

***Music and Displacement: Diasporas, Mobilities and Dislocations in Europe and Beyond.*** Edited by Erik Levi and Florian Scheduling. (Europea: Ethnomusicologies and Modernities; no. 10) Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2010. 207 pp. ISBN 978-0810863798.

Eric Levi and Florian Scheduling have delivered a significant contribution to the burgeoning literature on the relationship of music to place and displacement, particularly with regard to the exiled composer.<sup>1</sup> Published in the Europea: Ethnomusicologies and Modernities series by Scarecrow Press, the book is salutary because it juxtaposes authors with a broad range of expertise (from musicology and popular music studies to ethnomusicology). Indeed, the very success of the book leads one to wonder how long the traditional disciplinary distinction between musicology and ethnomusicology can or should be maintained.

The book is divided into three parts: The Silence of Displacement; Displacement and Acculturation; and Theories and/of Displacement. From a tight concentration on the Holocaust and the forced displacement of composers, the content of the book spirals out to broader perspectives, including a fascinating discussion of the stylistic displacement of Mahler's music in jazz. Björn Heile untangles the complex network of Bakhtinian voices embedded in Uri Caine's rendition of the funeral march from the first movement of Fifth Symphony. He claims that this treatment of Mahler's music reveals Jewish voices, which would not have been apparent in the original version, even to the composer (113-14).

This collection of essays, like many others, is a mixed bag. On the negative side, Sean Campbell's discussion of the Irish component in English popular music comes up short. The author surfs all too easily on the froth of anecdotal data. Guitar riffs, "folk" tunings and mandolin solos are evoked pell-mell as evidence of Irishness in "the all-engulfing sound" of the folk-rock of the 1980s (94). Campbell abandons substance and compelling arguments, replacing them with mounds of anecdotal details and sheer enthusiasm.

The book also contains annoying traces of what used to be known as "new" musicology. This is particularly evident in Sydney Hutchinson's "Place of the Body: Corporal Displacements, Misplacements, and Replacements in Music and Dance Research." The chapter presents a familiar

---

1. The study of music and displacement is implicitly part of work done on twentieth-century composers such as Béla Bartók, Ernst Krenek, Darius Milhaud, Arnold Schoenberg, Igor Stravinsky, Kurt Weill, etc. Literature explicitly on this topic has been and continues to be dominated by German authors. However, since the publication of *Driven into Paradise: The Musical Migration from Nazi Germany to the United States*, Reinhold Brinkman and Christoph Wolff (eds.) (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), English-language publications have begun to appear. Recent Canadian contributions include: *Centre and Periphery, Roots and Exile: Interpreting the Music of István Anhalt, György Kurtág and Sándor Veress*, Friedemann Sallis, Robin Elliott, Kenneth DeLong (eds.) (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2011); *Music Traditions, Cultures and Contexts*, Robin Elliott and Gordon E. Smith (eds.) (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2010); and Paul Helmer, *Growing with Canada: The Émigré Tradition in Canadian Music* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009).

litany of binary oppositions (West/East, mind/body, culture/nature, civilization/barbarism, male/female, etc.) held together by a spoonful of conspiracy theory. Western binarism, traced back via Descartes to Plato's *Timaeus*, prioritizes the cerebral over the corporal resulting in the hegemony of abstract thinking. The grand conspiratorial strategy is to maintain the supremacy of European cultural expression over all others (163). Hutchinson's conventional discourse is based on the assumption that today nineteenth-century definitions of music, dance and culture retain all of the force they had at the beginning of the twentieth century. In fact these definitions have now become historical forms of knowledge. One need only lift one's gaze to music and dance created since the death of Brahms. The unbiased observer will discover a remarkably open field in which composers, musicians, choreographers, dancers and impresarios (from the Stravinsky/Diaghilev/Nijinsky collaboration to the productions of Pina Bausch) have continuously worked to redefine what music and dance can be (see for example the work of Cage and Cunningham). Hutchinson appears oblivious to these contributions.

Philip V. Bohlman's essay, "*Das Lied ist aus'*: The Final Resting Place along Music's Endless Journey," is also puzzling. The text, which presents a personal reflection on the aesthetics of displacement through an examination of music composed and performed in concentration camps, is marred at the outset by an overuse of the first person singular pronoun (fourteen times in the first seven pages). In so doing, the author upstages his topic, turning an unnecessary and distracting choice of style into an egregious lack of judgement. In the second half of the essay, Bohlman shifts focus from himself to Viktor Ullmann's sketches for his monodrama, *Die Weise von Liebe und Tod des Cornets Christoph Rilke* written for narrator and piano in 1944, the year the composer was murdered at Auschwitz. Dealing with the ultimate destruction and tragedy of war, and the end of time, *Die Weise* is, according to Bohlman, "one of the most allegorical of all Ullmann's works for the musical stage." (22) The sketches stunningly cohere to "the eschatological aesthetic of displacement; in other words to the representation of death and the ending of all things" (22). Through them we can see that the composer's "acute awareness of temporal displacement at the end of time powerfully shaped the decisions he made about writing the score" (23). The second half of Bohlman's chapter effectively permits a silenced voice to be heard, though it is unfortunate that no space was allowed to visually present even a small selection of the documents that bear witness to this voice.<sup>2</sup>

The Holocaust and the silence of displacement constitute the dominant theme of this book. Three chapters stand out. Peter Petersen's "Dimensions of Silencing: On Nazi Anti-Semitism in Musical Displacement" takes an unflinching look at the ruthless oppression and displacement of musicians under the Nazis. In his clear presentation of the mechanics of stigmatisation, ghettoization and deportation, Petersen underscores Hannah Arendt's claim that the Holocaust fundamentally changed the definition of what it means to be human (32). Florian Scheduling examines the

---

2. The sketches are conserved in the Viktor Ullmann Manuscript Collection of the Paul Sacher Foundation. An inventory of the Collection was published in 2007.

uncomfortable legacies of *Exilforschung* in West and East Germany during the Cold War. For obvious reasons, this literature has tended to focus on central Europe between 1933 and 1945. However, Scheduling convincingly explains that “composers in exile” is a broad topic that can be traced back to the nineteenth century and that displacement is not unilateral (127). The careers of Sergei Prokofiev, Hanns Eisler, Iannis Xenakis, György Ligeti and Isang Yun remind us that composers have felt compelled to move in directions other than from central Europe to the United States.<sup>3</sup> Scheduling’s chapter is followed directly by “Adorno in Exile: Some Thoughts on Displacement and what it Means to Be German” in which Max Paddison examines the impact that Adorno’s sojourn in America had on his sense of identity. This is a fascinating study that anyone interested in a better understanding of Adorno’s writings should consult.

Scheduling, in his essay, also observes that the end of the twentieth century constitutes a watershed with regard to the study of displacement, because as the surviving witnesses of the cataclysmic wars of the twentieth century pass away, the time has come to “analyse displacement in its social, cultural, and historical context rather than as a biographical subtext of the artist in exile” (131). The book contributes to this goal in that it also examines what happens to music when people move. Ruth F. Davis looks at the impact that time, place and memory have had on the traditional songs of the Jewish community on the island of Djerba off the coast of Tunisia. Jim Samson recounts four “little” stories from the Balkans that concern the music of the Sephardic community in Sarajevo, the displacement of Serbian communities and their church music in the late seventeenth century, the displacement of Greek communities from Asia Minor to the Greek mainland during the first half of the twentieth century and the impact that this had on the development of *rebetiko* and finally the evolution of *Talava*, a traditionally feminine vocal genre that is associated with the *Aškalije* (Albanian-speaking Roma in Macedonia). These stories remind us of the simultaneous dimensions that come into play when we discuss the relationships between music and place: “home and abroad, past and present, dream and everyday life” (190).

Taken together and despite a few surprisingly weak contributions, this book presents timely and insightful topics that need to be addressed. Going forward it will no doubt become standard reading for many of us.

*Friedemann Sallis*  
*University of Calgary*

---

3. See for example *Komponisten im Exil: 16 Künstlerschicksale des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Ferdinand Zehentreiter (ed.) (Berlin: Henschel Verlag, 2008).