

STUDIES IN SOCIAL SCIENCES, PHILOSOPHY  
AND HISTORY OF IDEAS 9

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# Music and Genocide



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EDITION

## Foreword

Henri Bergson, a philosopher and – like Schopenhauer or Nietzsche – very sensitive to music, wrote in his last book:

We feel, while we listen, as though we could not desire anything else but what the music suggests to us, and that that is just as we should naturally and necessarily act did we not refrain from action to listen. Let the music express joy or grief, pity or love, every moment we are what it expresses. Not only ourselves, but many others, nay, all the others, too. When music weeps, all humanity, all nature, weeps with it. In point of fact it does not introduce these feelings into us; it introduces us into them, as passers-by are forced into a street dance.<sup>1</sup>

Bergson believed in the power of music. He believed that music could enchant the listener to the degree that he is changed: more susceptible to emotions which, in turn, can transform him into a better person. One can see his perspective as idealistic and biased. After all, Bergson grew up in a musical home so he was from the very beginning of his life conditioned to such beliefs. Yet, the same has been experienced by countless people before and after him, not necessarily brought up to love music the way he was.

It is hard to argue that the belief in the special powers of music is one of the most widespread among people, especially in Western cultures. There is neither space nor need here to provide different explanations for this phenomenon – from physical and physiological to the spiritual. They all point in one direction – music is a human phenomenon capable of transgressing our mundane reality. It induces a specific state of mind, a state of heightened awareness. This is why Schopenhauer found in music a reflection of will in itself.<sup>2</sup> Music, just like all other art forms, is of an imitative quality.

Nonetheless the point of comparison between the music and the world, the respect in which the former acts as an imitation or repetition of the latter, is very deeply hidden. In every age, people have played music without being able to give an account of it: content

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- 1 H. Bergson, *Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, trans. A. Audra and C. Brereton, London 1935, p. 28. This edition is available at: <http://archive.org/details/twosourcesofmora033499mbp> (accessed: March 2014).
  - 2 A. Schopenhauer, *The World As Will and Representation*, vol. 1, no. 52, trans. J. Norman, A. Welchman and Ch. Janaway, Cambridge–New York 2010, p. 282–295.

with an immediate understanding of music, people did without an abstract conceptualization of this immediate understanding.<sup>3</sup>

It is this immediacy of musical experience that particularly strikes Schopenhauer, who himself felt it deeply.<sup>4</sup> In the immediacy he finds grounds for his conclusion. Because music reaches straight into the heart (our own hearts as well as “the heart of things”<sup>5</sup>), without any rational mediation, without any sort of discursive explanation, it expresses the true essence of the world which for Schopenhauer was will – the all-encompassing, fundamental drive of being. Music “is the copy of the will itself”, writes Schopenhauer.<sup>6</sup> In a sense, music reflects the true nature of being. It is the closest human endeavour to give one sense of direct belonging to the universe, a feeling of being totally and fully alive. This is why Schopenhauer can write, and the words echo in the *passus* that opened this foreword, that “this universality, exclusive as it is to music, together with the most exact precision gives music its high value as the panacea for all the suffering.”<sup>7</sup> If music does not portray concrete fragments of reality, if it is not merely representational but really goes as far as the essence of being, then in music there are no divisions. To be sure, Schopenhauer does not mean here that music is homogeneous because it is comprised of almost innumerable genres.<sup>8</sup> What is at stake is the experience of music as such which can take on many forms. All these forms are united by an underlying, universal force that goes beyond particular problems and conflicts. Therefore music can be viewed as “the panacea for all the suffering.”

Schopenhauer was a philosopher who, contrary to Bergson in most of his works, presented a rather pessimistic if not downright gloomy view of the world. Yet, they both agreed that music possessed great power and found consolation in it. It might seem questionable, even naive, from today’s perspective but it was not so in their days. The belief in the conciliatory nature of music in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was something that did not spark too many debates. One can even say that in the post-romantic period it was

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3 Ibidem, p. 284.

4 Schopenhauer was an amateur musician devoting considerable amount of time to playing on his flute tunes of his favourite composer – Gioachino Rossini.

5 Ibidem, p. 291.

6 Ibidem, p. 285.

7 Ibidem, p. 289.

8 One should nevertheless add that Schopenhauer had clear preferences when it came to distinguishing the styles, genres and composers that really go to the heart of things from the ones who only pretend to do so. For example, Rossini was a master of this task while Haydn sometimes failed to achieve the goal.

commonplace, at least among the educated elite. To shed some light on it we must remember that music does not exist in a void even though Schopenhauer liked to think that it would be present even if there were no reality at all. Music is a part of culture and culture is a way in which human thinking is organised. The organisation is never of a purely private character but always reflects the social character of our being. Therefore music is instrumental in creating a social self.<sup>9</sup> Our sentiments towards music are entangled in the web of relations that constitute our *Lebenswelt*, our most intimate ways of experiencing the world which are, at least partially, socially constructed. In this sense the consolation that music brings is a result of the emotional climate<sup>10</sup> of our society. One is consoled by melodies because one is surrounded by people for whom melodies are consolatory; one lives in a society that presents certain types of consolatory melodies.

The world of Schopenhauer was marked by the romantic cult of artistic genius. It was a world in which the irrational, mysterious and inexplicable were highly valued. In such a world a form of expression like music, which does not rely primarily on a discursive means of communication, was destined to be highly praised to some extent. The works of Schopenhauer are not the only proof. In fact when one reads the writings of German thinkers from the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, one is struck by the presence of music in their thinking. Schlegel, Hölderlin, Novalis, Tieck – they all turned their attention to it, the latter two even making it their “key philosophical axis”<sup>11</sup>. Romantic composers, in turn, were saturated with romantic philosophising, although they did not necessarily acknowledge their debt to Schlegel and others.<sup>12</sup> We can thus

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9 This is the point that Lawrence Kramer makes particularly clear in his analysis of nineteenth century music, see L. Kramer, *Music as Cultural Practice: 1800–1900*, Berkeley, CA 1993.

10 It can be useful to employ here a term *doxa*, which is often used by Pierre Bourdieu to designate a sense of obviousness, a point at which one stops asking questions and refrains to the so-called intuition. See: P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. R. Nice, Cambridge–New York 1977. This point is located differently in different societies. What is obvious and intuitive in Western society is not obvious for Eskimos. Therefore we are characterised by different sensitivity, different emotional structures than Eskimos. What we find beautiful and moving they might find simply inaccessible and therefore bizarre and vice versa. Music is, of course, no exception to this.

11 M.M. Hall, *Friedrich Schlegel's Romanticization of Music*, “Eighteenth Century Studies” 2009, vol. 42, no. 3, s. 413.

12 See for instance J. Daverio, *19th-century Music and the German Romantic Ideology*, New York 1993.

say that music was – and let us emphasise once more that this was among the cultural elite – commonly understood to be the transporter to the truth of being, a path to Elysium, as Schiller would probably have put it.

Such a position was a sign of an essentially optimistic world-view that characterised nineteenth-century societies in Western Europe. There was still hope present in them regardless of many signs of distress. Even the grim Schopenhauer still believed in a certain striving towards the positive goal of unmasking the truth and locating oneself in its centre. Art, specifically music, was to play the most important role in this program that reflected the general, though often disguised, belief in ultimate salvation inherited from the Enlightenment. The nineteenth century was in essence a period of progress and energy. It was a time of rapid industrialisation, which came at a price, of course, but that price was still perceived as a seed of a better future.<sup>13</sup> It was a time of conflict and social turmoil but this still seemed resolvable. Music reflected or rather co-created this atmosphere. It would be especially insightful to look at Wagner in this context but there is no space here to do that. What we would like to stress though is the fact that the emotional climate, and associated musical culture, of the times of Schopenhauer up to early Bergson was one of hope which resulted in a strong belief in the power of music. Our times are different, though.

Let us now go back to the quotation that opened our considerations. “When music weeps, Bergson writes, all humanity, all nature weeps with it.” But what about the opposite – what happens to music when all humanity, all nature weeps? This is the question that underlies this book. In contrast to the nineteenth century the next one was nothing but a time of despair. Among the many labels attached to it, one is of particular importance, not only for this volume but also for general opinion as such. The twentieth century can quite rightly be dubbed “the age of genocide.”<sup>14</sup> Although genocidal acts have been committed since ancient

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13 I’m referring here of course to Marx and his disciples.

14 See among others S. Totten and W.S. Parsons (eds.), *Century of Genocide. Critical Essays and Eyewitness Accounts*, New York 1997; S. Power, *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*, New York 2002; M.I. Midlarsky, *The Killing Trap. Genocide in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge–New York 2005; B.A. Valentino, *Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the 20th Century*, New York 2004; also highly debatable yet important study by J.H. Goldhagen, *Worse than War. Genocide, Eliminationism, and the Ongoing Assault on Humanity*, New York 2009 (the Polish translation of this book is entitled *The Age of Genocide*).

times<sup>15</sup> it is in the last century<sup>16</sup> that the world witnessed an unprecedented scale of mass killings. What's more, the process of elimination has been "refined", submitted to managerial processes. The Holocaust heralded a new stage of rational, almost industrial organisation of genocide.<sup>17</sup> Bureaucratic procedures were installed by the Nazis providing a model that haunts us till this day. As disturbing as it may sound, if there was any progress in the last century it was in genocidal efficiency.

Contemporary culture, at least to some extent, tries to reflect on the specificity of this condition. Literature, visual arts, theatre, film have all tried to live up to the challenge of operating in the world marked by genocide, not by omitting it but by acknowledging the horror and responsibility it brings. It results in works of art that shun optimism and a hopeful tone in favour of guiltily admitting to the impossibility of fully positive acts. The names of Adorno, Amery, Levi, Rothko, Kantor, Lanzmann or Wosiewicz come to mind. But what about music? All the listed art forms can refer to discursive means and therefore communicate quite clearly the intention of the artist. From those mentioned, only Rothko – by choice rather than by the nature of his medium – implicitly testifies to the trauma that Holocaust brings. All the others do so explicitly. In music<sup>18</sup> such clarity is not possible. Does this mean that it is incapable of attesting to the failure of humanity in the age of genocide? Are there musical artists that try to fulfil a similar role to Lanzmann or Adorno? This type of question needs to be addressed if we are to bring genocide studies one step closer to the full panorama of the experience in question.

This is precisely why one should go even further and consider the general relation between genocide and music, which means researching not only music as a *post factum* reaction to genocide but also the presence of music where it happened. At first glance, no two experiences could be further apart than genocide and music. The world of mass murder seems to be the opposite of the world of spirituality. When the machine of death is operating there is seemingly no space for the contemplation that music brings. Yet real, live culture usually goes beyond rational divisions. In the magma of history opposites meet; horror and

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15 See the extensive study by B. Kiernan, *Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur*, New Haven 2007.

16 The current century is by no means free from genocide as the case of Darfur demonstrates.

17 See Z. Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Cambridge–Madon, MA 1989.

18 I mean here instrumental music, not lyrics or program notes explaining author's intentions.

exultation can go hand in hand. It is now almost commonly known that art is not absent from the sites of mass killings. Both victims and prosecutors engage in artistic activities in prisons and camps, as well as other places where genocides take place. Poems are written and paintings painted. The same applies to music and this book provides many examples.

The authors who contribute to *Music and Genocide* represent different disciplines. There are musicologists, philosophers, psychologists and cultural scholars among them. Their perspectives are diverse; they look at the connection proposed in the title from different angles. Yet there is one strong opinion that they share – if we are to understand and thus prevent genocide we need to embrace it as a total experience which requires multidimensional research. We cannot limit ourselves to historical, political and sociological inquiries. We must also try to grasp more intimate aspects of the tragedies that we seek to comprehend. The link between art and mass killings might be less visible than between genocide and politics but it exists and therefore it is our responsibility to study it. This is why the presented anthology undertakes for music a task that has been fulfilled in relation to other art forms.<sup>19</sup>

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19 For analysis of the relation between genocide and literature one can see: J. Gangi, *Genocide in Contemporary Children's and Young Adult Literature: Cambodia to Darfur*, New York–London 2013; R. Perroomian, *The Armenian Genocide in Literature: Perceptions of Those Who Lived Through the Years of Calamity*, Yerevan 2013; S. DeKoven Ezrahi, *By Words Alone: The Holocaust in Literature*, Chicago 1982; R. Franklin, *A Thousand Darkness: Lies and Truth in Holocaust Fiction*, Oxford–New York 2011; A. Hungerford, *The Holocaust of Texts: Genocide, Literature, and Personification*, Chicago 2003. If one is interested in the link between genocide and visual arts one can start with A. Bangert, R.S.C. Gordon, L. Saxton (eds.), *Holocaust Intersections: Genocide and Visual Culture at the New Millennium*, Oxford 2013; Z. Amishai-Maisels, *Depiction and Interpretation: The Influence of the Holocaust on the visual arts*, Terrywon, NY 1993; B. Zelizer (ed.), *Visual Culture and the Holocaust*, London 2001; J.E. Young, *At Memory's Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture*, New Haven–London 2002; G. Sujo, *Legacies of Silence: The Visual Arts and Holocaust Memory*, London 2003; Among works on genocide and cinema it is worth mentioning K.M. Wilson, T.F. Crowder-Taraborrelli (eds.), *Film and Genocide*, WI– London 2012; J.J. Michalczyk, R.G. Helmick SJ (eds.), *Through a Lens Darkly: Films of Genocide, Ethnic Cleansing, and Atrocities*, New York–Oxford 2013; J.-M. Frodon (ed.), *Cinema and the Shoah: An Art Confronts the Tragedy of the Twentieth Century*, Albany, NY 2010; A. Kerner, *Film and the Holocaust: New Perspectives on Dramas, Documentaries, and Experimental Films*, New York–London 2011. For an analysis that takes into account more than one art form see B. Zelizer (ed.), op. cit;

Was/is music present at the site of genocide and how? Can we talk about the soundscape of the inexplicable? What is the music of genocide, i. e. how does it shape the musical narrative, what picture does it paint on the screen of an audience's emotion? How does music reflect on genocide? Can the experience of ultimate terror be expressed in music? Can music bring a cathartic relief after the fear has passed leaving a sense of malaise for those who "accidentally escaped"? How do we perceive music after genocide? What is music and what is silence in a world marked by mass killings? Is post-genocidal silence really possible or appropriate? These and many other questions are addressed by the collection of the papers included in this volume.

In trying to find answers to these questions, the authors aim to shed new light on the discussed atrocities. It is not for the sake of pure curiosity that the relation between music and genocide is discussed. The goal is to shed more light on, and perhaps to some extent resolve the most profound dilemma that we face in the age of genocide, a dilemma so emphatically expressed by Theodor W. Adorno when he asked "whether it is even permissible for someone who accidentally escaped and by all rights ought to have been murdered, to go on living after Auschwitz."<sup>20</sup> In a sense we are all survivors who have accidentally escaped genocide. It might have happened to us. It may still happen. There is, therefore, no more pressing question than this.

The book is structured like a musical composition. It is divided into two parts – with an overture, interlude, and coda – in order to make the structure clear and rhythmical. The volume opens with an extensive essay by M. J. Grant, Mareike Jacobs, Rebecca Möllemann, Simone Christine Münz, and Cornelia Nuxoll investigating the roles of music in the genocidal machine of the Third Reich using the theoretical model of eight stages of genocide developed by American scholar Gregory Stanton. The model was designed to provide a yardstick for authorities with which they could judge whether certain acts might snowball towards a tragic end. Grant and others use it to show how music was present at different stages of the Nazi plan to unify the German nation by purifying it of undesired elements. The reader follows the development of genocidal policies while being shown that music played its part, or in fact many parts. The text serves as an invaluable introduction because it very clearly explains the basic notions used

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M. Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust*, New York–Chichester 2012.

20 T.W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. Dennis Redmond, "Part III. Models. Meditations on Metaphysics", available at: <http://members.efn.org/~dredmond/nd5.PDF> (accessed: March 2014), paragraph 1.



in genocide studies relying on an extensive research of the literature in this field which is listed in a very useful bibliography.

Part one of the book is titled *Testimonies*. It deals with the many ways in which music was present at the site of a particular genocide, as well as with responses that genocide has sparked in folk and popular music. Arman Goharinasab and Azadeh Latifkar reflect on how the 1881 genocidal massacre of Turkmen people by the troops of Imperial Russia in the village of Geok Tepe influenced the musical culture of the Muslim nomadic tribes in central Asia. We learn of this nation whose collective memory, in the absence of written history, relies first and foremost on songs and melodies. For Turkmen, it is in music that the most important events – and the 1881 massacre is such an event – are remembered and passed from generation to generation to build a collective identity. Melancholic instrumental and vocal *muğams* performed by traditional musicians called *bagşys* have served as a meeting ground for the Turkmen community. It is through them that their social bond has been built as well as their collective grief expressed. Therefore, music can be perceived as a crucial narration for the survival of Turkmen tradition and people.

Katarzyna Naliwajek-Mazurek changes the perspective and investigates the different roles played by music directly at the site of particular genocide, in this case in Nazi-occupied Poland. The reader is introduced to how both perpetrators and victims engaged in musical activities in prisons, ghettos, and concentration or death camps. The picture painted is a very disquieting one, also due to the personal and alarming style of writing. Naliwajek-Mazurek conducted numerous interviews with genocide survivors. In the process she grew close to them, which results in an attempt to be more than a scholar – to be a witness. Through such an approach, we are transported into the heart of darkness where we observe a cruel paradox. Playing music can be a survival method. The victims sing and play in order to fight dehumanisation. Yet, at the same time, music can be used as a means of control and humiliation. The same musical composition can bring hope or torture depending on who is using it and for what purpose. We cannot therefore simply say that music as such is a panacea for all the suffering. It can as well be the suffering that one is doomed to.

Joanna Pośluszna and Łukasz Pośluszný explore this mechanism further by focusing on the soundscape of one of the concentration camps in Poland – Majdanek in Lublin. Their contribution is entirely based on the testimonies of people who were present on site, which makes it especially disturbing and telling. The documentary style of the essay immerses the reader in the soundscape of mass killing. The reader comes to realise that certain sounds accompanied specific events; they had real consequences. Prisoners learned to recognise the sounds

as an exclusive code that consisted of signals and information but in fact the prisoner also co-created the code. Therefore, the soundscape of the site of genocide appears to be a complex and ambiguous structure. The authors believe that by reconstructing and analysing the soundscape of the camps we come closer to understanding or rather feeling and emotionally responding to the damage inflicted on the victims. The article proves that it is indeed a very promising direction for genocide studies.

Part one concludes with a contribution from Kirsten Dyck who presents the results of her research into White Power Music. This still too rarely discussed subject demands investigation as recent events related to it, like the shooting at the Sikh temple in Wisconsin, show. We continue to observe acts of violence committed by people devoted to this seemingly marginal musical culture. Dyck tries to put these actions into context by showing how saturated with murderous rhetoric and sentiments White Power Music is. She presents a brief but very telling history of the phenomenon and discusses the message it tries to convey. Even though the White Power movement seems to be only an obscure and late reminiscence of the horrors of the past, a marginal enterprise based on a set of beliefs that are outrageous but impossible to realise in a global, multi-cultural society, its members become more and more determined to emphasise their presence and therefore find new supporters. Music serves as a perfect vehicle in this quest. It continues to spread racist and genocidal propaganda making the threat of the killing happening again more real than we are prepared to admit.

In the interlude Leszek Sosnowski ponders on the problem that is essential for the whole volume, but specifically for the second part which his text precedes, namely: “can such an experience as genocide be expressed artistically?” In order to answer this question the author juxtaposes two philosophical terms, which seem to be very useful in analysing the relation of any art to genocide – the Husserlian notion of *Lebenswelt* and the opposing term *Todeswelt* coined by American Jewish philosopher Edith Wyschogrod and developed by Polish philosopher Jan Woleński. Sosnowski argues that the world of genocide should be perceived in terms of *Todeswelt* as a “code of death without an alphabet of life”. What does it mean? Among others, it signals the need to develop an appropriate kind of language for dealing with genocide, one that introduces careful speech fully aware of its inadequacy yet striving not to let the experience pass into nothingness. The authors in the second part of the book entitled *Tributes* reflect on the same problem in relation to music.

Ralph Buchenhorst considers Arnold Schönberg’s *A Survivor from Warsaw* and the reaction it provoked in Adorno, because their debate focuses on the wider issue of the (im)possibility of representing genocide in arts. Schönberg’s

cantata is a fictional representation of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and portrays a group of Jewish people resisting the Nazi captors by singing *Shema Yisroel*, the Jewish profession of faith. The story is told by a survivor whom Schönberg made the narrator of his composition. Yet the goal is not purely documentary because the composer used the cantata as a means of his personal artistic expression. *Survivor* was not only meant to be a commemoration. It was also a progressive statement in the musical debates of the day. This double character of the piece can be puzzling if not contradictory. On one hand we have collective sentiments, on the other highly modernist individualism. Buchenhorst quotes Schönberg himself who said: "We should never forget this, even if such things have not been done in the manner which I describe in the *Survivor*. This does not matter. The main thing is that I saw it in my imagination." How can one reconcile the two: collective history and personal imagination? Schönberg seemed to believe that artistic genius could find a way. Adorno was far more sceptical, condemning the cantata as conciliatory, what Buchenhorst reconstructs. Yet, Schönberg and Adorno agreed that whenever one tries to address the issue of Holocaust in art one better be fully aware of one's responsibility. It means being equally uncompromising about the content and the form. There are no easy solutions when it comes to representing Shoah, and genocide in general, in the arts. This is why Buchenhorst argues for the alliance of music and philosophy concluding his essay with an important statement: "Neither music nor dialectical thinking on their own could possibly grasp the horror of the extermination camps, but together both might be able to give us an idea of a universally valid solidarity against it ever being repeated."

The challenge Adorno and Schönberg discussed is similar to that which Hanns Eisler, once a student of Schönberg, encountered when asked by Alain Resnais to compose music for his seminal Auschwitz documentary *Nuit et brouillard*. In his article, Matt Lawson gives a careful insight into the problems Eisler's score raises. His research is particularly interesting because it fills the gap in film musicology which has not so far investigated Holocaust films. Starting with *Nuit et brouillard* seems to be a logical first step also because of the composer's person. Eisler was well-known for his leftist sympathies. Before the war he wrote revolutionary songs collaborating with Bertolt Brecht. After the war, he co-authored the book *Composing for Films* with Adorno to which Lawson refers on numerous occasions. In this book Eisler very strongly stood for a non-literal approach to film music. He felt that music should never be anecdotal but always progressive and self-conscious. One can thus say that he was both socially sensitive and demanding when it came to the form of musical expression. But how does it translate to his work on *Night and Fog*? Lawson argues that the translation is not as smooth

as one might expect. However hard Eisler tries to be sensitive to the subject he cannot escape the issue of appropriateness of his efforts. The subject matter does not let him get away with easy solutions. Literal and non-literal approaches alike can be subject to substantial critique as in Lawson's. It does not necessarily prove that Eisler was not up to the task but rather that the task is not possible to fulfil.

Joanna Posłuszna in her contribution takes a closer look at the debates surrounding Krzysztof Penderecki's efforts to address the tragedies of the twentieth century in his compositions. In many ways these debates are similar to the one that Schönberg provoked, especially when one takes a closer look at *Death Brigade* from 1963 which was based on a diary of Leon Weliczker, a Jewish prisoner of death camp near Lviv who was forced to work in a task force that was to cover the traces of mass killings by German troops. When the composition premiered, Penderecki was heavily criticised for aesthetising the tragedy. The critique was so heavy that Penderecki decided to withdraw the composition from his repertoire. Posłuszna very carefully reconstructs these debates showing their universal dimension. Although later works discussed in the article – *Dies Irae* and *Kadis* – were not condemned so totally, the doubts were not completely removed. At present, the critics might not see Penderecki's work as improper aestheticisation. Posłuszna demonstrates that his subtle strategies go beyond naturalism in search of the form that is appropriate – uncompromising and refined at the same time. Yet the question remains: does the artist have a right to use actual suffering as a material for creative manipulation? What kind of music can still be composed after genocide? And how?

The main body of the volume concludes with my contribution that serves as a coda. I shall undertake the challenge of entering into a dialogue with Adorno. My main concern is to understand his famous dictum that after Auschwitz all poetry or, indeed, all art is barbaric. I try to shed some light on that dictum, presenting it not as a call to silence but as a call to self-consciousness. My point is that genocide operates as a machine for the production of silence as I try to demonstrate by taking a look at the recollections of the survivors of the Rwandan genocide published by Jean Hatzfeld and at the still virtually unknown testimony of Rachela Olewski who played in the Auschwitz Women Orchestra under Alma Rosé and survived the genocide. What particularly strikes a reader in these testimonies is the dialectics of the oppressive sounds and even more oppressing silence remembered by the victims. In this context, silence following the genocide can be perceived as its continuation, a victory of the perpetrators. Music, thus, must not be silenced but the question as to how it is to be performed and composed remains. I believe that the key to the answer lies in our attention to memory. We must always remember that music as it was before the genocide is

not possible and carry this impossibility with us whenever we sit down to play, sing or write new tunes.

In the afterword, Lawrence Kramer approaches the theme of this volume from yet another perspective – that of active composer who happens to be a musicologist and philosopher at the same time. He offers not only his essay as the afterword but also his music introducing *A Short History (of the 20th Century)*, a piece that he wrote for solo voice and percussion. While discussing it, Kramer enters into dialogue with Derrida and Celan, who were both deeply concerned with the impossibility of proper testimony to the horrors of genocide. Kramer shares their concern yet, just like them, tries not to submit to the oppressing silence. To that end he investigates – in the text but most of all in his composition – the relation between the pliancy of music and the rigidity of names. The short history of which the title speaks is a history of the century's genocide conveyed through the naming of its sites. The names are the lyrics of the piece. In musicalising the names, Kramer looks for a kind of gesture that could possibly do both – commemorate the victims and steer clear of false promise of consolation. This is also the gesture for which the volume as a whole strives.

It must be stressed that the presented volume is far from being exhaustive or adequately diverse in discussing the subject. Many more peoples have been marked by the tragedy of genocide than are mentioned here. There are unfortunately many more stories still to be told. If the book was to be exhaustive, it should be really global in scale. Yet such a task seems to be impossible to carry out in a single collection. Therefore what the authors strive to do is to broaden an important field of investigation, to point in certain methodological directions hoping with humility that others will follow. The main focus is on Holocaust, and this raises the problem of singularity and provokes an important question: why not call this book *Holocaust and Music*. It can only be answered by a close reading of the volume as a whole. It is true that most texts deal with *Shoah*. It is also true that Holocaust cannot be compared to any other tragedy. But so cannot be other genocides. Each one is singular and in this singularity they all meet. In every victim of inhuman killing humanity dies, so whenever we try to commemorate a victim, we commemorate them all, in a sense. A volume like this will never be adequate. It is doomed to fail but precisely as such it is vital.

The belief in the power of music held by Schopenhauer and Bergson has been weakened if not extinguished in the age of genocide. We are much more suspicious of its role in the society because we as civilisation saw music being used to torture and oppress people at innumerable sites of genocide. Music is no longer innocent if it ever was. Yet, the burden of blame that it carries

should not simply be dumped by surrendering to silence. Even though the latter can be overwhelming, even though it might be perceived as the only appropriate reaction, human voices must not be subdued. This anthology presents various ways to resist. One can only hope that in the future more research will be made in this subject, so that the music of memory will keep on playing into eternity.

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