Journal of the Royal Musical Association, 150.2, 613–622
doi:10.1017/rma.2025.10054

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Review Article

Why Positionality Matters in Today's Historiography

FUYUKO FUKUNAKA

Tom Perchard, Stephen Graham, Tim Rutherford-Johnson, and Holly Rogers, *Twentieth-Century Music in the West: An Introduction*. Cambridge University Press, 2022. xiv + 494 pp. ISBN 9781108481984 (hard cover); 9781108741736 (paperback); 9781108680899 (digital).

Björn Heile, *Musical Modernism in Global Perspective: Entangled Histories on a Shared Planet*. Cambridge University Press, 2024. xvi + 286 pp. ISBN 9781009491709 (hard cover); 9781009491716 (digital).

Over a quarter of a century ago, as an insecure doctoral candidate at a US university, I was faced with the overwhelming task of presenting my research progress as a stipendium fellow at the Paul Sacher Foundation in Basel, Switzerland, in front of not only the Foundation's supportive staff but also musicologists affiliated with the Foundation as members of the Board of Trustees. After I finished my less-than-satisfactory presentation on the German composer Wolfgang Rihm, whose music resists tightly knit modernist compositional language, one very prominent musicologist from a Berlin university made a comment that still resonates with me today, especially when I advise non-Japanese students on topics related to Japan's musical culture: he said that I, as a Japanese person studying at a US university, was 'brave' for tackling 'one of the most "German" composers of our time'. He also muttered that I would need to read Adorno (which I had done but did not incorporate into my presentation), since Adorno's texts are key to understanding the 'Germanness' of Rihm's music. Perhaps it was his way of kindly reminding me that I would have no chance of acquiring a career as a German music specialist. However, I was still taken aback, especially since my nationality had never been a factor in evaluating my research output in the US.

Fortunately, it is rare these days to encounter the kind of blunt cultural essentialism that determines one's research qualifications based on where one is raised. We are more aware than ever that the creation of a musical (or any other cultural) product and its reception are part of the intricate web of global knowledge production. Although Rihm never physically left Europe during his lifetime, his work undoubtedly engaged with the aesthetic challenges facing his European and non-European contemporaries. Similarly, understanding a German composer does not have to be achieved solely through 'Germanic' scholarly practice. On the contrary, each scholar should be encouraged to use their 'situated' knowledge — that is, knowledge vested in them by their own cultural and scholarly interests, and incubated in the increasingly entangled network of physical and virtual knowledge production on a global level. This

Email: fukunaka.fuyuko@ms.geidai.ac.jp

© The Author(s), 2025. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of the Royal Musical Association

https://doi.org/10.1017/rma.2025.10054 Published online by Cambridge University Press

situatedness may also be termed 'positionality' (after Homi Bhabha's notion, which he draws upon in his discussion of a politicized place of utterance), a concept that endorses the idea that the act of enunciation, which is always ambivalent, needs to be underwritten by Derridean *différance*.[1]

Since the last decade, under pressure from a new development in historiographical scholarship now termed 'global history' or 'world history', musicologists have gradually recognized the need to 'occasionally rethink the premises of their research, writing and "craft" — that is, to think again or further about them, and reconsider them with a view to amendment'.[2] Nicholas Cook's unambiguous gesture in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music* (Cambridge University Press, 2004) to dismantle the privileged treatment of the European modernist tradition in narratives of twentieth-century music was a turning point. This was followed by pioneering volumes such as *The Cambridge History of World Music* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), edited by Philip Bohlman, and the collections edited by Reinhard Strohm: *Studies on a Global History of Music: A Balzan Musicology Project* (Routledge, 2018), *The Music Road: Coherence and Diversity in Music from the Mediterranean to India* (Oxford University Press, 2019), and *Transcultural Music History* (VWB, 2021). Other projects, such as those by Christian Utz, Jessica Gienow-Hecht, and Tobias Janz and Chien-Chang Yang, focus on intercultural negotiations, including political ones, that have given rise to specific types of music production and reception.[3] Together they have conveyed the message that the 'universalist' ambition is no longer relevant in contemporary music historiography: in the fragmented, or 'globalized', world that emerged after 1989, any given culture must be considered shared, hybrid, and globally entangled. Thus, also in line with new approaches of 'entangled history', or '*histoire croisée*', as proposed by, among others, the historians Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, the musicological projects mentioned above re-narrate music history from multiple perspectives and positionalities, presenting it as a series of interconnected micro-histories.[4] As a result, we are now moving beyond a centre–periphery dichotomy to gain a theoretical insight into various types of connectivity and disconnectivity that together form what we call history.

Yet however promising the notions of global history and of historical entanglements may be in musicological enquiries, they do not automatically guarantee a quality outcome that adequately reflects the original agendas and motivations characterizing the precursor texts on global history. For one thing, 'global entanglements' and the attendant notions in comparative sociology (e.g. the 'multiple modernities' of Shmuel N. Eisenstadt) and postcolonial studies (e.g. Chakrabarty's 'provincializing of Europe', and Chen's 'Asia as method') are more

[1] Homi K. Bhabha, 'The Commitment to Theory (1988)', in *The Location of Culture* (Routledge, 1994), pp. 28–56 (p. 53).

[2] Stefanie Gänger and Jürgen Osterhammel, 'Introduction', in *Rethinking Global History*, ed. by Stefanie Gänger and Jürgen Osterhammel (Cambridge University Press, 2024), pp. 1–22 (p. 1). Also see Pamela Kyle Crossley, *What Is Global History?* (Polity Press, 2008); *The Prospect of Global History*, ed. by James Belich and others (Oxford University Press, 2016); Sebastian Conrad, *What Is Global History?* (Princeton University Press, 2016).

[3] Christian Utz, *Neue Musik und Interkulturalität: Von John Cage bis Tan Dun* (Franz Steiner, 2002); *Music and International History in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Jessica Gienow-Hecht (Berghahn, 2015); *Decentering Musical Modernity: Perspectives on East Asian and European Music History*, ed. by Tobias Janz and Chien-Chang Yang (Transcript, 2019).

[4] Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, 'Beyond Comparison: *Histoire Croisée* and the Challenge of Reflexibility', *History and Theory*, 45.1 (2006), pp. 30–50.

https://doi.org/10.1017/rma.2025.10054 Published online by Cambridge University Press

indicative of scholarly convictions than of research methods.[5] Global history, which I believe is the only possibility left for today's twentieth- and twenty-first-century historiography, is intended as a way of 'overcoming Eurocentrism', foregrounding reflections on various colonialist and imperialist ways of thinking, rationalizing, and making conclusions based on hitherto-unquestioned value judgements.[6] In this respect, the two volumes under examination here are almost diametrically opposed, even though there is no denying that they are both welcome contributions to the ever-changing landscape of musicological scholarship.

Twentieth-Century Music in the West, co-authored by Tom Perchard, Stephen Graham, and Holly Rogers of the Department of Music at Goldsmiths, as well as by writer and music critic Tim Rutherford-Johnson, is, as the title suggests, about music production and reception in the twentieth century in western countries — that is, Europe and North America. While the concept of 'the West' often loses its validity in today's world, where cultural, commercial, and knowledge transmission often render geographical boundaries between the West and the non-West irrelevant, the book's selling point lies elsewhere. It is the 'first introductory survey […] to address popular music, art music, and jazz *on equal terms*' (p. i; emphasis added). Rather than discussing these genres as simply existing alongside one another in our lives, the book opts to narrate them as 'inextricably intertwined' (ibid.). In keeping with this disclaimer, each of the sixteen chapters contains discussions of 'art' music and musics of the popular genres (albeit in separate sections). The authors' central strategy is not to organize each chapter by location, period, genre, creative aesthetics, or compositional technique (although short sections are devoted to surveying particular compositional techniques, such as dodecaphony), in the way many texts on twentieth-century music do. Instead, they frame the chapters by key concepts that illustrate the choices, contingencies, motives, and strategies behind music production and reception in the twentieth century, regardless of genre. These are: 'Place and Space, Local and Global', 'Modernism', 'Postmodernism', and 'Canons', grouped together as 'Part I: Histories'; 'Work and Notation', 'Rhythm and Time', 'Harmony', and 'Instruments', grouped together as 'Part II: Technique and Technologies'; 'Recording and Production', 'Copyright and Music Industry', 'State and Markets', and 'Music and the Moving Image', grouped together as 'Part III: Mediation'; and 'Gender and Sexuality', 'Race and Ethnicity', 'Audiences, Class and Consumption', and 'Centres and Peripheries', grouped together as 'Part IV: Identities'. Although the authors state that they 'hope readers will emerge with a strong sense of chronology' (p. 9), their emphasis ultimately lies on addressing the common research questions and aesthetic enquiries that emerge from thinking across diverging musical genres. The outcome is praiseworthy, in that first-year university music students and general music-lovers, at whom this book is obviously targeted, can gain an understanding of the musical landscape where all musicians (or at least those in the western hemisphere) are the same human beings motivated by a common creative urge and searching for answers to shared questions.

However, the book falls short of convincing us of why, in the end, art and popular musics *need* to be considered together. In other words, it does not offer new historiographical perspectives — 'positionalities' — that negotiate with, communicate with, or at times

[5] *Multiple Modernities*, ed. by Shmuel N. Eisenstadt (Routledge, 2002); Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton University Press, 2000); Kuan-Hsing Chen, *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization* (Duke University Press, 2010).

[6] Jürgen Osterhammel, 'Explanation: The Limits of Narrativism in Global History', in *Rethinking Global History*, ed. by Gänger and Osterhammel, pp. 23–46 (p. 23).

https://doi.org/10.1017/rma.2025.10054 Published online by Cambridge University Press

contradict one another, despite cultural products that are traditionally separated into two 'incompatible' subdisciplines in academia being placed into one narrative here. Just because classical and non-classical musics often bear traces of similar concerns, aspirations, and social and political experiences, it does not automatically mean that they are '*inextricably* intertwined' (p. i; emphasis added). We need to examine the artistic, social, political, and economic mechanisms that have brought about this intertwining. Let me elaborate on what I mean with a few examples.

Chapter 5 ('Work and Notation') delves into the concept of the musical 'work' — what it is and where it exists. As might be expected, the chapter begins with a discussion of the work concept, which has been identified as central to the identity of western art music by thinkers ranging from Ingarden and Dahlhaus to Goehr and Talbot, and ontological musicologists such as Davies and Dodd.[7] While these authors' discussions differ in terms of their premises and theoretical methodologies, there is a general consensus on the concept's 'inventedness'. That is, the physical objects that we call scores, and the notes that they contain, constitute the imaginary figure of a composer. The performer's absolute commitment to faithfulness to the work (*Werktreue*) was also integral to the composer-centrism of nineteenth-century music. The chapter thus provides an excellent overview of the context in which renewed musical thinking of the twentieth century emerged, with examples of the New York School composers (Cage, Feldman, Brown, and Wolff) as well as European composers such as Bussotti (*Five Piano Pieces for David Tudor*) and Stockhausen (*Zyklus*), whose innovations in notation and pagination encourage considerable interpretation by the performers. The authors furthermore survey the so-called 'Happening' pieces by Cage (who, incidentally, was ambivalent about the term) and by other composers and artists. By referring to Europe (with, for example, Stockhausen) and non-Europe (with Fluxus, whose members included non-westerners), the authors paint a picture of similar creative experiments occurring concurrently around the globe. The following section jumps to a discussion of Historically Informed Performance (HIP), which serves as a useful reminder to readers that there *were* attempts to return to the authority of the score as seen in the previous century. The authors also note that HIP foregrounded questions surrounding the definition of 'text' by mentioning several representative instances of scholarly intervention that questioned the rationale behind the movement (Leech-Wilkinson, Taruskin):[8] should the authority of the score be regarded as the only definitive 'text'? Or are there multiple 'texts', including performances, meaning that there is an infinite number of texts for a single piece of music? Taruskin's relatively narrow definition of 'text' aside, the final section of the chapter moves rather predictably to popular music, including jazz, where there are no equivalents to the 'score-text' as found in western art music. Rather than contrasting the two traditions, the authors remind us that popular music and jazz also use something akin to the score, such as the lead sheet, and that non-classical musics leverage the notion of authorship too.

[7] Roman Ingarden, *Untersuchungen zur Ontologie der Kunst* (Max Niemeyer, 1962); Carl Dahlhaus, *Grundlagen der Musikgeschichte* (Gerig, 1977); Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford University Press, 1992); *The Musical Work: Reality or Invention?*, ed. by Michael Talbot (Liverpool University Press, 2000); Stephen Davies, *Musical Works and Performances: A Philosophical Exploration* (Clarendon Press, 2004); Julian Dodd, *Works of Music: An Essay in Ontology* (Oxford University Press, 2007).

[8] Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, 'What We Are Doing Is Genuinely Authentic to Such a Small Degree That the Word Loses Its Intended Meaning', *Early Music*, 12.1 (1984), pp. 13–16; Richard Taruskin, 'The Authenticity Movement Can Become a Positivistic Purgatory, Literalistic and Dehumanizing', *Early Music*, 12.1 (1984), pp. 3–12.

https://doi.org/10.1017/rma.2025.10054 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Overall, the narrative flows well, and readers may enjoy learning about events that took place across different locations, cultural settings, and times. However, one cannot help but feel that the argument becomes really slippery at times. First, the so-called 'Happening' pieces often produced scores, sometimes multiple versions.[9] Therefore no matter how unpremeditated the pieces are, the authority of the 'author' is not necessarily compromised (contrary to what some composers have claimed). Second, the notions of 'work' and 'notation' in the chapter's title are not wedded to each other enough to capture the chapter's argument. The concept of 'work', involving the physical score constituting the 'composer as sole author' formula of the Romantic era, does not necessarily rely on *detailed* notation; a printed score's physicality — simply though transcendentally — represents the now-dead, intangible composer. Therefore the fact that a given score allows for a great deal of interpretative freedom does not mean that it contradicts the work concept (although it can diminish the composer's authorship). Similarly, one should not confuse authority and authorship in music; the former is something created retrospectively by someone other than the author, whereas the latter is a fact born out of the moment someone creates something, regardless of whether it is written down on a piece of paper. Thus the final section on non-classical musics is confusing, as the authors seem to argue that post-war popular musics updated the concept of a 'work', whereas the examples cited only updated the notion of authorship. For this reason, their claims such as that within popular music, there are 'many different alternative landscapes of prestige, remuneration and authorship — *and therefore concepts of the "work"*' (p. 147; emphasis added) call for careful reconsideration. Most importantly, I do not see any 'intertwinements' between the first four sections (on western art music) and the final section (on jazz and popular musics). Are the authors suggesting that Cage and other experimental composers and artists were inspired by 'other' types of musics that were not confined to staff notation and traditional concert halls? Or are they presenting the idea that classical and non-classical musics sometimes share a similar obsession with authorship (or what they term the 'work'), meaning that we still subconsciously adhere to the nineteenth-century notion?

Similar uncertainties surrounding the idea of intertwining and the authors' approach to treating classical and non-classical 'on equal terms' are also present in other chapters. Chapter 2 ('Modernism') is a good case in point. It starts with a nice summary (pp. 46–48) of how art music prompted debates about modernist concerns to transcend social and artistic norms in the spirit of progress and teleological thinking. This summary is followed by references to the works of canonical composers such as Satie, Debussy, and Schoenberg and contemporaneous artistic movements such as Dada, Futurism, and the so-called 'Russian avant-garde', as well as works that question the borders between the self/subjectivity and the other/objectivity, such as those which deal with 'pagan' themes (e.g. *The Rite of Spring*) and Expressionist operas. There are also references to female composers, who, like the heroines of some contemporary operas, 'attempted to take some kind of socially unaccepted liberty' (p. 57), such as Tailleferre and Crawford-Seeger. Finally, there are references to feminist studies that have brought hitherto obscure female composers to light. The chapter's case study (Case Study 2.1) provides an accessible summary of pre- and post-war serialism, equipping entry-level music students with the knowledge and repertoire necessary for further study. Then, as in Chapter 5, a final section of the chapter is devoted to popular musics. Against the disclaimer that 'for some, […] the attempt to find modernism in new spheres of musical activities [i.e. popular musics] risks diluting what have long been thought of as that [modernist] movement's animating impulses:

[9] William Fetterman, *John Cage's Theatre Pieces* (Routledge, 1996).

https://doi.org/10.1017/rma.2025.10054 Published online by Cambridge University Press

namely, its criticality', the authors cite Mark Fisher, Ben Watson, and Stephen Graham to argue that popular genres, too, are 'potentially able to articulate a modernist challenge' (p. 69). Examples of this are taken from bebop and experimental jazz (Case Study 2.2). The chapter concludes with a section on post-war European avant-garde music, titled 'Institutionalisation': the authors argue that, despite modernists' urge for 'the destruction of convention' (p. 74), some leading post-war composers sought support for their work from official institutions, such as radio stations, turning the act of musical creation into something akin to scientific research.

Setting aside the textbook description of 'modernist' music as an art 'devoted to the destruction of convention [and] seeking no public acclaim' (p. 74), the central difficulty I have with the chapter's argument as a whole is its insistence on finding commonalities between art music and popular musics. (Ultimately, by emphasizing the commonalities, the discussion as a whole paradoxically presents both genres as *different*, the latter still occupying the position of alterity in western music historiography, waiting to be saved by phrases such as 'just like' and 'as well'.) The authors' argument seems to be that a) art music and popular musics are two distinct categories, yet also share a tendency to rebel against popular consumption; b) the search for an adequate modernist discourse was an agenda for both art and popular music figures; and c) classical music, like popular music in our consumer-oriented commercial culture, is deeply embedded in the power hierarchy of our society's institutionalized culture. Perhaps these are what the authors refer to as 'intertwinements', yet these appear to embrace no internal negotiations or struggles, as the histories of each respective musical category are recounted from perspectives firmly rooted in scholarly historiographical narratives rather than contemporary knowledge production — that is, knowledge production that is anything but unified.

I wonder whether we can, in the first place, really limit the scope of our examination to 'the West' when the subject of the examination is the twentieth century — a century that is characterized by migration, mobility, and transnational negotiations. As Janz and Yang have demonstrated, instead of presenting 'western' art music in the twentieth century along a single, coherent timeline, we could re-narrate multiple modernities as an intricate web of cultural negotiations, which often involve non-western agents.[10] Sure, the present volume contains a good number of narratives about how European and US composers find inspiration in the cultures of the geographical non-West. However, it seems that, to the authors, it is always a one-way transmission, with a static non-West inspiring or discovered by a dynamic western culture, and never vice versa. The discussion in Chapter 6 ('Rhythm and Time') is a case in point: in the section titled 'Mid-Century Experiments in Rhythm', much of the discussion is devoted to the repetitiveness of minimalist music and to the intercultural musical encounters behind it. True, Reich and Glass, among other composers, studied the musics of Africa and India in a way that is not comparable to the appropriative use of 'exotic', non-Christian musical cultures by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century composers, and the authors skilfully analyse the repetition and phasing processes that characterize minimalist music from cultural, philosophical, and cognitive perspectives by referring to Robert Fink, Susanne Langer, Susan Sontag, and Keith Potter. However, the discussion leaves untouched the fact that the corporeality of dynamic rhythm has always, rather one-dimensionally, been associated with the non-western world, particularly the music of Africa and South America, and as Cook points out, 'Western envy of the authenticity […] of Black minorities [is] not necessarily incompatible with a belief in their racial inferiority'.[11] It is also important to remember that non-western artists also participated

[10] *Decentering Musical Modernity*, ed. by Janz and Yang; see particularly their introduction, pp. 9–40.
[11] Nicholas Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction*, 2nd edn (Oxford University Press, 2021), p. 119.

https://doi.org/10.1017/rma.2025.10054 Published online by Cambridge University Press

in the imaginary, idealized construct of the musical 'non-West' and that the creative strategies behind this 'West meets East' performativity are way too intricate to summarize as the product of friendly intercultural encounters.[12] Histories of twentieth-century music, just as those of any other century, are rife with acts of emulation, respect, and cooperation as well as resistance, power struggles, and complicity. I believe that our task as historians of this century should be to foreground these kinds of 'entanglements', both pretty and ugly, rather than just 'intertwinements' in the sense of harmonious, sharing commonalities.

***

Musical Modernism in Global Perspective by Björn Heile, the author-editor of such volumes as *The Modernist Legacy: Essays on New Music* (Routledge, 2009) and *The Routledge Research Companion to Modernism in Music* (Routledge, 2018), is a respectable attempt to retell musical modernism through case studies of transnational music production and reception. Building upon the premise introduced by the aforementioned volume edited by Janz and Yang, Heile argues against heterogeneous historicism and instead highlights hybridity and entanglements — in short, multiple modernities. Yet his discussion focuses not on the dismissal of scholarly heterogeneity in an understanding of musical modernism (as in the volume discussed above), but on the multiplicities of spatialities, since musical cosmopolitanism — or related conditions — inevitably involves multiple locales and mobilities. Throughout the book, Heile narrates a variety of musical occurrences as they move and change through various types of intersections. He states that 'the global diffusion of musical modernism and the ensuing encounters between modernist music and its various counterparts around the world transformed *both*' (p. 1, emphasis added).

Heile presents five chapters, which are grouped into two parts. The first part, 'Rethinking the Historiography of Musical Modernism', deals with a global network of music, musicians, and music-related institutions. The discussion in Chapter 1 sets the tone for the entire volume by presenting the premise that musical modernism needs to be examined in terms of global dispersion and circulation. Through a case study of the Latin American afterlife of *The Rite of Spring*, Heile demonstrates how the specific characteristics of a musical work considered fundamental to musical modernism in twentieth-century European music historiographies (in this case, an evocation of a universalist/Eurocentric imagery of 'the Other'), once transferred to a different geographical and cultural mapping, begin to constitute a symbol of an entirely different modernism, arousing ethnic or cultural heritage specific to that mapping. Chapter 2 focuses on the transnational mobility of dodecaphony: following an outline of the theoretical framework of exile and migration, Heile uses the international reception of dodecaphony as an example of a musical modernity that does not essentially belong to any specific location while maintaining its institutional authority. The chapter also presents the formula 'music as/in exile', through which the author emphasizes the human and institutional mobilities that characterize modernist music, a factor which he suggests 'changes our view of history' (p. 72). Chapter 3 focuses on the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM). By promoting contemporary music and embracing a diverse range of member countries, including those outside Europe, the Society presents itself as a prime example of a globalized institution shaped by internal contradictions and negotiations. Through an examination of a large and diverse body of literature

[12] For example, Kofi Agawu, *Representing African Music: Postcolonial Notes, Queries, Positions* (Routledge, 2003); Fuyuko Fukunaka, 'When "Japanese" Music Became "World" Music: The Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik as Intercultural Agency', in *Musical Entanglements between Germany and East Asia*, ed. by Joanne Miyang Cho (Springer Nature, 2021), pp. 227–58.

https://doi.org/10.1017/rma.2025.10054 Published online by Cambridge University Press

as well as archival sources, Heile narrates the 'failure' of this institution, whose mission is to promote international and intercultural dialogue — failure in terms of cultural reciprocity on a global scale, while it nevertheless reflects the intricate paths of the political and cultural unfoldings of the twentieth century.

The second part, on the other hand, consists of two case studies of lesser-known figures: Chapter 4 is a critical examination of the musical activities of the Nigerian composer Akin Euba and his vision of a universalist 'African art music'. Chapter 5, shifting focus to East Asia, discusses the Korean composer Younghi Pagh-Pann and her autobiographically and sonically hybrid pieces. Pagh-Pann, like Isang Yun and many other Korean composers who followed him, moved to the West and, also like Yun, had no hesitation in incorporating elements of 'her own' (that is, Korean and East Asian) culture, musical or otherwise, into compositions that were firmly rooted in European modernism and primarily intended for performance in European concert settings. By placing an emphasis on the 'intercultural' aspects of Pagh-Paan's music, the chapter essentially follows in the footsteps of volumes by Christian Utz, Hee Sook Oh, and Hilary Vanessa Finchum-Sung.[13] At the same time, Heile pays particular attention to Pagh-Paan's positionality as an 'immigrant composer' and a devout Catholic (a religion once practised by Korea's lower classes, according to the author). These two aspects of her identity, Heile argues, jointly articulate her motivation to simultaneously draw on the 'European' modernist idiom and her native elements. Her music thus constitutes a case that is entirely different from, say, Tōru Takemitsu referencing elements of *gagaku* in his essentially western-idiom composition located in post-war Japan (a country where political upheavals under authoritarian, militarist regimes similar to those in contemporary Korea were absent).

Throughout the volume, Heile's argument is supported by a twofold premise: first, the fluidity of a global network of modernist music, with not a single but multiple locations of dynamic happening, making it necessary to narrate music history as constituted by global connectivity; second, this fluidity or multiplicity should not be reduced to an imaginary community of agents of equal power. Heile refers to Cho's edited volume on musical entanglements to explain his usage of 'hybridity' after Bhabha (which would embrace not only stylistic mixtures in a given musical work but also the 'impure' and precarious cultural standing — what Bhabha calls an in-betweenness — of human and institutional migration and mobility). Yet he does not adhere to Cho's somewhat naive formulation which fails to consider the imbalanced power relations at play in some modernist musical thinking ('one can expect that these music entanglements [between Germany and East Asia] will further intensify, mutually enriching both East Asia and Germany').[14] Instead, while stressing the polycentredness of a global network of musicians and music institutions, Heile ensures that these centres are not situated at equal distances and levels of visibility. In response to Cho's oversimplification of cultural exchanges, negotiations, and transfers between Germany and East Asia as 'bidirectional' cultural flows, Heile offers a steadfast counterargument:

> Flows can only be bidirectional on an even terrain. The study of entangled histories and transnational exchange therefore has to proceed from an analysis of power relations.

[13] Utz, *Neue Musik und Interkulturalität*; *Contemporary Music in East Asia*, ed. by Hee Sook Oh (Seoul University Press, 2014); *The Aesthetics of Interculturality in East Asian Contemporary Music*, ed. by Hilary Vanessa Finchum-Sung, special issue of *The World of Music*, n.s. 6.1 (2017).

[14] Cho, 'Introduction', in *Musical Entanglements between Germany and East Asia*, ed. by Cho, pp. 1–22 (p. 17).

https://doi.org/10.1017/rma.2025.10054 Published online by Cambridge University Press

> Indeed, the notion of bidirectionality rather than multi-directionality is telling: as long as across the world the only comparator remains 'the West', the relation is unequal. (p. 17)

This conviction of Heile is particularly evident in Chapter 3 on the ISCM, an institution that is perhaps the best case study for how the Eurocentric construct of 'modernist music' has been repeatedly tested and negotiated through clashes of alternative value judgements, cultural and aesthetic identities, and distinctive nationalist heritages. The chapter focuses on two questions: how the ISCM 'defined and carried out its role as an often inadvertent arbiter' and how 'it negotiated the tensions between different members and interests, notably those between the centre and the periphery' (p. 107). Heile responds by meticulously tracing the history of the ISCM and portraying it as rife with administrative confusion, internal contradictions, and political non-commitment. This is followed by an analysis of statistics and archival material, such as printed reports, minutes, and correspondence, from which one learns that there were sometimes significant disagreements as to whether the primary purpose of the ISCM should be to present the 'best' contemporary music or to promote global (i.e. inclusive) contemporary music scenes. While western European countries were disproportionately represented in the ISCM up until the last quarter of the previous century, there have also been sporadic efforts to overcome Eurocentrism, which are most clearly documented by a gradual shift in the programmes of the World Music Days, the concert series sponsored by the Society. A detailed analysis of these reveals a significant shift in representational balance at the beginning of the present century, coinciding with Asia's growing presence. Throughout the chapter, the reader gains an understanding of an international institution that has repeatedly failed to define musical internationalism as an ideal due to a lack of adequate internal dialogue and clashes between different policy-making ideas and ideological directions. Instead of extracting a utopian vision of global contemporary music, Heile accepts this as constituting its history.

Apart from in Chapter 5, a detailed discussion of music itself is largely absent from this volume. I believe the effectiveness of Heile's global historiography of musical modernism owes much to this fact. From Jonathan Bellman's and Ralph Locke's revisionist volumes, which reinterpreted nineteenth-century musical exoticism as part of artistic rhetoric, thus challenging contemporary ideological criticism after Said, to the volumes edited by Frederick Lau and Yayoi Uno Everett and by Finchum-Sung, the scholarship of musicology has taken for granted so-called cross-culturalism as manifested in musical composition.[15] While non-western scholars also participate in such discourses, treating a specific music material as originating from a specific single culture can lead to essentialist pitfalls. As Heile suggests by referencing Bhabha, no piece of music from the twentieth century can be described as a 'unity' or 'synthesis' of different musical cultures because no musical element can be traced back to a single point of origin — it is simply hybrid (pp. 14–15). Instead, Heile focuses on *institutional* globalization: the ISCM is certainly one example, as are *The Rite* in music history and the spread of dodecaphony from Austria to the world, the latter sometimes entirely transformed in its aesthetic connotations. This makes it possible to treat global-level entanglements not as the product of premeditated acts by concerned agents, but as mechanisms in which those same agents are deeply implicated, whether they like it or not and whether they are aware of it or not. Similar attempts have recently been observed by scholars in fields outside of musicology; one

[15] Jonathan Bellman, *The Exotic in Western Music* (Northeastern University Press, 1998); Ralph P. Locke, *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections* (Cambridge University Press, 2009); *Locating East Asia in Western Art Music*, ed. by Yayoi Uno Everett and Frederick Lau (Wesleyan University Press, 2004).

https://doi.org/10.1017/rma.2025.10054 Published online by Cambridge University Press

example is a forum by historians Friedemann Pestel and Martin Rempe titled 'Infrastructures of Musical Globalization, 1850–2000'.[16] The authors treat infrastructures as 'factors of connectivity *and* dysconnectivity' (emphasis added), defining them as things that 'unlock the relational qualities between historical processes and their material dimension'.[17] Indeed, this notion of 'infrastructures' may resonate with another of Heile's recent projects, on the German composer and diplomat Hans-Joachim Koellreutter.[18] In this project, a case study of the Darmstadt Summer Music Courses serves as a lens through which to examine how festivals of modern music held in Asia participate in the global construction of European-led modernist music as an infrastructural institution. (One side note is that Koellreutter's attempt to establish a surrogate version of Darmstadt in Japan never materialized due to strong resistance by his Japanese counterpart. It makes an interesting case of historical entanglements that involve not only cooperation and friendly connectivity but also repulsion and disconnection.)

***

Returning to my initial point about global entanglements and positionality: I would like to stress the question of how we can narrate music history not only as consisting of common motivations and concerns but also as reflecting and embracing the different ways in which they are perceived or conceptualized across cultural contexts. Historiographies are subject to constant changes in viewpoint from the various people who tell the story of history. The biggest regret I have with *Twentieth-Century Music in the West* is that while it teaches its readers (supposedly undergraduates) about various individuals, their works, and their circumstances — in other words, facts — it fails to demonstrate that these 'facts' (i.e. 'musical facts', after Dahlhaus) are not equivalent to music *historiographical* facts, since the latter always require a narrating subject, with her/his own cultural and historical background as well as her/his own scholarly positionality, to perform the narrating act.[19] While the book extensively references previously published literature and thus presents itself as a good introduction to classical and popular music of the previous century for those who want to know a bit about a lot of things, it reads as though it were a product of artificial intelligence into which a vast number of English-language texts on related topics were fed. There is little indication of how the authors *themselves* read, digested, and questioned the liminality that characterized twentieth-century musicians and their works, in terms of the self and the other, the mainstream and the alternative, and the 'western' and the 'non-western'. They also seem to overlook the possibility that writing about European and North American musicians and their music (including its reception) does not have to exclude 'non-western' perspectives that may disagree with the perspectives they have chosen to adopt. In this way, the book is 'Twentieth-Century Music in the West as Narrated in the West by the Western Subject'. When placed side by side with Heile's *Musical Modernism in Global Perspective*, it is hoped that the notion of 'historical entanglements' and the like, such as 'intertwining', shall be recognized as more than just a sales disclaimer.

[16] Friedemann Pestel and Martin Rempe, 'Infrastructures of Musical Globalization, 1850–2000: Introduction', *New Global Studies*, 19.2 (2025), pp. 1–23, doi:10.1515/ngs-2025-0003.
[17] Ibid., pp. 2 and 3.
[18] Heile, 'Toward a World without Opposites: Hans-Joachim Koellreutter and Japan', paper presented at the 7th Biennial Conference of the International Musicological Society East Asia (Tainan, 29 October 2023).
[19] Carl Dahlhaus, *Foundations of Music History*, ed. by J. B. Robinson (Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 33.

https://doi.org/10.1017/rma.2025.10054 Published online by Cambridge University Press