

New Music Festivals as Agorai: Their Formation and Impact on Warsaw Autumn, Festival d'Automne in Paris, and Wien Modern Since 1980

The project's thesis, that new music festivals strongly influenced the development of contemporary (art-)music and related public cultural practices in the past decades, shall be proven by this survey. Its starting point is the increased public interest in new music from about 2000, which can be traced back to impulses from the 1980s. After some decades of occupying a defensive niche-status, the radius of this music scene's impact expanded, as can be observed in the open and active forums of European Avantgarde-music festivals, which, beginning in the 1980s, led to the establishment of numerous additional new music festivals and ensembles.

Festivals in three different European states and language regions - with careful attention paid to include the East European sphere - will be the focus: "Warsaw Autumn" (Poland, first festival in 1956) is arguably the most important and international of the Eastern European festivals. It existed even before Solidarnosc and the fall of the iron curtain in 1989. The other two festivals are "Festival d'Automne" in Paris (France, first festival in 1972, including contemporary theatre, dance and new music), and "Wien Modern" (Austria, first festival in 1988). Their size, internal structure, and metropolitan status gives each of the three festivals an institutional character, and with that, a particular importance. New music festivals have become a significant part of the music industry, which includes festival tourism. They mirror the open "postmodern" Zeitgeist, which goes beyond old cultural barriers. Pluralistic aesthetic and interdisciplinary openings correspond with increased interest in alternative concert formats and professionalization of management and public relations, media, audience reference, and music mediation/education concepts. An important part of their success comes from the festivals' agents, especially their curators, composers, and performers, whose interaction has not yet been analysed, but who would be researched as part of this project in biographical sample portraits.

This study claims to be the first in Musicology to pursue the topic using a methodically complex and multidimensional approach. It captures the International—especially the European—scene of new (art-)music for the first time transnationally and mediates, starting from Austria, between national cultures of music research and its neighbouring disciplines.

The concepts of "cultural turns" provide an initial basis, as they have opened up flexible space for interdisciplinary and intercultural activities and given a context for understanding music as practice, which is an important emphasis in the project. The spectrum of the project's approaches ranges from exploratory documentary archival work (database) through the sociology of music (quantitative polls, qualitative interviews, and participatory observations) and historiographic approaches (including cross sections, biographical access to specific agents), cultural studies and music analysis of representative "works", to the analysis of activities in music mediation/education and management.

The comprehensive project intends to offer access to a public database. An International conference with (among others) scholars, curators and artists in cooperation with [ConTempOhr](#) is scheduled for March 10 to 13, 2016 in Salzburg (Austria).

There will also be a final multimedia publication on the research topic