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Gesamtdarstellung gesprengt. Das Buch ist überaus gut lesbar und wird auch daher hoffentlich breit rezipiert werden.

Bremen

Jacob Nuhn

Music and Change in the Eastern Baltics before and after 1989. Hrsg. von Rūta Stanevičiūtė und Małgorzata Janicka-Słysz. (Studies in the History and Sociology of Music.) Academic Studies Press. Boston 2022. VI, 355 S. ISBN 978-1-64469-894-5. (\$ 149,—)

At the end of 2022, Academic Studies Press started a new book series on the sociology and history of music. The first book, *Music and Change*, is an edited volume of twelve chapters focusing on high-brow music at the end of the Cold War and in the early post-communist period in the Eastern Baltics.

The volume brings various research on music (along with different methodologies, styles of writing, and artists in focus) all together under a common idea of cultural dissent and intellectual resistance. It gives us a glimpse of how, under the communist regime, artists and musicians managed to find a space—intellectual and organizational—for authentic creativity and to avoid direct engagement with the ideological forms of the arts. The contributors acknowledge that cultural dissent is a vague concept and, as a social phenomenon, was unique to each country, but at the same time they are eager to show that there were “moments of rhythmic synchronization between the liberation processes in the region’s musical cultures as a whole” (p. 2).

The Eastern Baltics as a geographical reference in the title is a bit misleading. The core of the book is a collection of studies (eight chapters written by eight different scholars) on Polish and Lithuanian academic music of the period, encompassing the networks of musical societies, composers, and art festivals in Lithuania and Poland. Picking different events, happenings, or persons as the subjects of their narratives, the contributors put a lot of effort into illustrating the social milieu associated with emerging musical concepts. Ideas and people are presented as mobile, traveling across national borders, transcending the boundaries of the Eastern Bloc and the West, or moving from the symbolic and geographical centers to peripheries and margins. Therefore, the field of academic music in communist Poland and Soviet Lithuania is presented as being more dynamic and interconnected in terms of international networking rather than separate and closed systems of music production under the strict surveillance of national ideological institutions.

Explorations of the academic music field in Lithuania and Poland are supplemented with two chapters about two jazz bands: the Ganelin Trio (Lithuania) (Peter J. Schmelz) and Miłość (Poland) (Andrzej Mądro). The detailed story of the Ganelin Trio going to the USA is the most intriguing one. It gives clues to the riddles of how experimental Soviet bands managed their tours in the territory of the ideological enemy and vice versa.

Another two well-crafted case studies in the collection stand in stark contrast to the book’s general concept in their choice of subject. In one study, Kevin C. Karnes explores the origins of Latvian disco culture and the new wave in the mid-1970s and early 1980s. The second one is written by Olga Manulkina about the development of the New Russian Music Criticism and the composer Leonid Desyatnikov, who became a very popular figure after the fall of the USSR and is portrayed as poorly fitting any musical genre classification.

The book contains a lot of interesting empirical material—original interviews with musicians and artists, newspaper articles and reviews, event programs and photos from personal collections, and sheet music, among other things—that is rarely available to international researchers (though hardcore historians would possibly wish for more “hard data” fished out from the archives of musical academies, concert halls, the Communist Party, or the KGB.) The fragments and details are also integrated into intriguing narratives; the engaging texts provide thorough reconstructions of local events and happenings. However,

a better presentation of the overall social and cultural context would allow us to understand the connections between political, economic, and academic fields as well as the processes structuring positions and possibilities for musical and artistic experiments in communist Poland or Soviet Lithuania. Perhaps, the authors considered the systemic overview and interpretation of the context as unnecessary tasks. In any case, as a result, the book leaves an impression of a kaleidoscopic image with fascinating empirical fragments. This is not a very good strategy for addressing an international audience that may be less familiar with the region or the historical period. If the book's intention is to reveal the impact of the creative impulse on social and political change, a reader would benefit from knowing how the system that constrained the artistic processes functioned and why the work of composers in positions of symbolic power in the 1970s and 1980s should be interpreted as dissent rather than ideologically collaborative or just routine practice. It looks like the narratives of the book are trapped by the epistemological fallacy of late modernity and reproduce a heroic discourse emphasizing the agency of the artist and overlooking the structural conditions of social action.

On the other hand, the diversity of methodological approaches is focused on the exploration of particularities and small fragments of the field of music. The variety of methodologies is impressive. They span from post-structuralist hauntology, generational analysis, and network analysis to case studies, or event reconstruction, as well as traditional music criticism, media analysis, and biographical accounts. However, a book chapter is too small to develop a methodologically consistent narrative and connect empirical details with analytical concepts into a coherent interpretive framework.

The contributors are aware of the difficulties of the "resistance" narrative (pp. 1–2), but the chapter titles show that the book is about heroes. Throughout the book, the most frequently repeated words and phrases are names: Krzysztof Droba, Ganelin Trio, Krzysztof Penderecki, Gintaras Sodeika, Mieczysław Tomaszewski, Bronius Kutavičius, Vytautas Landsbergis, and Eugeniusz Knapik. These are well-established Lithuanian and Polish musicians who had symbolic recognition early, before the fall of communism, and did not lose their symbolic power following the political and ideological change. Such a choice of heroes or agents of change is unusual in contemporary sociological discourse, which mainly digs for overlooked, marginal, or lesser-known cases or scrutinizes established symbolic hierarchies. It looks like *Music and Change* takes the opposite approach. Suggested interpretations and narratives about the past reproduce and make stronger already established hierarchies within the field of academic music in Poland and Lithuania. This approach should not surprise a reader since the contributors are mainly music theorists and critics who are also the subjects of their own professional discourse. Practices of music criticism are always interrelated with the production of symbolic value for cultural commodities, and narratives primarily maintain rather than challenge aesthetic hierarchies within the field of music production and consumption. In contrast to pop music, where rebellion and social critique are sung or yelled out explicitly in words, only a text and interpretation produced by a music critic or theorist can assign the social meaning of "dissent" to the abstract sound of academic music. *Music and Change* is a good example of discursive value production and could be an interesting case by itself as a subject of research for a more reflexive sociological study of music.

A reader should be reminded that this book is about music and thus, to gain a deeper understanding, they should also seek out and listen to the music it discusses as a soundtrack to the narrative. The sound is merely a sound, but interpretation makes it a social phenomenon and portrays it as transformative, dissenting, and historical. Music is an individual sensory experience, but the attached words make it a topic for a scholarly discussion.

Klaipėda

Liutauras Kraniauskas