

Politics and the Art of Cultural Control: Aspects of 20th Century Art Movements

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Art functions as a cultural metaphor, mirroring a culture's ideas and values. Throughout the twentieth century all cultures and societies have had to adapt with drastic changes: technology, colonization, exploitation, revolution, among other factors, have all contributed to affect changes in how humans live and interact with one another individually, as well as collectively. Ultimately, these changes are revealed as they permeate works of art at all levels. The dramatic changes that occurred at the beginning of the twentieth century have had extraordinary ramifications in shaping cultural art values with which we continue to struggle. The following essay examines early twentieth century developments of the Dada, Futurist and Fascist movements to their subsequent impact upon the culture - specifically the musicians - of Europe and America. The ways in which music has been used as propaganda will receive particular attention, as will the influence of technology and the "isms" upon early electroacoustic music development of the 1940's and 1950's. Finally, a parallel will be drawn between efforts to control the arts in European Fascist countries and similar events occurring in contemporary America.

Dada

Dada is a term used to describe the activities and ideas of a group of artists and poets who gathered in Zurich, Switzerland, during World War I. The group included but was not restricted to artist Hans Arp, Marcel Janco, poet Richard Huelsenbeck, Tristan Tzara, who coined the term 'Dada', and theater director and filmmaker Hugo Ball, who opened the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich in 1916. The work of certain New York artists occurring during this time including that of Frenchman Marcel Duchamp and Max Ernst are also associated with Dada.¹ The movement grew out of a sense of disillusionment and despair among artists stemming from meaningless war slogans and the resulting slaughter, which betrayed a perceived inefficiency of cultural values:

"... If nothing makes sense but murdering and cutting people to pieces, then art, and poetry, and philosophy doesn't make sense either."²

The Dadaists viewed the world objectively and were able to create new meanings and context from the opposite sets of values that occur in the natural world. The Dadaists' attack upon arts and culture was an act of ground clearing, so that once cultural prejudices were eliminated, people could be excluded from the slaughter of war, and attain divine inspiration. By transcending cultural boundaries, the Dadaists were attempting to attain the infinite in art.

The Dadaist aesthetic involved a variety of techniques in order to create and perceive new relationships, including the concept of simultaneity utilizing the juxtaposition of similar but unrelated objects or occurrences, as well as the use of extreme contradictions or positions of suddenness resulting in unpredictable turns of events. The Dadaists used "found objects" of little or no use detached of their subjective meanings and context as objective formal elements in order to create new relationships in their work.³

¹ David Ernst, *The Evolution of Electronic Music* (New York: Schirmer, 1977), xxix.

² Stefan Wolpe, in Austin Clarkson, "Lecture on Dada by Stefan Wolpe," *Musical Quarterly* 72, (1986): 202-15.

³ *Ibid.*

Although the aesthetic involved no authentic musical counterpart during the movement's inception, several important ideas were later transferred to music during the 1950's. Many of the ideas and concepts of the music of John Cage can be traced in part to Dada,⁴ although other composers have been similarly influenced. Tzara's idea of simultaneity, which he used in poetry and in theater, have been used in Cage's "Musicircus" compositions, as well as his works involving tape. The idea of simultaneity invokes the concept of layers, which has been used in tape compositions, whereby simultaneous layers of sound events are layered and combined through mixing or other types of signal processing equipment, as demonstrated in the sound-mass compositions of Ligetti, Stockhausen, and others. Tzara's "chance" poems have also been influential in Cage's use of chance techniques and indeterminacy in such tape collage compositions as "Fontana Mix" and "Williams Mix". The works of Stockhausen, Berio and Berberian, Babbitt, Schaeffer, Henry and Cage involving phonemes in the 1950's and 1960's have antecedents in Ball's language experiments, occurring as early as 1916.⁵ The Dadaists' work with "found objects" has direct associations in the objective organization of sounds in the Musique Concrete compositions of Schaeffer. Cage's work in such areas as music theater, obscuring the boundaries between life and art, also have Dada antecedents.

Futurism

Futurism is a term used to describe a socio-political movement of the early 1900's primarily rooted in Italy, whose proponents rebelled against institutions they regarded as being outworn, namely, the monarchy, the church, and socialism; these institutions were blamed by the Futurists for the resulting state of cultural stagnation in early twentieth-century Italy. Although Futurism began as a literary movement, the idea spread into art, music and ultimately into politics. The charismatic Italian poet Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1876-1944) is credited as being the leader and founder of the Futurist movement, whose nationalistic vision of the future was described in his two 1901 manifestos: "The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism", and "Manifesto of Futurist Poetry".⁶ Marinetti's first credo was published 12 February 1909 in the Parisian newspaper *Figaro*.⁷ Marinetti soon published similar manifestos for painting (1912), sculpture (1912) and music (1910-12).⁸

The manner in which the ideas of the Futurists eventually transformed Italy is both fascinating and frightening. Marinetti's strategy involved drawing the attention of the public against what he considered to be obsolete traditional Italian values towards the modern urban environment resulting from new technological advances in transportation, communication and science, influences that profoundly impacted early twentieth-century Western society. While Marinetti's rhetorical outbursts at first appeared to be absurd fantasies of a lunatic, his attacks upon the church, government, the monarchy and Roman culture in general were deliberately calculated to obtain results in an expedient manner. Marinetti, the advocate of speed, was able to cast Italian culture as being contaminated by outmoded traditionalism and conservatism, with himself as its savior. By attacking tradition, Marinetti and his followers sought national revitalization.⁹

From its inception, Futurism was a nationalistic movement, which proposed violence, militarism, aggression, patriotism as well as anarchy and celebrated war as being the epitome of progress. The ground-clearing process involved the removal of

⁴ Cage's musical philosophy involves a curious blend of Dada and Eastern philosophy, including Zen, in order to compose music that is not "goal-oriented".

⁵ Ernst, xxix-xxx.

⁶ Glenn Watkins, *Soundings: Music in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1988), 235.

⁷ Nicolas Slonimsky (ed.), *Music Since 1900*, 4th ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), 139.

⁸ Watkins, 235.

⁹ Rosa Trillo Clough, *Futurism* (New York: Greenwood, 1969) 11-37.

those institutions that existed in part to preserve culture: universities, museums, and libraries. The Futurists were also violently opposed to pacifism as well as socialism. Futurist nationalism, once set into motion, ultimately swayed popular opinion in support of the types of political agitation resulting in the colonial aggression against Ethiopia and the subsequent war against Germany in World War I.¹⁰

Marinetti envisioned a society based upon machines, with velocity as an absolute power that could transcend the barriers of time and space. Machinery, technology, and engines were to be the new tools of a society that would construct automobiles, highways, mass transportation and create an industrialized economy. Marinetti essentially wanted to transform Italy into a modern society that would not depend upon the heavily industrialized society of northern Europe, England and America, leading the way to the future. The Futurists saw in technology the means by which they could aggressively establish much needed social and economic change for Italy.¹¹

Marinetti's "Down with the Tango and Parsifal," published 11 January 1914 in Milan, is an attack upon the fads of popular culture as well as an appeal to those who desire to be "chic" to support Futurist ideals. Targeted are the middle class bourgeois, who are advised to abandon their love of Wagner and all trappings of the Romantic.¹² Although Marinetti obliquely refers to music in his manifestos, clarification of the Futurist position concerning music fell to Francesco Balilla Pratella and Luigi Russolo, who gave numerous concerts, invented new instruments and published musical manifestos, under the tight editorial manipulation of Marinetti.

The composer Pratella (1880-1955) authored the principle musical manifestos, including "Manifesto of the Futurist Musicians" (11 October 1910, Milan), "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Music," (11 March 1911, Milan) and "The Destruction of Quadrature" (18 July 1912). The classically trained Pratella had already composed two operas by the time of his 20 August 1910 meeting with Marinetti. Marinetti was attracted to Pratella because of his opera "La Sina d'Vargoun" at a point in Pratella's career when the composer was seeking new ideas and directions; thus Pratella's collaboration with the Futurists was mutually beneficial. One month later, on 28 September 1910, Marinetti had received Pratella's "Manifestos of the Futurist Musicians" and had them edited and circulated by 8 October.¹³ Pratella:

"In the field of music I tend to recreate the world humanly and never to go against nature. I must say that some affirmations of a polemic and others of a theoretical nature, which one can read in my Manifesto, refer to a rapport between music and machine. These were neither written nor even thought by me and often are in contrast to the rest of the ideas. These inventions were added by Marinetti arbitrarily and at the last moment. I was then astonished to read them over my signature..."¹⁴

Other works by Pratella written along a vein similar to that of the art and painting manifestos were "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Music," and "The Destruction of Quadrature": the three works constitute the foundation of the Futurist position regarding music. "Manifesto of the Futurist Musicians" criticizes efforts by contemporary Italian composers for their inclination to base new works upon musical forms of the past, rather than to pursue modern forms and concepts. The "Technical Manifesto" of 1911 attacks

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Filippo T. Marinetti, "Down with the Tango and Parsifal" trans. Nicolas Slonimsky, in *Music Since 1900*, 1302-3.

¹³ Rodney J. Payton, "The Music of Futurism: Concerts and Polemics," *The Musical Quarterly* 62, no. 1, (January 1976): 31-2.

¹⁴ F. Balilla Pratella, *Autobiografia* (Milan, 1971) 103. [See Payton, p. 30, for additional cross-reference to Pratella's autobiography.]

academic conservatives for inhibiting experimental trends¹⁵ and proposes the use of microtones and atonality, as well as rhythmic irregularities.¹⁶ "The Destruction of Quadrature" offers an alternative from regular rhythmic pulse orientation by introducing a system of notation. Once the theoretical premise had been established, the movement required compositional confirmation, which Pratella demonstrated in *Inno alla vita, Musica futurista per orchestra*.¹⁷ The usual controversy and public displays of approval accompanied the first performances:

"Some threw upon the orchestra and also on me, the conductor, an uninterrupted shower of garbage, of fruit, of chestnut cakes; others shouted themselves hoarse crying every kind of thing: some protested not being able to hear; some became exalted, others infuriated, some laughed and enjoyed themselves, others quarreled and started rows, with frequent blows between friends and enemies.

I ... then went up to the stage where I found Marinetti, who was pronouncing in a loud voice some strange formula of exorcism to which he attributed a great mystical power like a magical mascot, and woe to anyone who contradicted him."¹⁸

Despite the furor, Pratella's composition was considered by some as too conservative to adequately reflect the aesthetic.¹⁹

The foremost and most well-known of the musical Futurist manifestos concerning music was *The Art of Noises* (11 March, 1913), written by the painter Luigi Russolo (1885-1947). A true visionary, Russolo was willing to act upon the ideas promoted by the Futurists. Russolo joined the Futurist movement along with Boccioni, Carrà, Balla, Romani and Bonzagni with whom he signed *the Manifesto della pittura futurista* in 1910. After publishing *The Art of Noises*, Russolo collaborated with Pratella in the musical arts.²⁰ Russolo's views were based upon the evolution of musical art from music that "achieved purity and sweetness of sound" to an art-form that included "those combinations of sounds that fall most dissonantly, strangely, and harshly upon the ear."²¹ Russolo advocated a break from this "narrow circle of pure musical sounds" and proposed using "noise-sounds," which he classified into six categories for use in a "futurist orchestra":²²

1	2	3	4	5	6
Booms Thunderclaps Explosions Crashes Splashes Roars	Whistles Hisses Snorts	Whispers Murmurs Mutterings Bustling noises Gurgles	Screams Screeches Rustlings Buzzes Cracklings Sounds obtained by friction	Noises obtained by percussion on metals, wood, stone, terracotta	Voices of animals and men: Shouts Shrieks Groans Howls Laughs Wheezes Sobs

¹⁵ Ibid, 33.

¹⁶ Watkins, 236.

¹⁷ Payton, 33.

¹⁸ Pratella, *Autobiografia*, 114-16.

¹⁹ Watkins, 236.

²⁰ Payton, 36.

²¹ Luigi Russolo, "The Art of Noises," trans. Stephen Somervell, in *Music Since 1900*, 1298-1302.

²² Ibid.

Russolo rejected repeated performances of works from days long gone; instead, he recognized that art is a reflection of its time:

Every manifestation of life is accompanied by noise. Noise is therefore familiar to our ears and has the power to remind us immediately of life itself. Musical sound, a thing extraneous to life and independent of it, and occasional and unnecessary adjunct, has become for our ears what a too familiar face is to our eyes. Noise, on the other hand, which comes to us confused and irregular as life itself, never reveals itself wholly but reserves for us innumerable surprises. We are convinced, there, that by selecting, co-ordinating, and controlling noises we shall enrich mankind with a new and unsuspected source of pleasure. Despite the fact that it is characteristic of sound to remind us brutally of life, the ART OF NOISES must not limit itself to reproductive imitation. It will reach its greatest emotional power through the purely acoustic enjoyment which the inspiration of the artist will contrive to evoke from combinations of noises.²³

An open letter to Pratella, to whom Russolo acknowledges as inspiring his series of *intonarumori*, or noise-makers, which were mechanical devices or machines invented by Russolo designed to produce the various classifications of sound described in his manifesto. On 2 June 1913, three months after Russolo issued his manifesto, he gave a demonstration of an *intonarumore*, a "crackler", at a concert at the Stocchi Theatre in Modena.²⁴ Russolo built additional *intonarumori*, which produced sounds of various timbres that are described in his article "Gl'intonarumor futuristi" concerning the June 2 concert.²⁵

Since Pratella denied any interest in a collaboration between music and machines, it is worth speculating whether the inspiration behind *The Art of Noises* was in fact by Marinetti, as has been suggested by Payton.²⁶ Although Marinetti apparently maintained a rigid amount of control concerning Futurist aesthetics, behind the collective manifestoes and Russolo's curious *intonarumore* lie the following musical concepts:

- 1) Inclusion of noise as compositional material, a concept that has dramatically expanded the twentieth-century compositional vocabulary, influencing composers working in the electroacoustic as well as traditional mediums;
- 2) Use of micro-tones, i.e., the expansion of divisions that can be made from one octave to a number greater than twelve semi-tones, although simultaneous investigations in this area were being made in America by Ives, Cowell, and others;
- 3) Music that can be made by machines, pre-dating major developments in the electroacoustic medium by about thirty-five years;
- 4) Music functioning as political propaganda.²⁷

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Payton, 37-39.

²⁵ Luigi Russolo, "Gl'intonarumori futuristi," *Lacerba* 1, no. 13 (1 July 1913): 140-41.

²⁶ Payton, 36.

²⁷ The historical precedent of music being used as propaganda is quite strong: the Roman Church suppressed regional liturgies and practices (i.e., Spanish and Celtic), not only to standardize Gregorian liturgy as well as to excise all lingering vestiges of pre-Christian practices used in more remote areas from Rome. From the Council of Nicea onwards, the church increasingly controlled not only religious practice and thought, but also enjoyed the controlling influence in affairs of state as well as commerce.

Fascism

Fascism is a term applied to the movement and later the political regime led by Benito Mussolini who named the movement in Italy from 1919 to 1943. The creation of Fascism is the result of a political niche from various socio-economic conditions and pressures arising from various factors, among them the impact of WORLD WAR I and the rise of national socialism, particularly successful in Russia, which threatened the established but crumbling political order. Fascism presented itself to large population segments including the power elite as a political fighting force determined upon protecting Italy from capitalist and socialist forces from outside and within. Threats were perceived as coming from both external capitalist powers such as England, France, and the United States as well as internally, where the political left and the solidity of the working class indicated a growing movement similar to the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. The Fascist propaganda agenda promised Italy a revolution that would improve everything: instead of being divided according to social class, a unified Italy would be able to promote the interests of its citizens by restoring the nation to military glory. Mussolini's Fascist program depended upon success of its commitment to military aggression, conquest and destruction, of particularly weak neighbors such as Ethiopia, which could compete with socialism by providing employment and career opportunities, making land available for colonization, and importing alien labor for exploitation. When the commitment to aggression eventually resulted in military defeat in World War II, nothing positive was left of fascism.²⁸

Although the policies of Fascism shifted as much as those of its engineer, Mussolini, whose primary philosophy was his ability to lead, the basic philosophy behind Fascism was to make all aspects of society subservient to the State: in short, to control. Mussolini:

"... The man of Fascism is an individual who is nation and fatherland, which is a moral law, binding together individuals and the generations into a tradition and a mission, suppressing the instinct for a life enclosed within the brief round of pleasure in order to restore within duty a higher life free from the limits of time and space: a life in which the individual, through the denial of himself, through the sacrifice of his own private interests, through death itself, realizes that completely spiritual existence in which his value as a man lies. ... Fascism is opposed to all the individualist abstractions of a materialistic nature ... against individualism, the Fascist conception is for the State, and it is for the individual in so far as he coincides with the State. ... It is opposed to classical Liberalism ... for the Fascist, everything is in the State, and nothing human or spiritual exists, much less has value, outside the State. ... Outside the State there can be neither individuals nor groups ... Therefore Fascism is opposed to Socialism. ... Fascism is opposed to Democracy, which equates the nation to the majority, lowering it to the level of that majority ... The Fascist State, the highest and most powerful form of personality, is a force, but a spiritual force, which takes over all the forms of the moral and intellectual life of man."²⁹

Revolutionary ideas such as Futurism generally surface in the arts; once the ideas and values behind the movement are acculturated, they inevitably surface later in the political arena. The connection between the Italian Futurists and its subsequent political

²⁸ Heinz Lubasz (ed.), *Fascism: Three Major Regimes*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1973), 2-7.

²⁹ Benito Mussolini, "The Doctrine of Fascism," in *Fascism: Three Major Regimes*, 37-41.

counterpart, the Fascist movement, is a rather direct one when considering the nationalist motivations behind the movements, especially when comparing their shared predilection for using violence as a social tool. The tie between Futurism and Fascism is readily apparent when realizing the Futurists were instrumental in drumming up public support for the Tripolitan Campaign and its subsequent colonial enterprises as well as for actions against the Germanic states in World War I.³⁰

Mussolini, who had been involved with the Futurists and Marinetti in particular,³¹ was quick to adapt the Futurist propaganda techniques to manipulate the populace. Once in power, the Fascists influenced the curriculum of musical education by issuing government directives requiring the study of Italian music other than the 19th century operatic music of Verdi and Rossini. Although the philosophy differed from the Futurist musical program, it shared the nationalistic emphasis upon Italian music and in general shunned the previous operatic tradition. Particular emphasis was placed upon the study of composers such as Monteverdi and Palestrina; such directives established an educational convention for music at all levels.³²

Until the Fascist program began to more closely resemble that of the Nazis in the mid 1930's, discrimination against ethnic groups such as Jews was not a consideration for the first fifteen years of the Fascist regime, as Italy did not have a particularly large Jewish population. During this time, many Jews were able to obtain high-ranking positions in the Italian military, Fascist party and university system. However, by 1935, future events were foreshadowed by "instructions" from the Italian Ministry of the Interior of Propaganda that prohibited programming of Jewish performers and composers (such as Mendelssohn).³³

In 1935, the Ministry of Popular Culture (MinPopCul) was created from the Ministry of Press and Propaganda, which basically controlled the media and the arts. The control of music was administered by the General Administration for Theatre and Music, a division of MinPopCul, which assessed if tentative works were unfavorable to "public order, morality or decency."³⁴ Before the directives regarding race, a government directive issued in 1936 concerning the programming of concerts advised that Italian concert societies "give much more space to soloists in programmes of symphonic music, in order to obtain greater variety, ... to encourage Italian soloists, and to make familiar many unknown or rarely played compositions of the past", indicating that theater administrators have at least one soloist on every symphonic concert.³⁵ Another important way that the Fascists used propaganda techniques was by the secret subsidization of artists, musicians, writers and journalists by the MinPopCul; in return, composers, conductors and others in influential positions would promote the regime. Composer Gianandrea Gavazzeni:

"It was a pay-off fund ... and also a small corrupting influence, by means of which the regime created a certain attitude of benevolence towards itself."³⁶

The first anti-Jewish laws passed in September 1938 were politically motivated as the agenda of the Italian Fascists and German National Socialists began to align.³⁷ Jewish communities were required to set up separate schools as Jewish teachers and students were eliminated at every educational level. In October, the marriage of Italians to ethnic

³⁰ Clough, 20-23.

³¹ Ibid., 22, 25; Watkins, 243.

³² Harvey Sachs, *Music in Fascist Italy*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1988) 43-5.

³³ Ibid., 184.

³⁴ Ibid., 66.

³⁵ Ibid., 87.

³⁶ Ibid., 62.

³⁷ Ibid., 177.

groups other than the Aryan race was banned.³⁸ Jewish composers and performers were effectively eliminated from Italian musical endeavors, and some were even imprisoned in concentration camps, although the official persecution of Jews was carried out during the German occupation of Italy from September 1943 to April 1945.³⁹

A comparison between Italian and German Fascism reveals significant differences that reveal the extent to which Hitler and the Nazis intensified propaganda techniques groomed by the Futurists and Fascists to support their political agenda.⁴⁰ As much as the Fascist and Nazi movement were both nationalistic movements, Mussolini had no wish to rule the world, and only used policies of aggressions against nations outside Italy for the purpose of creating a powerful military state. Mussolini believed in his ability as a leader, so all who opposed him or Fascism were enemies of the state. Hitler, on the other hand, believed in superiority of the Aryan race. His goal was to rule as much of the world as possible, perceived all those opposed to his agenda as enemies, and would not hesitate in using the massive war machines he had at his disposal to carry out this agenda. The Fascists and Nazis glorified the attributes of militarism and the ordeals of a nation at war: social class was subservient to national unity, achieved by the cooperative obligation to a primary collective objective, under the guidance of an authoritative, dictatorial leadership. The poise of the soldier, language of combat, and other manifestations of militarism were superimposed upon politics, with all social, economic and political objectives portrayed as a "struggle," "battle," or "fight" "for the nation" and "against the enemy" (i.e., socialism). Both nations presented a political system based on autocracy and aggressive expansion in order to compete with capitalism; creating revolutionary movements to compete with and ultimately replace them destroyed the internal threats of socialism. In Italy, the eventual success of Fascism was as much a result of the failure of the socialists to act upon a society that was approaching total anarchy, as it was the niche created by the need for someone to take control. The ability of the Fascists to act and secure power resulted in many of the socialists joining the Fascist movement. World War I resulted in a large Italian population accustomed to living within a military structure, who then carried out internal aggression against socialists, who were either killed by the "black shirt" squads or converted to the Fascist movement. Socialists in Germany met a more precarious fate: they were simply executed. In the assault upon capitalism, Mussolini attacked Albania and Ethiopia; Hitler, having an extremely large Jewish population in Germany, substituted a massive anti-Jewish campaign. In both instances, capitalists and Jews were regarded as being "enemies" that by aggressively exterminating, would create a strong state.⁴¹ The Nazis' refinement of propaganda techniques against the Jewish people enabled Hitler to fulfill his campaign of purging all "non-Aryan" and undesirable influences.

Nazism

Nazism refers to the movement and philosophies of the Fascist National Socialist Party, commonly referred to as the Nazi Party, under its leader Adolph Hitler, which governed Germany from 1933 to 1945. The Nazi's philosophy towards race and nationalism were made explicit in a statement from "The First Program of the Nazi Party," dated 24 February 1920:

"None but members of the nation may be citizens of the State. None but those of German blood, whatever their creed, may be members of the nation. No Jew, therefore, may be considered a member of the nation. ...

³⁸ Ibid., 183.

³⁹ Ibid., 186-7.

⁴⁰ H. H. Stuckenschmitt, "Under the Swastika," *Modern Music* 11, no. 1 (November - December): 51.

⁴¹ Lubasz, 2-7.

We demand a ruthless campaign against all whose activities are injurious to the common interest. Oppressors of the nation, usurers, profiteers, etc., must be punished with death, whatever their creed or race. ... We demand legal measures against intentional political lies and their dissemination in the Press... It must be forbidden to publish newspapers which do not conduce to the national welfare. We demand the legal prosecution of all tendencies in art and literature of a kind calculated to disintegrate our national life..."⁴²

Remarkable are their views toward cultural values of art, music and literature, which they recognized as reflecting society in general, and sought to control using a rather well organized and effective propaganda machine.

While Mussolini's Fascists wanted to de-emphasize all the grandiose of 19th century opera, Adolph Hitler completely subscribed to Wagner's operas as the basis of the proper model of German Nationalism as well as his entire Nietzschean/Nazi philosophy. In the arts, this resulted in the condemnation and censorship of everything considered as "modern." In music, to be excised were everything that reeked of non-Aryan influences, including dissonance, non-tonality, as well as jazz and jazz-influence. The Nazis rapidly seized control of the media's communication means for dissemination of political rhetoric, effectively severing the progression of German cultural art. The severe rules governing acceptable types of music included use of major keys and rapid tempos, as well as control of song texts, which must express joy; to be avoided were introspective melancholy texts that were perceived as expressing politically incorrect sullen Jewish gloom and despair. The Nazis went as far as to prohibit specific types of instruments and timbres that were considered to be foreign to the German spirit, such as cowbells, flex-a-tones, use of brushes as well as the sounds resulting from plucked strings and muted brass. The *Reichskulturkammer* on 15 March 1933 placed a ban that prohibited the public broadcasting of "Negro Jazz" by Berlin Radio.⁴³ To protect the German people from Jewish contamination, performance by or of all Jewish musicians, living or dead was completely banned: all Jewish musicians were forbidden from performing in public.⁴⁴

The system of cultural control in Nazi Germany, considered to be a crucial means of public education,⁴⁵ was administered by the *Reichskulturkammer*, which was subdivided according to area. The *Reichspresses* dealt with writers, journalists and publishers; the *Filmkammer* dealt with the movie industry; the *Kammer für die Bildenden Künste* for the visual arts; and the *Theaterkammer* and the *Musikkammer*, for theater and music. Dr. Joseph Goebbels, Minister of Propaganda and enlightenment, headed the *Reichskulturkammer*.⁴⁶ Goebbels' philosophy towards the arts was made quite explicit in a 10 April 1933 reply to Berlin Philharmonic conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler concerning Furtwängler's appeal not to exclude certain Jewish musicians and artists from the cultural life of Germany:

"The task of art and the artists is not only to bring diverse elements together; it is, far more, to give form and shape, to remove what is diseased, and to create a free channel for what is healthy. ... Art must not only be good; it must be conditioned by the needs of the people - or, to put it better, only an art which springs from the integral soul of the people can

⁴² "The First Program of the Nazi Party," 24 February 1920, in *Fascism: Three Major Regimes*, 77-79.

⁴³ Slonimsky, 563.

⁴⁴ Arnold Perris, *Music as Propaganda: Art to Persuade, Art to Control* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985), 55-61.

⁴⁵ Stuckenschmitt, 49.

⁴⁶ "Fugitivus," "Inside Germany," *Modern Music* 16, no. 4 (May - June 1939): 205. ["Fugitivus" was a pseudonym for a recently emigrated German musician who wished to remain anonymous, for obvious reasons.]

in the end be good and have meaning for the people for whom it was created. Art in an absolute sense, as liberal Democracy knows it, has no right to exist. ... I admit gladly that art is not in any condition to be made the object of further experimentation.

It would, however, have been fitting to protest against artistic experiments at a time when the artistic life of Germany was governed almost exclusively by the experimentalism of elements foreign to our people and our race, and when therefore the prestige of German art was discredited and compromised before the whole world."⁴⁷

In addition to his interests in radio and film studios, Goebbels controlled the German Opera House in Berlin.⁴⁸

The function of the Reichskulturkammer was to maintain absolute control over all aspects of German culture. Although this bureaucracy governed matters of the arts by official decree, absolute control was maintained by effectively adopting a policy that applied indirect pressure to achieve desired results. Among the board known as the "*Beratende Referenten*" were three musical directors whose official function was to supply the Propaganda Ministry with expert opinion for the Kulturkammer: Heinz Drewes, Erich Roeder, and Herr Ludwig. The three men were opportunists who would victimize their personal enemies as political targets. The men were in charge of selecting operas and new compositions for programming and selecting, directing and conducting appointments. The directors had also at their disposal the structure of the Nazi party and minor officials, such as the provincial *Gauleiter*, who was a regional political official who controlled all theaters, performances and appearances in his province. A simple unofficial word from a director of the "*Beratende Referenten*" could prohibit a particular artist or composer from being performed. Once word reached other *Gauleiten*, similar prohibitions on the artist in question would be placed in other provinces, although the artist may in fact have had official approval from the Propaganda Ministry.⁴⁹ Local control of theaters and concert halls were brought under the jurisdiction of the *Städtische Musikbeauftragte*, who passed on lists of acceptable artists and works to be produced that need not conform to practices occurring in other cities. In this way the once affluent assortment of musical life in cities renowned for their unique concert and operatic productions was brought under rigid conformity and control.⁵⁰

The press, being under the direct control of the Reichskulturkammer, was unable to utter freedom of opinion. The right to criticize musical endeavors was terminated in 1937 by Dr. Goebbels, denying writers to be anything more than "observers." Weekly press conferences ensured exactly which works could be "observed" as well as the specific language that could be used to describe the works, to ensure that "observations" were not overly zealous in their reviews of works not officially forbidden but undesirable.⁵¹

In 1933 the infamous Nuremberg Laws of Dr. Goebbels deprived Jews of their citizenship.⁵² The marriages of all "Aryan" artists and composers who had contracted "non-Aryan" marriages were thereby terminated, with the qualification of "Aryan" being strictly applied according to blood.⁵³ In November 1938 the Foreign Ministry prohibited Jews from attending theaters or concerts.⁵⁴

⁴⁷ Roger Sessions, "Music and Nationalism: Some Notes on Dr. Göbbel's Letter to Furtwängler," *Modern Music* 11, no. 1 (November - December 1933): 5-6.

⁴⁸ Perris, 55-61.

⁴⁹ "Fugitivus," 203-6.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 207.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 210.

⁵² Perris, 55-61.

⁵³ "Fugitivus," 207.

⁵⁴ Perris, 55-61.

The Nazi's policy on activities of culture was directed against anyone considered to be "enemies" of the state, including and not necessarily restricted to: Jews or those suspected of being Jews, pacifists, "Marxists," and "*Kulturbolschevists*." The term "*Kulturbolschevist*" applied to practically anyone whose opinions did not coincide with current Nazi philosophies, which were anything but stable from week to week.⁵⁵ The term was effective in dealing with "modern" composers such as Schoenberg, but included anyone whose music was not of a purely German character. The philosophy of "*Kulturbolschevism*" was aimed primarily at new "international" trends in composition, which had been attacked throughout the 1920's by Dr. Alfred Heuss in the journal *Zeitschrift für Musik*. The blame for the corruption of the national character of German music was laid upon such foreign composers as Debussy and Stravinsky; however, Germans such as Hindemith and Schoenberg were particularly branded for their "soulless, atonal music." Schoenberg, because of his prominent position as a composer, teacher and leader in new music, was especially singled out because he was Jewish. All music of an "international" character was therefore associated with "Jewishness," which was considered to be the only "true" internationality. Music of an international character was felt to be a corrupting influence, and as a result, publishers were urged not to promote the "terrible atonal music" that would demolish the prestige of German music abroad. The editors of *Zeitschrift für Musik* went as far as to accuse Jewish composers and the Leftist Press of an actual conspiracy aimed at destroying German culture. The journals *Musikblätter des Anbruch* and *Melos* as well as Schoenberg's Vienna Universal-Edition were included as being instruments of this supposed conspiracy.⁵⁶

The criteria determining whether composers or artists were acceptable to the Reich was subject to the whims of the *Reichskulturkammer*. Jewish composers such as Schoenberg along with his twelve-tone composing methods were automatically regarded as being unacceptable. However, composers' works could be banned upon aesthetic grounds, as were the works of Berg, Webern, Krenek, Bartók, Hindemith, and Dallapiccola. Certain works by a composer could be prohibited, while other works by the same composers were perfectly acceptable. For example, Stravinsky's *Firebird* was acceptable, while *Le Sacre du Printemps* was regarded as being too modern.⁵⁷ The "official" list of prohibited composers and performers was unavailable to the public, as it was of vital importance to the *Kulturpolitik* that the current opinion be perceived as being the spontaneous will of the *volk*. However, the names of prohibited and banned composers were distributed in letters to symphony societies, theaters, and publishers.⁵⁸ Such direct and indirect techniques were also placed upon foreign composers: on 4 April 1933 Berlin issued a ban as a response against American conductors and musicians who protested against Nazi racial policies:

"... the compositions and recordings of these gentlemen shall no longer find a place on the programs of German broadcasting stations and ... no musical performance in which they have a part in any capacity shall be transmitted from concert halls."⁵⁹

In addition to composers and artists, performers and conductors were removed from exalted positions. Carl Ebert, director of Berlin Municipal Opera, and Fritz Stiedry, its conductor, were removed on 11 March 1933 from their positions by the Nazi Ministry of

⁵⁵ Sessions, 3.

⁵⁶ Joel Sachs, "Some Aspects of Music Politics in Pre-Nazi Germany," *Perspectives of New Music* 9: 74-95.

⁵⁷ Ferris, 55-61. Mussolini, on the other hand, himself an amateur violinist, regarded himself a modernist, and very much admired Dallapiccola. See H. Sachs, 12, 15-16.

⁵⁸ "Fugitivus," 211.

⁵⁹ Slonimsky, 565.

Propaganda; Stiedry was removed as being a non-Aryan,⁶⁰ while Ebert, an Aryan, was removed because of his associations with "modernists" suspected of being Jewish.⁶¹

The *Reichskulturkammer* succeeded not only in controlling concert programming and the production of new music composition, but attempted to change the facts of music history. At issue were particular works of at least three composers: Mendelssohn, a Jewish composer; Mozart, who used the Librettos of a Jew for his operas; and Handel, whose oratorios were based upon texts of the Old Testament. Mendelssohn's incidental music to Shakespeare's *A Summer Night's Dream* was a particularly sensitive issue, and considered so vital to German concert life, that several composers were commissioned to replace it, with unsuccessful results. The problem of Lorenzo da Ponte's librettos for the operas *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutte*, and *Le Nozze di Figaro* was avoided by allowing performances that had been translated into German by an Aryan. The works of Handel remained a point of contention between Goebbels and Alfred Rosenberg, the Nazi ideology expert. While Rosenberg advocated the removal of references of Yehovah from the songs of Bach, Handel, Mozart and Beethoven, Goebbels issued a directive prohibiting any modifications of Handel's texts. Despite the inconsistent policy, attempts to alter substantial historical facts betrayed a society whose cultural values had been thoroughly undermined.⁶²

The attempts of the *Reichskulturkammer* to control the arts culminated in a profound negative effect upon German musical life. As the Nazis severed more rights, composers' fields of creative outlets were severely limited.⁶³ Jewish composers were unable to receive royalty payments and pending legal contracts were nullified.⁶⁴ The prohibition of Jews from teaching at musical institutions, as well as their prohibition from obtaining licenses to teach privately, created a considerable academic vacuum,⁶⁵ resulting in a "brain drain": Arnold Schoenberg was fired from the Prussian Academy of Arts in Berlin as being "unfit" to teach music in Nazi Germany on 30 May 1933.⁶⁶ From 1933 through the end of World War II and unprecedented amount of musical scholars, composers and performers fled the country to the United States as well as to France and England. As a result of the massive exodus of German musicians into America, America was established as the center for music during the second half of the twentieth century. Leading opera houses suffered through the losses of important conductors, performers and administrators.⁶⁷

Post-war Repercussions

Although the German and Italian Fascist movements seem to have no positive influence upon the development of electroacoustic music other than the invention of the Magnetophone in 1935 by the *Allgemeine Elektrizitäts Gesellschaft*, the overall result of negative influences have been rather significant. The total disruption of European developments in art music and its subsequent suppression resulted in completely new aesthetic issues that were of concern to composers in the immediate post-war era. Many European composers subscribed to the Anton Webern's serial approach, as it represented for them a symbolic way of exercising control over their art during the rebuilding process at a time when Europe was left in ruins. However, some composers such as Stockhausen,

⁶⁰ Ibid, 563.

⁶¹ Nicolas Slonimsky, *Supplement to Music Since 1900*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1986), 263.

⁶² Erik Levi, "The Aryanization of Music in Nazi Germany," *The Musical Times* 131, no. 1763 (January 1990): 19-23.

⁶³ Alfred Einstein, "The Composer, the State, and Today," *Modern Music* 13, no.1 (November-December 1935): 9.

⁶⁴ Sessions, 4.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Slonimsky, 567.

⁶⁷ Sessions, 4.

who applied the serial method to control all musical parameters, were branded as little more than musical dictators, seeking to gain control over their music as much as the Nazis controlled society. For composers Stockhausen and Cage, who advocated seemingly opposing solutions towards the aesthetics of control and indeterminacy, compositional solutions to these aesthetic questions became a major focus of their work. However, both composers were essentially addressing the same problem, which was how to maintain a balance between rational and intuitive processes in music composition. Cage used strict techniques of chance, such as the magic square I Ching, (later utilizing the aid of computers) to govern the compositional material that was structured similarly to his earlier percussion and prepared piano music. Although the structures governing his later music were for the most part perceptibly inaudible, it nevertheless functioned as a way to control sound events. Stockhausen used serial procedures to classify all possible permutations and combinations of material, but would not hesitate to use his intuition to change the results. More recently, composers such as Gary Lee Nelson and Dale Millen have applied fractal theory to generate musical structures, using computers to randomly generate similar permutations of predetermined material.

Arts in Neo-Conservative America

The previous examples of ways in which Fascist governments have controlled culture and artistic expression are issues of particular concern to contemporary American artists. Since the early 1980's, the traditional rift between conservative and liberal thinking has widened significantly. Fueled by political extremism on both sides, the ever-widening gap between Progressives and the Religious Far-Right has resulted in Neo-Conservatism, an emerging and disturbing trend that has already threatened Constitutional rights that guarantee freedom of expression.

Popular music genres, whether they are folk, rock, metal, rap or hip-hop, have always been voices of rebellion or conscience, drawing the ire of those representing the object of rebellion. Opportunists of the religious right such as Jimmy Swaggert have led anti-rock campaigns against "the music of Satan". While the Bible-thumping tele-preachers draw attention to the issue of cultural immorality and obscene lyrics in popular music, donations pour into Christian publishing houses that crank out literature by the truckload, and who reap the financial rewards.⁶⁸ Similarly, careers were forged in Nazi Germany by opportunists seeking to gain favor, power or other advantages by discrediting their political enemies as well as by attacking convenient scapegoats, seeking to find corrupting traces of Judaism in existing art, music and literature.

Successful attempts to legislate and control song lyrics of popular music have been spearheaded by Tipper Gore, Senator Jesse Helms and others in a series of Senate subcommittee hearings in 1985. While Tipper Gore advocates a system of providing warning labels upon the packaged products of the corporate entertainment media in order to advise parents or others of the content of the material they are purchasing, Senator Helms is much more determined to legislate government control of art that receives government funding.

Tipper Gore, concerned in "preserving the moral foundation of our society," distinguishes between censorship and control. Gore:

"It is important to note that there is a difference between wanting to restrain and control and wanting to suppress and censor."⁶⁹

Mrs. Gore fails to understand that the "control" she advocates is actually a form of

⁶⁸ Mark Sullivan, "'More Popular than Jesus': The Beatles and the Religious Far Right," *Popular Music* 6, no. 3 (October 1987): 313-326.

⁶⁹ Charles M. Young, "My Talk with Tipper," *Musician* 106 (August 1987): 21-2.

governmental censorship: once you begin to "control" art, art can no longer function properly in a society. When artists become uncertain and afraid to express themselves, the fear spreads throughout the culture like a cancer, resulting in a people and culture as lethargic as that of Nazi Germany. Gore has openly attacked metal groups that use subliminal "suicide messages" when played in reverse. Although it is questionable whether the human brain can intelligibly process or perceive reverse speech envelopes, Gore attributes the high rate of teenage suicides and suicide attempts to such techniques. While one wonders if teen-age suicides can be attributed to subliminal "Paul is Dead" messages or the result of stress created by the multitudes of pressures of living in modern society, legislation attempts to prohibit the use of retrograde speech envelopes have been introduced in several states.⁷⁰ The effect upon record store outlet chains, who subsequently refuse to stock 'questionable' merchandise for fear of legal reprisal reeks of similar actions taken by local *Musikkommissars* who refused to allow the works of certain composers to be performed in Nazi theaters.

During the early 1990's the controversy concerning the federal funding of artists by the National Endowment for the Arts centers upon the issue whether taxpayer's money ought to be spent upon works that are offensive to some. The function of the NEA is to establish a climate for creativity, funding groups and individual artists, making the arts available to a broad audience as well as providing education in the arts. In order that funds be reallocated to the NEA to continue its patronage of the arts, Congress must ratify the reauthorization of funding. During the recent furor concerning the work of Robert Mapplethorpe and Andres Serrano,⁷¹ Senators Alfonse D'Amato, Jesse Helms, and others, attempted to block federal funding of art considered to be offensive. The result was a complete overhaul of the NEA's federal funding disbursement procedure. During the course of events, lasting several months. Helms introduced a restrictive amendment that was inserted in an appropriations bill prohibited NEA funding of works considered to be "obscene":

"None of the funds entitled to be appropriated pursuant to this Act may be used to promote, disseminate, or produce-

- (1) Obscene or indecent materials, including but not limited to depictions of sadomasochism, homo-eroticism, the exploitation of children, or individuals engaged in sex acts; or
- (2) material which denigrates the objects or beliefs of the adherents of a particular religion or non-religion; or
- (3) material which denigrates, debases, or reviles a person, group, or class of citizens on the basis of race, creed, sex, handicap, age or national origin."⁷²

Although Helms was criticized by the public for the content of the amendment and its threat to free speech, Helms pressured Congressional opponents of the measure by including threatening letters from national "pro-family" special-interest groups.⁷³ While the NEA had previously granted funding to artists whose works were based on sensitive issues, the Helms amendment prohibited certain topics from receiving federal funding. Specifically targeted were homosexual topics: nowhere in the amendment was "hetero-

⁷⁰ Sullivan, 313-326.

⁷¹ Serrano's work, entitled "Piss Christ," involved a photograph of a crucifix submerged in the artist's urine. The Mapplethorpe exhibition involved certain photographs that included homoerotic subjects. Both the Mapplethorpe exhibition and Serrano received NEA funding, setting off a national controversy whether taxpayers ought to fund works of this nature. See 135 Cong. Rec. S5594 (daily ed. May 18, 1989).

⁷² Cong. Rec. S8806 (daily ed. July 29, 1989).

⁷³ Kim M. Shipley, "The Politicization of Art: The National Endowment for the Arts, the First Amendment, and Senator Helms," Emory Law Journal 40 (Winter 1991): 244.

eroticism" specifically banned, as was "homo-eroticism." Although issues of homosexuality are indeed offensive to some, the Helms amendment countermanded the original intent concerning the creation and funding of the NEA. During the subsequent congressional subcommittee hearings, Senator Pat Williams, who chaired the reappropriation subcommittee, reaffirmed the position of Congress concerning art that is "offensive":

"The strength of the panel... has been that it has been remarkably free from any political pressure. ... We have... let citizens who are qualified in their discipline make that decision rather than Congress. In each reappropriation... there has been a challenge... which has basically said... let us not fund anything that we find offensive, let us fund only things that are acceptable to the broad reach of the American public.

Each time... that has been soundly defeated, because... the arts should be free from political interference..."⁷⁴

Once legislation of this type is enacted and restrictions are placed upon artistic expression, further restrictions and censorship are easier to make. While the Helms Amendment was ultimately defeated in favor of a compromise amendment, local pressures upon artists continue to threaten American cultural life. Unfortunately, people like Helms feel they can remove immoral or undesirable influences from American culture by censoring art. Because art mirrors the culture it represents, Helms wishes to remove the problem by breaking the mirror. Certainly, by excising only those things that displease us or make us uncomfortable, art will suffer; if art suffers, then the culture and society suffer, as did the people of Europe during the pre-war Fascist regimes of the early 20th century. Alternatively, the opinions of some advocate governmental non-involvement in the affairs of art, believing that the NEA should be abolished. Agencies that receive government funding may be required to conform to restrictions placed upon them from above, similar to the Fascist system. Since the public university system is subsidized by state funding, American citizens should examine the extent to which they wish to have the government control or terminate the free exchange of ideas and information, as did the Nazis.

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⁷⁴ Hearing on the reauthorization of the NEA Hearing before the subcommittee on Postsecondary education of the Committee on education and labor, 101st Congress, 2nd session (March 1990) (statement of Senator Pat Williams).

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