

REVIEWS

Although it is generally undervalued in the audits of research that universities are put through these days, reviewing the most significant publications seems to us a vital part of the research process. This issue of *tcm* includes what we believe to be the first instance in a musicological journal of a double review, of *Postmodern Music / Postmodern Thought*, ed. Judy Lochhead and Joseph Auner: a review article by Adam Krims is followed by a review by Peter Sedgwick. We hope that the provision of differing perspectives within the same covers will prove stimulating. More such double reviews will be commissioned for publications which seem to us either to break new ground, or to synthesize ideas, in a way that is likely to impact on a wide range of scholarship.

Review article

twentieth-century music © 2004 Cambridge University Press
DOI: 10.1017/S147857220421009X Printed in the United Kingdom

Postmodern Musicology in Combined Development: a Review of Judy Lochhead and Joseph Auner, eds, *Postmodern Music / Postmodern Thought* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), ISBN 0815338198 (hb), 0815338201 (pb)

Adam Krims

In Trotsky's classic theory of uneven development, 'combined development'¹ designates how some regions may graft characteristics of new production relations onto older formations: examples might include the information economies of Guangzhou and Lagos, integrated to early capitalist, or even older, social orders. 'Combined development' provides a handy metaphor for *Postmodern Music / Postmodern Thought*, suggesting the grafting of post-Marxist 'postmodern theory' onto a musicological field that never substantively encountered Marxism, instead embracing ideologies that had already repudiated it.

The essays (mostly selected from an earlier conference) present a hodge-podge of topics, but they distinguish themselves by concentrating, more than, say, collections edited by Schwarz *et al.* and Krims, on postmodern music (or the music of postmodernity).² Many entries offer little theoretical analysis, instead filling gaps in the historical record of twentieth-century music: Anne LeBaron relates surrealism to postmodern musical aesthetics; Joakim Tillman tracks shifting definitions and political stances toward postmodernism in 1980s and 1990s Germany; Jane Piper Clendinning argues for some broad formal analogues between postmodern architecture and music; Mark Berry contends that George Rochberg belongs

- 1 Leon Trotsky, *The Russian Revolution: the Overthrow of Tzarism and the Triumph of the Soviets*, trans. Max Eastman, ed. F. W. Dupee (New York: Anchor Books, 1989).
- 2 *Keeping Score: Music, Disciplinarity, Culture*, ed. David Schwarz, Anahid Kassabian, and Lawrence Siegel (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1997); and *Music/Ideology: Resisting the Aesthetic*, ed. Adam Krims (New York and London: Routledge, 1998).

more in the 'radical' than the 'neoconservative' camp of postmodern composers; Paul Attinello maps Kagel's simultaneous engagement and dismemberment of modernist practices; Björn Heile similarly maps Kagel's simultaneous deployment of collage and compositional control (perhaps redundantly, after Attinello's much more extensive contribution); and Jason Hanley informs those who would not have guessed that music contributes, with filmic technique, to the fragmentation of time and narrative in *Natural Born Killers*. Some of these less theoretically ambitious historical essays are well done: Attinello, in particular, offers a compellingly detailed and subtle glimpse of a developing push through modernist form and ideology to something (then) not yet named. His essay paints a nuanced, powerful portrait of post-War music culture and also boasts the rare virtue of seriously examining recorded performance.

But it is the more explicitly theoretically engaged essays that offer the greatest symptomatic value, the most intimate glimpse of the jagged landscape of what postmodern theory looks like in combined development. One weakness immediately presents itself, the obvious novelty of the theoretical field for many contributors, yielding blunders startling in published work. So, for example, Ross Feller, in an otherwise routine traversal of some works by Lachenmann and Ferneyhough, blends without explanation a misconceived Derridian 'play' with Lyotardian descriptions of postmodern characteristics and Schlovsky's *ostranenie* (!) to produce a (somehow) 'resistant' postmodernism. Meanwhile, Luke Howard, concluding a valuable enumeration of differing receptions of Górecki's Third Symphony, professes to take issue with Jameson's influential account of 'the postmodern', all the while arguing precisely Jameson's point.³ In the latter case, the stumbling block may be a fetishized confinement to famous passages of stylistic description, deleting the more substantive Hegelian–Marxist historicizing argument.

Indeed, without that historicizing tendency as background, postmodern theory, and Cultural Studies in particular, risks degradation to formulaic celebrations of aesthetic avant-gardes, cheering the upsetting of familiar cultural binaries or hierarchies, launched from one's favoured social location. Thus, Renée Coulombe valorizes Cornershop as distanced from – sorry, resistant to – any notion of authenticity, liberating us all by embracing their own hybridity ('Postmodern Polyamory or Postcolonial Challenge?: Cornershop's Dialogue from West, To East, To West . . .'). Most of the essay describes the various contexts in which the group projects its hybridity, 'bringing together a vast array of sounds sampled from all over the world, and creating something new *without* imposing a system of dominance over the original' (185, emphasis Coulombe's). How, exactly, one may determine the absence of a system of dominance is, importantly, never specified – such determinations, in any case, would most likely lie in the analysis of political economy, beyond the ecstatic two-dimensional web of intertextuality the essay traces. One may imagine, with trepidation, a spate of similar conference papers and essays, happily hoisting the flag of 'post-coloniality' for endless combinations of West and East, colonizer and colonized, dominator and

3 Fredric Jameson, 'Postmodernism, Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism', *New Left Review* 146 (1984), 59–92.

dominated, all 'resisting' any final determinate identity;⁴ that would truly be a loss, since within postmodern scholarship, surely post-colonial studies has fared among the best in creating meaningful continuities between text and social relations.⁵ Its reduction to paper-thin and formulaic boosterism would surely constitute a major loss for one of the most promising areas of postmodern inquiry.

Indeed, the draining of theoretical complexity, such as it existed in postmodern theory during its (long past) heyday, haunts many essays in the collection; and, perhaps not surprisingly, several older, classic formulations, especially Jameson and Lyotard, recur as points of reference, without consideration that debates about postmodernism and post-modernity continued and were refined after 1984.⁶ All this might be attributed to the relative novelty of such theory in musicological curricula – perhaps we might all be forgiven for not having mastered the literature. But the sparsity of theoretical engagement in the volume is more deeply symptomatic, I believe, and here the combined development metaphor will again prove useful: the end-run musicology has tried to accomplish around Marxism has weakened our *sociological imagination*, substituting pat theoretical slogans for any sense that the world we examine is undergoing systematic changes somehow related to our new knowledge about it. The three most theoretically substantive and successful essays in this collection all confirm this speculation.

Martin Scherzinger's 'Feminine/Feminist? In Quest of Names with No Experience [Yet]' entangles gender-studies critiques of music analysis (principally by Joseph Dubiel and Benjamin Boretz) with resolutely modernist dialectics. Questioning the often fetishized privilege of 'the particular' (and its transcoding as 'the feminine'), Scherzinger unpacks the social meanings of music-theoretical generalization and the elusive (politically charged) search for its Other. Turning eventually to Lukács and Hegel, he problematizes some of the more simplistic schemata offered in the name of gender studies and dramatizes their stakes. Scherzinger provides a truly thoughtful and challenging model for theorizing music analysis and gender, vastly more powerful than the moralizing trends in music gender studies he scrupulously critiques.

While Scherzinger revisits the dialectic, David Brackett, in '“Where's It At?”: Postmodern Theory and the Contemporary Musical Field', activates a more positive sociology, arguing 'that the reciprocal influence of economic and technological determinations with musical style has not merged the spheres of “high” and “low” musics' (207), substantial shifts notwithstanding. He supports his contention with a survey of some musics both 'high' and 'low', at each point allowing his gaze to range across musical poetics to institutional determinants of production and consumption. Encompassing the latter field allows Brackett

4 Such formulas cannot be laid entirely at the feet of musicology: Russell Potter marches through the same paces; see his *Spectacular Vernaculars: Hip-Hop and the Politics of Postmodernism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).

5 Stephen Slemon, 'Unsettling the Empire: Resistance Theory for the Second World', *World Literature Written in English* 30/2 (1990), 30–41; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

6 Fredric Jameson, 'Postmodernism'; Jean François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: a Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

to consider the institutional funding and the composition of audiences inseparably from formal characteristics of John Zorn, Aaron Jay Kernis, and other purportedly postmodern 'art-music' composers; the richly nuanced results render all the more startling the disappearance of such institutional (and, of course, sociological) concerns from discussions of Beck, Björk, and the Wu-Tang Clan (the latter sidestepping concerns specific to rap style). Thus, contrary to what one might expect from the author of one of the better books on popular music analysis,⁷ the more convincing and substantive arguments encompass the 'high' genres; and despite an unexplained will to avoid a 'totalizing rubric' (210), the closer brush with totalization in his discussion of 'downtown' art-music culture actually conjures his most original and theoretically sophisticated observations. The essay closes promisingly, recontextualizing his pop-music discussion in Andrew Goodwin's important contention that purveyors of postmodernist optimism tend to focus myopically on marginal avant-gardes, rather than more mundane mainstreams; Brackett extends the point with the provocative prospect of 'the failure of a critically-sanctioned "center" to progress' (223).⁸ Most intriguingly, remaining focused on residual boundaries between 'high' and 'low' musics, he specifies that nevertheless those 'categories have shifted and hierarchies have eroded, especially among those with large amounts of cultural capital' (224); the very suggestion that perhaps phenomena tagged as 'postmodern' belong more to some (here Weberian) classes than others, promises an initial glimpse of postmodernism as a worldly phenomenon (in a sense of 'worldliness' subsuming and extending the more common post-Foucauldian usage).

Such sociological intimations are best developed in Timothy Taylor's 'Music and Musical Practices in Postmodernity'. As the final word in his title indicates, Taylor concerns himself not with a fetishized conception of style or resistance, but rather with a multifaceted slice of history, namely the present, and its musical practices of production, dissemination, and reception. Thus, his discussion of purportedly postmodern music grows from a discussion of 'postmodern political economy' (100–102). Taylor builds on the powerful sociological work of Scott Lash and John Urry,⁹ providing a conception of postmodernity that is simultaneously relations of production, characteristics of goods and services, cultural configuration – and yes, musical style, in the broadest sense. Like Brackett, but in greater elaboration, Taylor sees, in what is often mystified as a new cultural dominant, the particular activities of new kinds of producers and consumers of 'design intensity'.¹⁰ Some of the imperfections in Taylor's essay stem from the still rough edges of his totalization: thus, for instance, the

7 David Brackett, *Interpreting Popular Music* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2000).

8 See Andrew Goodwin, 'Popular Music and Postmodern Theory', *Cultural Studies* 5/2 (1991), 174–190. Ironically, Fredric Jameson's theories would be helpful here – not the essay cited *ad infinitum* in the collection ('Post-modernism'), but rather one of his antinomies of 'late' capitalism, counterposing its restless motion to its utter stasis; see Jameson, *The Seeds of Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

9 Scott Lash and John Urry, *The End of Organised Capitalism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), and *Economies of Signs and Space* (London: Sage, 1994). See also Adam Krims, 'Marxism, Urban Geography and Classical Recording: an Alternative to Cultural Studies', *Music Analysis* 20/3 (2001), 347–63 and 'Marxist Music Analysis without Adorno: Popular Music and Urban Geography', in *Analyzing Popular Music*, ed. Allan Moore (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

10 See Lash and Urry, *Economies of Sign and Space*, and Krims, 'Marxism, Urban Geography and Classical Recording'.

socio-geographic particularity of *urban* agglomerations, while dominating his examples, escapes visibility in his theoretical framework.¹¹ More tellingly, Taylor allows himself to reference 'post-Fordist modes of production' (103), arguably more than a simple terminological boner, since even in the singular it misrepresents what post-Fordism purportedly represents (a mode of *accumulation*). Even in its original formulation by Piore and Sabel,¹² and most especially for David Harvey (whom Taylor is here citing),¹³ post-Fordism (and Lash and Urry's related concepts of reflexivity and design intensity) remains an aspect of the *capitalist mode of production* and a strategy of relative surplus value, a partial solution to crises of accumulation in manufacturing. Outside that theoretical framework, 'post-Fordism' loses much of its explanatory force. Nonetheless, the nuanced sociological explanation, and theoretical dexterity, lend Taylor's essay a force and subtlety consistently missing from most essays in this collection, a model of productive engagement with the idea of the 'postmodern'.

Most of all, the success of Taylor's essay could suggest just how much the shortcomings of postmodern music studies – for example, the repetitious celebration of this or that 'subversion' – may stem from the end-run musicology has made around Marxism itself. In other fields (literature, sociology, etc.) the proposal of postmodern theories as *successors* to Marxism (legitimate or not) entailed a responsibility to refashion the latter's explanatory richness; but musicology engages postmodern theory piecemeal, absorbing by an often haphazard osmosis the term 'totalizing' as a thought error, and Cold War representations of Marxism as rigid dogmatism. The great loss here is less Marxist methodology than an awareness of the richness of social life, the unity of social relations and aesthetics (faintly echoed in postmodern declarations of aesthetics as social relations by fiat).

As a close corollary, what may be striking about most essays in the collection, to those accustomed to assuming that postmodern theory is politically 'progressive', is their intransigent *conservatism*: methodologically closed (the most so while disowning closure), socially regressive and inert (the most so when celebrating 'subversion'), and above all celebratory of the dizzying complexities of capital, much of *Postmodern Music / Postmodern Thought* could have been staged to dramatize Fredric Jameson's characterization of postmodernism as the cultural logic of late capitalism. The essay by the collection's best-known postmodern theorist, E. Ann Kaplan ('The Politics of Feminism, Postmodernism, and Rock: Revisited, with reference to Parmar's Righteous Babes'), handily illustrates Jameson's point, as Kaplan makes peace with the socially constructive function of commercial culture, in territory already well tread by Lipsitz and many others (including Marx and Engels).¹⁴ Considering

11 Derek Wynne and Justin O'Connor, 'Consumption and the Postmodern City', *Urban Studies* 35/5–6 (1998), 841–64. See also Adam Krims, *Music and Urban Geography* (New York: Routledge, forthcoming).

12 Michael Piore and Charles Sabel, *The Second Industrial Divide: Possibilities for Prosperity* (New York: Basic Books, 1984).

13 David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: an Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989).

14 George Lipsitz, *Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism, and the Poetics of Place* (London: Verso, 1994); Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Communist Manifesto: a Modern Edition*, introduction by Eric Hobsbawm (London: Verso, 1998).

postmodern theory as faintly disguised conservatism helps to make sense of the quick and massive conversion of (at least large sectors of) North American and British musical academia to Cultural Studies and postmodern theory generally. The editorship of journals, the many graduate programs specializing in postmodern cultural theory, the numerous articles, book series, and conference sessions – all that, far from representing a wholesale transformation, a break with the past, builds on, and deepens, the ideological tendencies it disavows. The moralizing and sweeping judgements about history proliferate, rather than being critically dismantled; the understanding of culture often defaults into repetitious celebrations of symbolic subversion, rather than flourishing in liberated multiplicity. Here, too, combined development pointedly characterizes this otherwise surprising regressiveness: Trotsky notes how imported cutting-edge industrial techniques and social organization, far from being politically emancipatory (as in integrated development), in fact entrenched existing feudal relations in Russia.¹⁵ The metaphor achieves completion, then, as the grafting of postmodern theory onto musicology deepens its most regressive tendencies – not always, of course, but more often than we generally recognize.

It is most unlikely that musicology, in a quantum leap, will transcend its enthrallment to postmodern theory, integrate its combined development, and revisit the Marxism that lies buried in the shadows, just as Guangzhou or Lagos could never simply arise from the circuit of world capital and work through intermediate social developments. Nor should we demand such a clean break, in any case anathema to postmodern ideology; surely *some* advantage lies in working through contemporary forms of knowledge. Instead, we may demand that in the midst of the looming postmodern regimentation, those seriously claiming to perform *critical* musicology underline *the historicity of postmodern theory itself*. As far as an engagement with Marxism is concerned – an engagement not to be confused with the decontextualized or de-Marxified ‘Adorno’ widely discussed lately – this is beginning, slowly; and nothing could bode better for postmodern musicology.¹⁶ In the meantime, *Postmodern Music/Postmodern Thought* offers an eloquent illustration of just how profoundly it is needed.

twentieth-century music © 2004 Cambridge University Press
DOI: 10.1017/S14785722044220096 Printed in the United Kingdom

Reviews

Judy Lochhead and Joseph Auner, eds, *Postmodern Music / Postmodern Thought*

Lists have their uses. They can enable us to do things in an organized way. When one goes shopping for groceries, for example, the presence of a shopping list can allow for the efficient

¹⁵ Leon Trotsky, *The Russian Revolution*.

¹⁶ See Krims, ‘Marxist Music Analysis Without Adorno’.

procurement of the produce one has in advance chosen as fitting for the week's planned consumption of food. There are also limits to how useful lists can be. For example, once drawn up, a list implies that something already exists that corresponds both to its content and to the rationale according to which it was constructed. This generally works for grocery shopping, but not necessarily for other things. Take the kind of list offered by Jonathan D. Kramer in his essay 'The Nature and Origins of Musical Postmodernism'. Having rightly, I think, begun by stating that 'Postmodernism is a maddeningly imprecise musical concept' Kramer then poses eight questions concerning what the term 'postmodern' might mean. These questions give way to a larger one, 'simply, what is postmodernism?' Kramer points out that there are 'some critics' who think of postmodernism as a nostalgic return to a past consisting of recognisable tunes, regular rhythms, tonality, and the like. In such a view, the postmodern turn expresses a conservative desire to recapture a lost sense of unity. This conception, Kramer argues, is incorrect. Specifically 'postmodern' works by figures such as Krauze, Adams, Górecki and others 'do not so much conserve as radically transform the past, as – each in its own way – they simultaneously embrace and repudiate history'. Such a repudiation of the past is achieved by 'going beyond the modernist practices of such composers as Berlioz, Liszt and Wagner' (14). The notion of an engagement with a past that abandons a modernist nostalgia for unity can then be extended. Whereas antimodernists and modernists alike see 'unity as a prerequisite for musical sense[,] for some postmodernists, unity is an option'. We are thereby presented by Kramer with a dichotomy that, implicitly at least, suggests that there is a *method* whereby one can justifiably assert what it is that makes postmodernist works postmodern. According to such a method, if we are presented with a piece that abandons 'unity' in favour of disunity, we are entitled to infer it is perhaps 'postmodern'. For Kramer, the postmodern embrace of disunity allows for the appropriation of music from other periods and cultures in a manner that simply (and neutrally) cites it. Such a procedure of quotation offers the music to the listener 'with neither distortion nor musical commentary' and hence allows it 'simply [to] be what it is' (15). Stylistic disunity not only tells you which contemporary music is postmodern; it tells you that works that may look like 'precursors' of postmodernism (for example, Ives's *Three Places in New England*, Mahler's Seventh or Nielsen's Sixth Symphony) are also 'actually postmodern' (16).

What bothers me about Kramer's approach is linked to the methodological tendency it exhibits. This is an issue that takes us back to the question of lists. Having been offered the above opposition between unity on the one hand and eclectic disunity on the other, we are then offered a list which includes fifteen other characteristics that serve to characterize postmodern music. These include a tendency simultaneously to break with and to extend the logic of modernism, irony, the rejection of the distinction between 'high' and 'low' art, quotation (as mentioned above), fragmentation, plurality, multiple meanings, an emphasis on the role of the listener in the construction of musical meaning. Kramer's list is tentative in one important respect: 'Not many pieces exhibit all these traits, and thus it is futile to label a work as exclusively postmodern. Also, I would find it difficult to locate a work that exhibits none of these traits. I caution the reader, therefore, against using these sixteen traits as a checklist ... postmodern music is not a neat category with rigid boundaries' (17). This comment straightaway invites a question. Why draw up a list in the first place if what you are

talking about (postmodernism) is just as prone to fail to exhibit some of these characteristics as what you are *not* talking about (modernism, neo-conservatism, etc.) is prone to exhibiting some of them? One is thereby left with the impression that an approach of this kind expresses a methodological urge to categorize that, by definition, flies in the face of its avowed subject matter.

The urge to formulate a method is, of course, characteristic of a tendency that philosophers are all too well aware of. When Descartes, in the *Discourse on Method* (1637)¹ provides a list of four rules that establish what is to count as the correct method for attaining knowledge, the second of these springs to mind in the current context. This rule states that one should divide the object or problem under discussion into as many parts as one can. The project of analysis thereby aims at arriving at an exhaustive account of all the parts that, together, make up the whole, with a view to resolving that whole. What this method presupposes is precisely that there is just such a whole that is amenable to this form of analysis. A notion of unity, in other words, is already presupposed before analysis can get under way. Such a view is perhaps a trifle paradoxical if what one is talking about, in this case postmodernism, entails at least suspending the methodological primacy of the concept of unity. The question, which is one that needs to be posed in relation to postmodernism no less than in relation to the modernist conception of knowledge that Descartes' thought is often held to initiate in philosophy, is: does such a unity exist? This is a problem that is posed by Timothy D. Taylor in his essay 'Music and Musical Practices in Postmodernity'. Taylor surveys the question of postmodernism from a rather different perspective than Kramer. From the outset, Taylor seeks to render postmodernism a problematic notion. As a prelude to this problematization Taylor turns to the works of writers such as David Harvey and Fredric Jameson, figures whose importance lies in the fact that they emphasize the social, economic and cultural conditions associated with the use of the term 'postmodernism'. Like Kramer, we are offered a range of lists for consideration. The lists in this instance, however, are not Taylor's but ones culled by him from texts by Hassan, Jenks and Harvey – in the last case from *The Condition of Postmodernity*.² Taylor notes that Harvey's book (one that I share his great admiration for) powerfully argues for the view that the Fordist centrally organized mode of industrial production has given way to a flexible mode of production in which markets, products, and their consumption are governed by an increasingly decentralized logic. However, Taylor obviously shares my suspicion of lists. Taylor notes that Harvey himself considers the oppositions that are inevitably formulated by his own list contrasting 'Fordist Modernity' with 'Flexible Postmodernity' to be themselves problematic. The use of such a list, Taylor argues, has the effect of concealing 'the many ways that ideas and practices from one period survive into the next'. Hence, the accompanying 'danger is that the subtlety of Harvey's thought in his prose . . . will be lost on those who want to view postmodernism as nothing but lists' (98). Instead of assuming that such lists are adequate, and taking his cue in

1 René Descartes, *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. Donald A Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1999).

2 David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: an Inquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989).

part from the subtler analysis offered in Harvey's prose, Taylor then engages in a line of discussion that emphasizes the 'political-economic realities' that need to be addressed in any analysis of cultural terms such as 'postmodernism'. He contrasts this approach to one that has become prevalent in the academic discussion of music, which has, he says, tended to emphasize questions of style independently of such realities. If we view 'postmodernism' as a term that is inextricably entwined with the political-economic sphere, then issues of marketing, production, and consumption cannot but be central to an understanding of its significance. Taylor's point, in brief and simplified terms, is that we need to analyze such things as the marketing practices and sensibilities that characterize the dissemination of avowedly 'postmodern' music. Some of these practices and sensibilities have changed, and some have not. Thus, 'slapping on a label doesn't tell us much . . . It may be that the best way to understand contemporary cultural production by anyone is to throw out the P-word altogether, for in its very popularity it has ceased to be very useful – it obscures more than it reveals' (111). Instead, Taylor argues, it might be much better to develop 'more specific discourses that can help us understand particular forms and formations' (112). Such analyses would gain their legitimacy precisely by virtue of their refusal to engage in the kind of general claims that retention of the word 'postmodernism' invites.

The two essays mentioned above in many ways frame the volume as a whole. Anne LeBaron explores the relevance of surrealist aesthetics to postmodern music. Joakim Tillman provides a detailed and thorough engagement with debates about postmodernism in the context of German musicology. Jane Piper Clendinning explores stylistic parallels between postmodern architecture and postmodern music. Martin Scherzinger seeks to identify and assess a politically oriented mode of "'feminine" hearing' with a view to undermining accepted distinctions between 'formalist close listening and . . . post-structuralist inspired musical interpretation' (141). Renée T. Coulombe fuses debates about issues of style with developments in postcolonial theory. Luke Howard discusses Górecki's Third Symphony (specifically its reception, codification as 'postmodern', and subsequent 'amalgamation with pop song') arguing that it is the role of consumption rather than production that initiates the collapse of the distinction between 'high' and 'mass' culture that Jameson holds to be characteristic of postmodernism. David Brackett (in contrast to Howard and in a manner akin to Taylor) argues that the view of postmodernism as collapsing categorial distinctions between 'high' and 'low' art 'ignores several aspects of contemporary musical production and consumption' (207). According to Brackett, the value of a word like 'postmodernism' lies in its ability to signify not the dissolution of such categories but the forming of 'new relationships' between them, specifically in relation to 'shifts in the economic and technological levels of production' (224). Mark Berry provides a careful analysis of Rochberg's Third String Quartet, both in the historically specific context of 'a larger public discourse on the arts and society in the 1960s and 1970s' (239) and in terms of its stylistic features. This dual approach is adopted with a view to questioning not only the Quartet's categorization by some scholars as exemplifying a 'neoconservative postmodernism' but also the usefulness of the 'postmodern' label itself. Ross Feller considers stylistic elements in the works of Lachenmann and Ferneyhough to reflect a postmodernism codified in terms of a pluralistic cultural situation defined in terms of 'excess and complexity far beyond that found in any

other period in history' (261). The contributions of Paul Attinello and Björn Heile explore the works of Mauricio Kagel. Where the former takes Kagel's works to embody a post-modernist aesthetic that presents modernist fragments with a view to demonstrating their vacuous nature, the latter, in contrast, questions the modernist–postmodernist opposition, regarding the terms as dialogically related and equally unsuitable as a means of categorizing Kagel's output. Krin Gabbard considers the film-maker Spike Lee's appropriations of Copland's music within a postmodernist context where 'sounds and images do not adhere to grand narratives but circulate freely among systems of meaning that escape the conventional boundaries of academic disciplines' (305). E. Ann Kaplan takes a backward glance at debates about the politics of feminism, postmodernism, and rock music in the 1980s, seeking to investigate the tensions between varieties of feminist discourse and postmodernist aesthetics. Finally, Jason Hanley considers the way in which 'music contributes to the . . . "postmodern narrative discourse"' of the film *Natural Born Killers* (335). Some of these essays tend to follow Kramer in taking the 'postmodern' category to indicate certain stylistic characteristics and then using this category to frame their analyses of specific works or issues. Others are more akin to Taylor in that they stress the historical, political and social dimensions of production and consumption in the construction of aesthetic attitudes, sometimes with a view to questioning the validity of the postmodern category, sometimes not. Others, unsurprisingly, fall somewhere between these two poles. The volume, taken as a whole, is hence instructive and valuable.

That said, one is left wondering about a few things. For example, given the importance of Lyotard's work in framing debates about postmodernism a contribution that dealt specifically with him would have been welcome. I mention this not simply because of Lyotard's role in the dissemination and popularization of the word. It is also worth recalling that Lyotard himself wrote about music (see *The Inhuman*³). Additionally, what is notable about Lyotard's later work (and hence invites some comment) is its increasing suspicion of the 'postmodern' label, exemplified in his turning in 1986–7 to the phrase 'rewriting modernity'. This phrase, Lyotard argues, 'shows up the pointlessness of any periodization of cultural history in terms of "pre-" and "post-", before and after, for the simple reason that it leaves unquestioned the position of the "now", of the present from which one is supposed to be able to achieve a legitimate perspective on a chronological succession'.⁴ The 'post-' in 'post-modernity', in short, is best abandoned. Even before this, in *The Differend* (1983), Lyotard seems to be moving in the direction of rendering the term problematic:

Are 'we' not telling, whether bitterly or gladly, the great narrative of the end of great narratives? For thought to remain modern, doesn't it suffice that it think in terms of the end of some history? Or, is postmodernity the pastime of an old man who scrounges in the garbage-heap of finality looking for leftovers, who

3 See Jean-François Lyotard, *The Inhuman: Reflection on Time*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 153–64.

4 Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 24.

brandishes unconsciousnesses, lapses, limits, confines, goulags, parataxes, non-senses, or paradoxes, and who turns this into the glory of his novelty, into his promise of change? But this too is a goal for a certain humanity. A genre.⁵

To affirm the 'post-' in 'postmodernism', in other words, means recapitulating the very logic of the modernity one thought one had escaped, its 'meta-narrative' ambitions now presented in paradoxical form. But as soon as the paradox is affirmed, one must also accept that this entails affirming a perspective characterized by a generic partiality: a pluralism that cannot be all-encompassing in spite of its ambitions to the contrary, an avowal of disunity that in its very formulation unifies. It is perhaps for this reason that, against expectations, Lyotard ultimately reserves a privileged place for philosophy: 'Philosophical discourse has as its rule to discover its rule: its *a priori* is what it has at stake'.⁶ This, in effect, amounts to the contention that philosophical discourse retains a special priority in that it is open-ended, since it does not operate according to a rule that is known in advance. The implications of this view for our understanding of the cultural movements associated with the term 'postmodernism' invite further exploration, not least in connection with the realm of musical studies.

Peter Sedgwick

twentieth-century music © 2004 Cambridge University Press
DOI: 10.1017/S1478572204230092 Printed in the United Kingdom

Stan Hawkins, *Settling the Pop Score: Pop Texts and Identity Politics* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), ISBN 0754603512 (hb), 0754603520 (pb); Sheila Whiteley, *Women and Popular Music: Sexuality, Identity and Subjectivity* (New York and London: Routledge, 2000), ISBN 0 415 21189 1 (hb), 0 415 21190 5 (pb)

Although the two books that form the focus of this review share common subject matter (for example, the relationship between pop music texts and identity), they differ in the extent to which they focus on the historical and the textual: whereas Stan Hawkins presents a predominantly textual analysis of the music of a limited number of performers, Sheila Whiteley provides a historical overview of female pop performers and singer-songwriters in Britain and America from the 1960s to the end of the twentieth century. In this review I situate both books within the broader context of understanding how music might relate to, what might it have to do with, identity and the related notion of subjectivity. I begin with a descriptive account of each before considering some of the wider implications that, together, these two books raise.

5 Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, trans. Georges Van Den Abele (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), section 182, 135–36.

6 Lyotard, *The Differend*, 98.

Settling the Pop Score fits into a strand of musicology that offers interpretations of musical texts based on an analysis of musical materials and discursive contexts of musical reception.¹ It offers a set of readings that pertain to identity politics: ‘an underlying thread concerns the general idea that a politics of identity can be approached through interpreting aspects of compositional design, sonic gesture, and musical structure, alongside matters relating to the various components of nationality, race, age, ethnicity, sexuality, and gender’ (xi). The range of issues tackled in any one chapter, and in the book as a whole, is diverse: for example, ten different aims are given for the chapter on Morrissey. The book avoids a single, linearly pursued argument: many chapters could have tackled more issues, or fewer, without detriment to the overall argument, and similarly the book could have included fewer case studies. The exception to this is perhaps the chapter on Prince, which brings together issues of gender, sexuality, racial identity, and pop texts raised during the preceding chapters.

Five case studies are presented from 1980s British and American pop, alongside an introductory chapter which sets out the general methodology and issues to be addressed. The particular case studies chosen (Madonna, Morrissey, Annie Lennox, The Pet Shop Boys, and Prince) are comparable in terms of period and their relationship to the newly emergent music video (MTV), while allowing discussion of a range of identity issues: namely, gender, sexuality, and race. They also have the advantage of being generally available in recorded form – a useful asset in the absence of an accompanying sound recording. Many of these chapters have previously been published as journal articles, but bringing them together in this way has a useful cumulative effect and provides a perspective on methodology and the representation of identity which would otherwise be less visible.

The methodology is the same in each case study: a combination of ‘analysis’ (a term Hawkins uses here to refer to the discussion of musical structures) and ‘reading’ (the broader contextualization of these musical materials). Within each chapter the emphasis is on the end-product of the reading (that is, the kind of identity issues raised by the text in its context as seen by Hawkins) rather than the method by which the reading is reached. The technique of reading is semiotic in character – based on the reading of musical codes which ‘attach arbitrarily to the discourses that construct them’ (9). Perception of codes depends upon listener competence and personal understandings of social context, and for this reason Hawkins is careful to point out that the readings he presents are mediated by his own personal experiences (‘What these texts have signified for me’), and those privileged by the media and record industry (although the influence of the latter are less explicit in his readings – an issue I return to below).

As an illustration of some of the advantages and pitfalls of this method I focus on one example. In his discussion of Madonna Hawkins provides a rare moment of focus on musical materials in Madonna scholarship. He shows that there are interesting things to hear in this music (were we in any doubt), and here, as elsewhere, he discusses musical pleasure, fun, irony, and eroticism – elements largely ignored in other writing about pop-music materials.

¹ See, for example, David Brackett, *Interpreting Popular Music* (Berkeley and London: California University Press, 2000); and *Reading Pop: Approaches to Textual Analysis in Popular Music*, ed. Richard Middleton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Where the pitfalls appear is in terms of the status of the readings produced: analysis of tracks proceeds from structures to interpretation with little discussion of the coding or decoding involved. Thus, the analysis of the track 'Survival' refers to 'phallic snare shots' (56), but there is no discussion of the process by which this reading is reached. In other words, the method consists not of revealing how or why the music might be read in a certain way (that is, how Hawkins comes to hear these snare shots as phallic), but instead consists of presenting a reading, together with any implications of this reading for the representation/construction of identity. Although his aim may have been to show how music shapes our identities (xi) what we get is not an account of this process, but a description of its end result: the kinds of identities which these texts afford for Hawkins as a reader of the texts. The book contributes to discourse on the kinds of identities that might be afforded by pop rather than to understanding processes of identity formation – an interesting counterpoint to recent publications on identity in other domains of musicology.²

One of the central methodological differences between *Settling the Pop Score*, and Sheila Whiteley's *Women and Popular Music* is that Whiteley's account presents more by way of historical context, and therefore provides a framework and a more explicit motivation for her readings of particular tracks. She situates a selection of female performers historically and socially, with particular reference to the changing feminist debates during the period. Whiteley's choice of case studies includes women performers who will be familiar to many readers as a result of their commercial success and who have been received as challenging gender boundaries: Janis Joplin, Joni Mitchell, Patti Smith, and Siouxsie Sioux (in relation to the feminization of rock), Annie Lennox and Madonna (in relation to challenging constructions of femininity), k.d.lang (in relation to lesbianism), Tracey Chapman (in relation to race and poverty), Tori Amos, Courtney Love, P. J. Harvey (in relation to rape and abuse), and the Spice Girls (in relation to the notion of 'Girl Power' and generational identity).

One issue that immediately arises in the context of this categorization of the case studies is the alignment of certain performers with a particular aspect of identity through which they are read. Whiteley recognises that the readings she presents are only one possibility among many and that:

while the lyrics and song title might suggest a preferred reading, the musical text allows for a mapping of individual experience and meaning that provides a sense of fluidity of engagement. As such, if there is any assigned significance to music, this significance is generally located within the commonly agreed meanings of the group or society from which the music originates and to which it is addressed.
(26)

Whiteley's readings rely far more explicitly than Hawkins's on the biographies of the musicians she takes as her focus, and, to the extent that authorial subjectivity is one of the primary ways in which pop music is received, her readings do seem to reflect these 'commonly agreed

² See *Musical Identities*, ed. Raymond MacDonald, David Hargreaves, and Dorothy Miell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

meanings'. Thus, the focus on female pop artists provides 'specific insights into subjective experience – whether this is about love or rape, sexual desire or sexual assault, childbirth, miscarriage or abortion – or simply having fun' (1). This is indicative of a larger process by which, Whiteley suggests, music allows an insight into other subjectivities:

the artists' investment (of identity and experience) in their music enables us to place ourselves in imaginative cultural narratives and, as such, they help both to construct and provide insights into that wider experience. (9)

The danger here is that a reception ideology in which the cultural products of singer-songwriters are received as embodying or capturing authorial subjectivity is taken as the premise for a cultural narrative rather than as itself a narrative of subjectivity. Whiteley presents a reading of musical texts which assumes that music is invested with authorial identity rather than demonstrating how such readings come about for particular people at a particular time. Work on subjectivity can offer a useful insight here. Lawrence Kramer argues that listeners hear music in terms of the subjectivities it allows them to experience, stating that 'the basic work of culture is to construct subject positions'.³ Kramer's basic argument regarding music and subjectivity goes through a number of steps which I summarize here: that the work of culture is to construct subjectivity, that subjectivity in music can be personified in a number of different ways, that the listener attempts to fill this subjectivity, and that this produces subjectivities that are consistent with certain cultural narratives.⁴ According to Kramer, this subjectivity works by being embodied in representation, by being personified. Most ways of thinking about music tend to focus on a single agency: a composer, a performer, a dramatic character, or some imaginary, virtual, less specific other. What Whiteley does is to locate that subjectivity as the subjectivity of the performer.

One of the concerns of 'critical musicology', a context within which both books situate themselves more or less explicitly, has been the attempt to reveal subject positions afforded by music, with some recognition that certain positions may be privileged by processes operating within and around the text. Different theorists have identified different influences. For example Kramer, writing of the lied, argues that 'A song will typically seek to manage the interplay of text, voice, and musical technique in order to privilege one of the available positions'.⁵ Whereas for Middleton, talking of popular song, the 'processes of production and dissemination' privilege certain meanings, perhaps for market ends.⁶ Both Hawkins's and Whiteley's analyses are characterized by the same underlying lacuna: the recognition that musical texts allow a range of meanings but without explicit analysis of the way in which particular cultural processes lead to the privileging of certain meanings. The motivation for Whiteley's readings is implicit in her account of the social and historical context of this

3 Lawrence Kramer, 'The Mysteries of Animation: History, Analysis and Musical Subjectivity', *Music Analysis* 20/2 (2001), 156.

4 Lawrence Kramer, *Musical Meaning: toward a Critical History* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2002).

5 Lawrence Kramer, *Classical Music and Postmodern Knowledge* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1995), 147.

6 Richard Middleton, 'Introduction: Locating the Popular Music Text', in *Reading Pop*, 15.

music's composition and reception. This is less the case with Hawkins's readings simply because less historical context is provided. Hawkins's claims that his readings are 'personal' are a way of avoiding the over-generalizing tendency of the analyst. I am less concerned by what others have referred to as the 'arbitrary relativism' of this approach, than by its neglect of the mediation of musical experience by the political economy. For example, Hawkins presents the end-product of his own readings and does not explore the relationship between 'personal' readings and those privileged by the music industry. Similarly, although Hawkins is unusual in providing a discussion of pleasure, playfulness, and irony – important aspects of 1980s pop – they are the subject of ubiquitous celebration as though pleasure has no ideological function.

My approach to these two books might seem a little unfair: I have after all criticized them for the failure to address issues which it was not their stated aim to deal with. But together they highlight methodological problems in the textual analysis of popular music. I have argued that by not addressing the issue of how particular meanings come about we learn less about identity representation and formation. An alternative approach might be to extend the historical contextualization into the musical readings, so that the means by which certain meanings of texts are privileged at particular times becomes a subject of analysis. And focusing on the mechanisms by which readings come about rather than, or in addition to, an analyst's own analysis of those texts has an ethical function: it reveals processes of identity construction in which certain meanings, and certain subjectivities, are privileged over others.

Nicola Dibben

twentieth-century music © 2004 Cambridge University Press
DOI: 10.1017/S1478572204240099 Printed in the United Kingdom

Bernard Gendron, *Between Montmartre and the Mudd Club: Popular Music and the Avant-Garde* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002), ISBN 0 266 28735 1 (hb), ISBN 0 226 28737 8 (pb)

We used to think we knew how to teach courses entitled 'twentieth-century music': we started with Debussy and Strauss, moved on to Stravinsky and Schoenberg, and proceeded up through Boulez and Babbitt. After that, the road became rather less well marked, as Leonard B. Meyer had already predicted in the late 1960s.¹ But at least we still knew what to exclude: namely, popular music in all its manifestations. If an earlier generation avoided dealing with pop music because they regarded it as the enemy, their descendents today just cite the existence of courses dedicated specifically to jazz or rock, making it unnecessary to spend precious time in the twentieth-century course on such repertoires.

Despite the continuing publication of textbooks presenting this airtight canon, however, cracks have appeared with ever-greater frequency. Pop music leaks in to influence conservatory-trained composers, and ideas and technologies produced within the context of

¹ Leonard B. Meyer, *Music, the Arts, and Ideas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).

élite culture end up as part of the detritus picked through and deployed by enterprising rockers. Moreover, with the refusal of college graduates since the 1960s to uphold the appreciation of classical music as essential to the educated individual, the rationales that used to cordon popular music off from 'twentieth-century music' no longer appear so self-evident. John Rockwell's *All-American Music* treats Milton Babbitt and the Talking Heads as artists working at the same time and in roughly the same geographical location,² Robert Fink's 'Elvis Everywhere' analyzes the uneasy co-existence of a wide range of music genres in North America today,³ and Andreas Huyssen's *After the Great Divide* argues that twentieth-century modernism was always a reaction formation against the rise of pop culture – a diagnosis that insists that we always study both together.⁴ But the habits of thought that maintain cultural hierarchies die slowly, if at all.

Of course, even the most mandarin of historians acknowledge jazz-oriented passages in Ravel and Stravinsky, though they can write those passages off as topical references: jazz does not sink in to inform the styles of such composers and thus does not enter into genealogies of twentieth-century music. But engagements with pop music become far more consequential in the work of John Zorn or Steve Mackey, and it seems increasingly clear that we must start telling different stories about twentieth-century music – even if we just want to account for those we class as 'composers'. Still, we ordinarily take the position of High Culture and document the ways in which classically based musicians have made use of other musics in their production of art.

By contrast, Bernard Gendron's *From Montmartre to the Mudd Club* approaches these interactions from the vantage point of popular culture. A philosopher at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, Gendron has no stake in the institutional quarrels internal to music departments. He seeks rather to understand the conditions that have permitted popular music on occasion to enter into those terrains designated by cultural authorities as 'art'. By means of a series of case studies – the bohemian cafés of *fin-de-siècle* Montmartre, Cocteau's avant-garde circle, bebop, the Beatles, and New Wave – he examines the ways in which discourses associated with the avant-garde have enabled aesthetic mobility.

One might expect a philosopher to focus mainly on categories, with only the occasional artist mentioned as an example. But aestheticians have approached their subject differently in the wake of Lydia Goehr's *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*,⁵ which argues persuasively that philosophers cannot say useful things about the arts unless they take historical frames of reference into consideration. Goehr demonstrates, for instance, that the unit 'musical work', which has grounded music aesthetics for the last two-hundred years, developed only in the nineteenth century; its misapplication to earlier or popular or ethnic musics results in nonsense, not because these other musics are in any objective way inferior

2 John Rockwell, *All American Music: Composition in the Late Twentieth Century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983).

3 Robert Fink, 'Elvis Everywhere', *American Music* 16/2 (1998), 135–79.

4 Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

5 Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

but because they cannot be made to fit the procrustean bed of Romanticist assumptions without conceptual mutilation.

Even more than Goehr, Gendron pursues his topic as a historian, as he sifts through archives and long-forgotten journals for evidence of how moments of cross-over from low-brow to highbrow actually happened. His book solves aesthetic questions not by positing definitions in advance but by reconstructing reception history in detail. As a result, *From Montmartre to the Mudd Club* should be required reading for anyone – artists, historians, philosophers – concerned with twentieth-century culture.

Gendron's principal aesthetic problem is the much-fought-over rupture between modernism and postmodernism. Cultural theorists have long regarded the breakdown in cultural hierarchies as one of the distinctive traits of postmodernity. But the appearance of pop-culture fragments in early twentieth-century modernist works of Picasso or Milhaud frustrates that easy distinction, unless we simply declare any instance of eclectic borrowing 'postmodern'. Holding himself to a stricter historical and philosophical standard, Gendron asks if and how those early manifestations of cross-over differ from later ones.

Gendron's first section, which he entitles 'Pop into Art', covers nearly a hundred-year slice of Parisian cultural history, beginning in the 1840s. He focuses first on the *cabarets artistiques* that brought avant-garde poetry reading (Verlaine, Mallarmé) and art exhibition (Manet, Van Gogh) together with popular songs, posters, and stand-up comedy. None of these, which Gendron calls 'secondary aesthetic practices', has attracted much attention from historians, who concentrate instead on the modernist paintings, symbolist poetry, political *provocateurs*, and experimental theatre that emerged from these locations. Yet, he writes, 'the modest secondary practices of the artistic cabarets, sharing the same intertextual space, participated quite significantly in determining the public reception of the "primary" modernist products, and hence in the constitution of their public meanings' (31).

Chat Noir, the most celebrated of the artistic cabarets, began its life in 1881 in Montmartre. With regular performances by popular singers such as Aristide Bruant (recall Toulouse-Lautrec's poster of him in slouch hat, red scarf, and black cape), Chat Noir drew a target clientele of bohemian poets and artists, as well as tourists eager to rub shoulders with the decadents in their native habitat. In 1889, however, with the opening of the Moulin Rouge, the entertainment aspect of this uneasy mix took over, leading to the demise of the Parisian *cabaret artistique*. Many of the 'isms' that proliferated between 1890 and 1925 (Impressionism, Symbolism, Cubism, Dadaism, Surrealism, etc.) were incubated in the makeshift galleries, performance stages, and poetry journals of these venues. But, although popular song provided the soundtrack for these avant-garde movements, its proximity to the progressive fringe of artistic activity did not guarantee its own elevated prestige. In Gendron's words:

The forty-year history of the artistic cabaret . . . strikingly illustrates the many-sided vicissitudes that befell the first full-scale alliance between modernist high culture and popular song. As [my] narrative . . . has relentlessly underlined, this was a highly insecure and unstable alliance, fitful and incessantly mutating, with recurrent bouts of triumphant shockingness followed by seedy obsolescence. It

had taken decades of development in bohemian secondary practices for the concept of such an alliance to emerge clearly, and it required unrelenting effort and adaptation to implement it effectively. The insecurity and instability of this alliance was in large part determined by the volatility of the fashion scene within high-cultural bohemia, where trends in secondary practices shifted even more rapidly than the notoriously tumultuous style changes in the primary practices of art and literature and where the fluctuating imperatives of promotion recurrently dictated new strategies.

As the passive component in this alliance, popular music exhibited in an even more pronounced fashion the vulnerabilities of secondary practices, disappearing from the artists' venues and then reappearing, sometimes centrally and sometimes marginally, as poetry put to music, as aestheticized street song, as satire . . . or as jaded world-weariness. In the modernist context prevailing before World War II, it was always high culture that initiated the alliance and used it for its own ends. The popular music of *cafés-concerts* and music halls was valued more often as instrument or weapon by modernists than for its own intrinsic aesthetics. [79]

Gendron's second case study also concerns Paris and the appropriation of American jazz by modernist artists in the years following World War I. Under the leadership of Jean Cocteau, a remarkable roster of avant-garde artists – including Stravinsky, Satie, Poulenc, Picasso, Léger – began incorporating elements from musics brought into France by African-American soldiers. Although many of these artists lionized jazz, even dubbing their own historical moment The Jazz Age, they none the less treated it as a secondary practice. They derived inspiration for their own work from listening to this alien music, but jazz remained none the less on a lower aesthetic plane, abandoned as soon as a new fad came along.

[J]azz was for Cocteau the proper signifier of modern life in its postwar embodiments, and thus the proper object of the *flâneur's* gaze. It combined speed, noise, vulgarity, aggression, America, the inner city, danger, transgression, the exotic, the Negro – all stock images celebrating the mystique of modernity. In effect, jazz became the paradigmatic object of the avant-garde slummer, the new signifier for bohemian life. [97]

Only Darius Milhaud attempted to come to terms with jazz *as music*. In his ballet *Le création du monde* (1923), he brought together musical ideas he had culled variously from his years as a diplomat in Brazil, his contact with Billy Arnold's Novelty Jazz Band, and his visits to Harlem nightclubs to compose music based ostensibly on African and/or African-American models. Regardless of his high-minded intentions (carefully documented by Gendron), Milhaud did not completely transcend the primitivist fantasies of his colleagues: thus his equation of all African-based musics, whether tribal or urban, and his use of commercial American blues to set a libretto based on African creation myths. Soon after this experiment, Milhaud too left his jazz phase to take up neoclassicism, and the temporary alliance between Cocteau's avant-garde circle and its passive partner, popular music, fell

apart. When all was said and done, jazz retained its low-brow status within the cultural hierarchy, despite its liaison with the avant-garde. Nevertheless, the music born as a result of this encounter remains in the canon, testifying permanently to the depth of the attraction across the great divide at a particular fleeting moment.

Throughout this first part of Gendron's book, the poles of high and popular culture stay more or less intact, and modernism (although it feeds repeatedly on popular music) continues to forge its progress-driven path; pop music for the most part also goes about its own business, often quite oblivious to its brushes with the avant-garde. In his second part, however, 'Art into Pop', Gendron takes up positions that challenge our usual historical narratives and philosophical categories. For in the last three case studies, popular music becomes an active agent, a protagonist that makes use of avant-garde discursive strategies to launch itself from its usual low-brow rung on the hierarchy to the status of art. By virtue of this change in protagonist, Gendron argues, we enter into postmodernism.

Gendron offers three examples: the elevations of bebop in the 1940s, rock in the 1960s, and punk / New Wave in the 1970s. The first of these would seem to be quite familiar: it is because of bebop's achievement that jazz could begin to claim the title of America's classical music. Most of our explanations, however, point to formal aspects of the music itself: as musicians such as Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker started employing complex harmonies and phrase structures, they pulled away from the commercial swing music then dominant and moved into the more rarified realm of experimentation. But this account does not address the ways a few players in tiny Manhattan clubs managed to capture the right to count as the next and most crucial evolutionary stage of jazz, however much it resonates with the similar moves toward modernism in European classical music at the turn of the century. Nor does it explain the quite unlikely phenomenon of a popular genre claiming the aesthetic status of art.

Turning to jazz journals of the time, Gendron reveals how the discursive precedent for considering jazz as a music worthy of aesthetic debate occurred a few years before the advent of bebop. In the early 1940s, a controversy broke out between *aficionados* of traditional New Orleans (Dixieland) jazz and defenders of swing, who held that music should progress. Both sides wanted to apply the name 'jazz' to their favoured music, but they defined the word differently: is true jazz an improvisatory practice of small ensembles, or does it rightly develop with time, even taking on the orchestrational and harmonic sophistication of European classical music? Odd as it may seem to us today, swing identified itself as the avant-garde – or at least it did so until its discursive strategy backfired. For once the notion of progressive development took hold (as in the case of all other modernist paradigms), there was nothing to prevent another style from claiming that position for itself.

When bebop appeared, the debate reproduced itself, but replaced Dixieland with swing, swing with bebop – and so on *ad infinitum*, for bebop reigned only a few years before the next kid on the block tried to supplant it. Suddenly, the journalists aligned with swing found themselves cast as the mouldy figs (the term of abuse they had invented to disparage the Dixieland faction). Yet the terms of the previous controversy supplied bebop's advocates with their aesthetic and rhetorical ammunition. The elevation owed at least as much to these

discursive strategies, in other words, as to the undeniable transformations of the jazz idiom itself.

To my mind, Gendron's next example counts as the highlight of the book: his account of how rock 'n' roll – a much despised youth music – suddenly acquired the status of art. His discussion focuses, not surprisingly, on the Beatles. But again, he locates his explanation not in the formal characteristics of their music but rather in the discursive strategies that coalesced around it. As he points out, when the Beatles first broke in North America in 1964, they still performed Chuck Berry and girl-group covers. The press obsessed over their ability to make girls scream, but their music was written off as trivial. Yet a mere three years later, composers and musicologists were falling all over themselves to endorse the Beatles as serious artists.

What we usually fail to notice when we recount this stunning ascent is that the *music* of the Beatles had not yet moved into its explicitly experimental stage when the scramble for accreditation took place.

What could possibly have happened to bring about this radical reversal? Did the Beatles simply become better musicians according to traditional standards? Or did public musical taste undergo a massive transformation? If the latter, to what extent were the Beatles uniquely responsible for the changing public reception to their music and to what extent was the latter merely an epiphenomenon of a wholesale aesthetic reevaluation of youth culture by the established authorities of adult culture? [163]

If Gendron the philosopher wants to understand how art forms shift from one rung on the hierarchy to another, Gendron the sleuth focuses his sights on old magazines and the stages in the printed debate. His extraordinary answer involves John Lennon's book *In His Own Write*, the Beatles' film *A Hard Day's Night*, Joshua Rifkin's *Baroque Beatles Book* – all from 1965. What before had sounded naïve now appeared ironic, vastly changing the terms of interpretation. This is reception history at its very best, for it not only sheds light on the aesthetic upheavals of the 1960s but also on the canonization process in general. I cannot imagine teaching a course on the twentieth century or on cultural theory without assigning this section of Gendron's book.

The final part, which addresses the punk scene in New York in the 1970s, follows similar methods, as Gendron once again reveals the discursive strategies that produced radical changes in attitudes. To a certain extent, the place of music within the Mudd Club resembled that of the Montmartre establishments with which the book begins: in New Wave clubs, which emphasized poetry (Patti Smith) and the visual arts (the Talking Heads, Laurie Anderson), popular song risked retreating to the role of secondary aesthetic practice.

From Montmartre to the Mudd Club makes two especially valuable contributions to the study of twentieth-century music. First, it proposes new terms for considering the relationship between modernism and postmodernism. I would not care about this aspect of Gendron's book if it only offered a new twist on what has become a rather stale debate; I might even be inclined to debate that appropriations of avant-garde postures by jazz or rock place them in a modernist rather than postmodernist position. But what matters about

Gendron's model is its insight concerning cultural protagonists in these hierarchical cross-overs. If we can list innumerable moments throughout Western history when High Culture grabbed onto the energies of the popular, only since bebop have popular genres and their fans succeeded in arguing their way to the position of art. And identifying that moment in the 1940s as the turn to the postmodern makes a great deal of sense for twentieth-century music history as a whole.

Gendron's second contribution is to set forth in exquisite detail five different sets of interactions between popular culture and the avant-garde. He offers what must count for now as definitive accounts of the conditions allowing these interactions. In doing so, he provides a methodology for all such projects, whether a search for the triumph of German idealism in the nineteenth century or the more recent cultural accreditation of hip-hop No philosophy without history, and Gendron has done his homework many times over.

When I finished reading this book, I rushed to my office, waving my copy in front of my colleagues and students. Alas, I did not get to be Gendron's herald: his title had already made it onto syllabuses for all the courses that might be relevant. One of my colleagues had already developed an entire seminar around it, and rightly so, for Gendron's book is rapidly changing the terms of debate and challenging us to a more scrupulous documentation of history. In short, *From Montmartre to the Mudd Club* has already become an indispensable item for anyone concerned with music history of the last hundred years.

Susan McClary