to get in touch with early music; performance practice is another. Performers of contemporary music frequently combined contemporary repertoire with early music. To give just one example: Richard Taruskin has shown that the Group for Contemporary Music at Columbia University often played music from earlier periods with „a particular relevance for our time“, thereby playing from famous editions, such as the above-mentioned *French Secular Music of the Late Fourteenth Century* or the series *Das Erbe deutscher Musik*.<sup>33</sup> Many composers also had connections with performers in the field of historically-informed practice, which sometimes inspired them to compose pieces for period instruments and for specific early music ensembles. Famous examples include Karel Goeyvaerts' *Pour que les fruits mûrissent cet été*, which was commissioned by the early music ensemble Florilegium Musicum de Paris in 1976, and Mauricio Kagel's *Musik für Renaissance-Instrumente* from 1966.<sup>34</sup> And this is a tradition that continues until today: think of the collaboration between the Hilliard Ensemble and Arvo Pärt, of Gavin Bryars' work for Fretwork, or of the collaboration between Fabrice Fitch (a musicologist and composer) with Leones. Even though

<sup>31</sup> Mark Delaere, „Cantus autem iste choleris et iuvenibus appetibilis est propter sui mobilitatem et velocitatem. Zur Hoquetus-Technik in der jüngsten Musik“, in: Herbert Schneider (ed.), *Mittelalter und Mittelalterrezeption. Festschrift für Wolf Frobenius*, Hildesheim: Olms 2005 (Musikwissenschaftliche Publikationen 24), 407–433; Mark Delaere, „Self-Portrait with Boulez and Machaut (and Ligeti is there as well). Harrison Birtwistle's *Hoquetus Petrus*“, in: Björn Heile (ed.), *The Modernist Legacy. Essays on New Music*, Farnham and Surrey: Ashgate, 2009, 191–204.

<sup>32</sup> See also Möller reflecting on Martin Zenck's study on the role of Machaut's motets for Goeyvaerts': „Problematisch wird es erst dann, wenn derartige ‚Analysen‘ zu theoretischen Texten aufgewertet und zum Fundament einer Geschichtskonstruktion über *Mittelalterlichen Konstruktivismus in der seriellen Musik* gemacht werden [...]. Was bleibt angesichts grundsätzlicher Schwierigkeiten mit der Analogie, angesichts der höchstens ‚eigenwillig‘ zu nennenden Analyseergebnisse von Machauts Messe aus der Sicht seriellen Denkens?“ (Möller, „Seriell komponieren“ [see n. 30], 153).

<sup>33</sup> Taruskin, „Alte Musik' or 'Early Music'?“ (see n. 19), 5.

<sup>34</sup> See Maarten Beirens, „Minimalist Techniques from a European Perspective. An Analysis of *Pour que les fruits mûrissent cet été* by Karel Goeyvaerts“, *RBM* 57 (2003), 215–229; Stefan Drees, „Alte Instrumente und aktuelles Komponieren. Ansätze zum Umgang mit einer Problemstellung“, *Dissonanz* 98 (2007), 14–17. Other examples include the work of the harpsichordist Antoinette Vischer, who inspired John Cage for his *HPSCHD* (1969) or the recorder player Michael Vetter, for whom Luciano Berio composed his *Gesti* (1966) and Karlheinz Stockhausen the work *Spiral* (1968).



historically-informed performance practice has a focus that is different from the practice of reworking – the former focusing on the composer's intention and the origin of the work, the latter on progress and actualisation – both clearly can mutually influence and cross-fertilize each other.

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When we talk about reworkings, what exactly are we talking about? Clearly, reworking is not mere citation. There are many ways of using existing music, and it is important to differentiate among them. Herein lays an important task for musicologists. One of the path-breaking projects in this respect is an article by Peter Burkholder on „The Uses of Existing Music“ that is closely connected with the „Musical Borrowing“-website hosted by Indiana University, which contains an extensive bibliography on the topic.<sup>35</sup> Burkholder has even argued to consider „musical borrowing as a field“. He encourages his readers to approach the uses of existing music as a field that crosses periods and traditions – very much in the way the Basel Reworkings-conference was conceived. As Burkholder writes, „knowledge of the ways existing music has been reworked in other times and by other composers can clarify the historical place of those we focus on, helping us recognize what is unusual or innovative in their approach to the uses of existing music and, just as important, what has long-established precedent“. In his article, he distinguishes between different kinds of reworking such as paraphrase, stylistic allusion, variation, arrangement, quodlibet, collage etc., thereby developing a typology which takes into account a variety of factors. He establishes a catalogue of questions, such as the relationship of the existing piece to the new work, what element or elements of the existing piece are incorporated into or alluded to, the way the borrowed material is altered in the new work, the function or meaning of the borrowed material within the new work etc. Burkholder's seminal article and the work that sprang from it are a model on which we can draw.<sup>36</sup>

Let me conclude by a famous quotation by Stravinsky, which picks up many of the topics we discussed during the conference: „Tradition is inherited understanding. It is not only transmitted from fathers to children, it follows the life processes, being born, growing, reaching maturity, declining and sometimes being reborn.“ In his *Poetics of Music*, he once more touches upon the topic:

<sup>35</sup> J. Peter Burkholder, „The Uses of Existing Music. Musical Borrowing as a Field“, *Notes* 50 (1994), 851–870 and <http://www.chmtl.indiana.edu/borrowing/index.html> (03.02.2016). Burkholder is against the use of the term intertextuality: „First, it is too broad, encompassing all the ways one piece of music is like another, including general similarities of aesthetic, style, and procedure. Second, it evades the questions of priority and derivation; we may say that two works are related intertextually without deciding whether one was based on the other or both were based on a common source“ (p. 862).

<sup>36</sup> See also the chapter on „Intertestualità e arte allusiva“ in Maria Caraci Vela, *La filologia musicale. Istituzioni, storia, strumenti critici*, Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 2009, three vols, II, 117–173.



A live dialectic demands that innovation and tradition develop together, in mutual aid. Tradition is entirely different from habit, even from an excellent habit, since habit is by definition an unconscious acquisition and tends to become mechanical, whereas tradition results from a conscious and considered acceptance. A real tradition is not the relic of a past that is irretrievably gone; it is a living force that animates and informs the present [...]. A tradition is carried forward in order to produce something new. Tradition thus assures the continuity of creation.<sup>37</sup>

And indeed, as Taruskin writes: „Almost every piece Stravinsky composed in America, beginning with *Orpheus* and the Mass, both completed in 1948, bears some resonance from early music – that is to say, from ‚pre-Bach‘ or pre-Baroque repertoires.“<sup>38</sup> In this respect, I was especially intrigued to see the title of Pablo Ortiz' work *Metamorphoses* that was performed in Basel at the occasion of the conference. I suspect it is not only intended as a reference to Vitry's use of a quotation from Ovid's *magnum opus* in his *Garrit Gallus – In nova fert*, but also to the very act of reworking itself, as it always involves an entity that is transformed into another being or form, but still in some way recognisable as such. Reworking can serve different purposes. It is not only a way to create a fruitful tension between the past and the present, to sharpen one's compositional language and to discover affinities between distant repertoires, but also to legitimise compositional decisions and to refine one's position in music history.

<sup>37</sup> Quoted from Mikhail Druskin, *Igor Stravinsky. His Personality, Works and Views*, transl. by Martin Cooper, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, 79.

<sup>38</sup> Taruskin, „Alte Musik‘ or ‚Early Music?‘“ (see n. 19), 10. At the same time, Taruskin stresses an important difference between Stravinsky and the second Viennese School when it comes to their reasons for turning to the musical past: „When Stravinsky turned to the past he looked for difference. He looked for ‚early music‘. When the Neue Wiener Schule turned to the past they looked for sameness“ (p. 16).



