

**Lithuanian modernisms:**

**Alternative paradigms in contemporary Baltic art music**

**Claire Eileen McGinn**

**PhD**

**University of York**

**Music**

**January 2021**

This study argues that musical modernisms are often sidelined in representations of contemporary Baltic art music, in favour of an over-representation of euphonic, folk-inspired or mystical genres. The thesis will explore a range of contrasting modernist, constructivist, dissonant, and deliberately non-euphonic musics by Osvaldas Balakauskas, Rytis Mažulis, Nomeda Valančiūtė, Tomas Kutavičius, Remigijus Merkelys, Vykintas Baltakas, Justina Repečkaitė and Albertas Navickas. A chronological study of these Lithuanian composers presents an alternative to dominant, homogenous impressions of Baltic art music from the mid-twentieth century to the present. Much existing literature and discourse acknowledges the impact of euphonic styles, but this thesis emphasises the significance of Lithuanian serialism, 'machinism', expressionism, spectralism and other contemporary idioms that contradict prevailing images. A key argument of this thesis is that the seemingly more prominent heterogeneity and modernist tendencies in contemporary Lithuanian classical music discourse, compared with the more northerly Baltic countries, may also be mapped onto other divergences. This study explores the contextual multivalence of images of non-modernism, which can be interpreted in a number of ways: as empowering, through a postcolonial and national-liberatory lens; as a problematic and implicitly colonial product of formerly-western notions of cultural superiority; and viewed as a pragmatic political cog in the conceptual rebirth and national rebranding of post-Soviet Estonia – which led among the Baltic States in terms of the speed and intensity of controversial reforms implemented after independence – as a postmodern neoliberal competitor. This study aims to cast light on two things: the modernist-leaning heterogeneities of Lithuanian contemporary art music, and the roots and consequences of a narrow aesthetic and conceptual template common to dominant paradigms of Baltic art music.

## Contents

	Abstract	2
	List of Figures	6
	Acknowledgements	9
	Author's declaration	10
<b>1.</b>	<b>Introduction: Exploring Images</b>	<b>11</b>
1.1.	Negotiating national identities	13
1.2.	Narrativising Soviet occupation	19
1.3.	Literature Review	20
1.3.1.	Studies of music of the USSR	23
1.3.2.	Post-Soviet studies (particularly pertaining to the Baltic States)	25
1.3.3.	Studies of histories and cultures of the Baltic region	28
1.3.4.	Studies of Baltic contemporary classical music	29
1.4.	Modernism in early-twentieth-century Estonia and Latvia	33
1.5.	Contemporary art music from neighbouring Baltic States, Estonia and Latvia	37
1.6.	Lithuanian contemporary music networks	43
1.7.	Overview of contents	45
<b>2.</b>	<b>Euphonicism: Cultural branding and western criticism</b>	<b>49</b>
2.1.	Heterogeneity	62
2.2.	Brand Estonia	69
2.3.	Lithuanian art music: alternative paradigms	77
<b>3.</b>	<b>'Difficult music': Osvaldas Balakauskas and Soviet-era modernisms</b>	<b>84</b>
3.1.	Exiled and mediated modernisms	87
3.2.	Osvaldas Balakauskas: 'Radical views' and a yellow jacket	91
3.3.	'Tonal serialism'	95
3.4.	Immanent dominant and tonic	100
3.5.	Soviet-era works	102
3.6.	Post-Soviet-era works	111

<b>4.</b>	<b>Vanilla and chilli: Machinist minimalists Nomeda Valančiūtė and Rytis Mažulis</b>	<b>125</b>
4.1.	Rytis Mažulis (b. 1961): Mensurations and machines	131
4.2.	Nomeda Valančiūtė (b. 1961): ‘Strong, sharp, and not devoid of glitter’	132
4.3.	<i>Twittering Machine</i> (Mažulis, 1986)	134
4.4.	<i>Narcissus</i> (Valančiūtė, 1986)	138
4.5.	<i>Fragment from the Hospital’s Park</i> (Valančiūtė, 1998)	144
4.6.	<i>Canon Mensurabilis</i> (Mažulis, 2000)	151
<b>5.</b>	<b>Networks and individuals in contemporary art music: Tomas Kutavičius and Remigijus Merkelys</b>	<b>158</b>
5.1.	Remigijus Merkelys (b. 1964): ‘Sound anagrams’	160
5.2.	Tomas Kutavičius (b. 1964): Taking the wheel	167
5.3.	Repetition	177
5.4.	Harmony and pitch content	183
5.5.	Affect	187
<b>6.</b>	<b>Leaving Lithuania Part I: Vykintas Baltakas — Silence, screaming, and soup</b>	<b>191</b>
6.1.	Vykintas Baltakas (b. 1972)	192
6.2.	Five pieces by Vykintas Baltakas: <i>Pasaka, Nichtstück, Sinfonia, Smokey Arnold</i> and <i>Sandwriting</i>	193
6.3.	‘Freedom scream’: Leaving Lithuania	194
6.4.	‘The hero kills the, er, destiny...’: Resisting linearity	201
6.5.	Clouds and bubbles: directness and the irrational	209
<b>7.</b>	<b>Leaving Lithuania Part II: Justina Repečkaitė and Albertas Navickas — Circles, science, and spectra</b>	<b>215</b>
7.1.	Justina Repečkaitė (b. 1989): ‘Drawn with the sharpest pencil’	217
7.2.	Albertas Navickas (b. 1986): ‘Baltic, “archaic”...whatever...’	221
7.3.	Case studies by Repečkaitė and Navickas	225

---

7.3.1.	<i>Cosmatesque</i> (Repečkaitė, 2017)	225
7.3.2.	<i>Chartres</i> (Repečkaitė, 2012)	230
7.3.3.	<i>memory lines</i> (Navickas, 2017)	234
7.3.4.	'Music of a single state': <i>Blanche t'a vu</i> (Navickas, 2006)	240

---

8.	<b>Conclusions</b>	251
----	--------------------	-----

---

8.1	'Nordic with a twist'	258
-----	-----------------------	-----

---

	Bibliography	264
--	--------------	-----

---

## List of figures

1.1 — Table of focus composers and featured Lithuanian composers at Gaida Festival from 2014-2019.

2.1 — Table showing samples from (UK/US) reviews of and articles about Arvo Pärt's music, 1989-2017.

2.2 — Table showing samples from (UK/US) reviews of and articles about other Baltic (mostly Estonian and Latvian) contemporary classical composers, 2000-2018.

2.3 — Image showing perceptions and reality about Latvia (Frasher et al.).

2.4 — Opinion polls regarding statements and characteristics about Estonia (*Eesti Stiil*).

3.1 — Gundega Šmite's periodisation of Baltic art music history from a lecture on the subject.

3.2 — 'Monovector PQ' (*Dodekatonika*).

3.3 — 'Bivector PQ' (*Dodekatonika*).

3.4 — 'Row Alpha', generated from a monovector PQ, showing harmonic objects increasing in relational distance from the generative tone D (*Dodekatonika*).

3.5 — 'Row Beta', generated from a bivector PQ (*Dodekatonika*).

3.6 — 'Row Delta', produced by combining the rows from a monovector and bivector PQ (*Dodekatonika*).

3.7 — 'Row Gamma': a linear melodic expression of Row Delta (*Dodekatonika*).

3.8 — Functional harmonic 'zones' based on degrees of intensity (*Dodekatonika*).

3.9 — Table showing outline of movements in *Ludus Modorum*.

3.10 — Cadential figure prefigured in resolving cello melody in *Ludus Modorum* mvt 1.

- 3.11 — Cadential figure at opening of third movement of *Ludus Modorum*.
- 3.12 — Basis of recurrent ostinato pattern in *Rex Re*.
- 3.13 — Example of layers of horizontal symmetries in bars 27-8 of *Rex Re*.
- 3.14 — Octatonic flute melody with rhythmic and intervallic symmetry, *Rex Re*.
- 3.15 — Intervallic symmetry in flute melody (*Rex Re*).
- 3.16 — Sections of *Rex Re* with D pedal/ D as sole pitch centre and those with more harmonic movement.
- 4.1 — Example motivic cells from *Twittering Machine*, mvt. 1.
- 4.2 — Example resulting rhythmic riffs from *Twittering Machine*, mvt. 1.
- 4.3 — Outline of harmonic and motivic sections in *Narcissus*.
- 4.4 — ‘Reversing’ chords in ‘development’ section of *Narcissus*.
- 4.5 — Melodic ostinati (used as textural and harmonic building blocks) from *Fragment*.
- 4.6 — Extrapolated linear sequence of consonant ‘anchor’ chords in *Canon Mensurabilis*.
- 4.7 — Full sequence of chords between first and second consonant chords, bars 1-26.
- 4.8 — Number of notes (total, new, and microtonal) per chord, bars 1-26.
- 5.1 — Čiurlionis Nocturne quotation in *MiKonst*.
- 5.2 — Overview of sections in *A Glow-Worm for Maria Morawska*.
- 5.3 — Repetitive, tonal-adjacent melody in *Ritus Rhythmus*.
- 5.4 — Parallel brass chord refrain in *A Thinking Reed*.

6.1 — Parody of *sutartiné*-like close intervals in *Nichtstück*.

6.2 — Outline of sections and material in *Pasaka*.

6.3 — Dance-like paratonal loop in *Pasaka*.

6.4 — Conversation over looping bars in *Smokey Arnold*.

7.1 — *Cosmatesque* mosaic tiles in Aachen Cathedral.

7.2 — *Cosmatesque* score with gaps.

7.3 — ‘Chartres Clue’ from *Chartres* score.

7.4 — Proportional strata in *Chartres*.

7.5 — Lines travelling downward in *memory lines*.



## **Acknowledgements**

This thesis would not have been possible without the input, advice and assistance of Linas Paulauskis and the Lithuanian Music Information Centre (abbr. LMIC). For similarly invaluable support, including giving up their time and sharing unpublished scores, recordings, digital materials, articles and books not easily accessible in the UK, thanks are due to Ben Lunn, Vilma Kutavičiūtė (for translation support), Rima Povilionienė, Ruta Gaidamavičiūtė, and all the organisers and volunteers involved with the Gaida Festival in 2017 and 2018. I am grateful for the support of composers Vykintas Baltakas, Tomas Kutavičius, Justina Repečkaitė, Albertas Navickas, Gundega Šmite, Raimonda Žiūkaitė, and Diana Čemeryte for kindly agreeing to interviews and conversations and sharing scores, recordings, articles, books, and ideas.

Professor Tim Howell, who supervised this project, has been an unwaveringly patient, reassuring, insightful and reliable advisor. Huge thanks are also due to Dr. Daniel March for his advice and guidance and to Professor Marina Frolova-Walker for agreeing to act as external examiner for this thesis. I would also like to acknowledge additional support from Dr. Àine Sheil, Dr Catherine Laws, Dr Jonathan Eato, Professor Jo Wainwright, Dr. Rich Powell, Dr. Mark Hutchinson, Dr. Martin Scheuregger, Caryn Douglas, Clare Meadley, Catherine Duncan, Helen Gillie, Gilly Howe, and Kath Watson.

On a personal level I would also like to thank Phillip Roberts, Beth Williams, Emma Delany, Mabyn Veall, Hes Bradley, David Cane, Alice Masterson, Liam Maloney, Gaia Blandina, Charlotte Armstrong, Dan Johnson, Rosie Morris, Anlieka Kursiani Marconi, Kelly Lopes Horta, Ashley Whiteley, Owen Burton, Alex Berry, and my family.

## **Declaration**

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References. Parts of this work have been published in *Lithuanian Musicology* (2019, <http://xn--urnalai-cxb.lmta.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Muzikologija20-3.pdf>) and *Deep Baltic* (2019, <https://deepbaltic.com/2019/06/25/jazz-instinct-and-meaning-tomas-kutavicius-and-contemporary-lithuanian-music/>).

## 1. Introduction: Exploring images

The classical music industry was swept off its feet by Arvo Pärt with the launch of *Tabula Rasa* on the ECM label in 1984.<sup>1</sup> Since then, the muted, minimal, white-grey-and-blue palette of the album's cover has become a recurring characteristic in the marketing of his music.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the 35 years since the release of *Tabula Rasa* have seen the emergence and/or 'discovery' of many more artists, Baltic or not, whose work was aligned profitably with this template and employed similar themes for its visual marketing. In spite of the prominence of composers from other countries (the British John Tavener, Georgian Giya Kancheli and Tatar-Russian Sofia Gubaidulina), the biggest name among them is still Estonian Arvo Pärt —the most-performed living composer in the world for multiple consecutive years in the last decade<sup>3</sup> — which may contribute in part to the association of Baltic music with spiritual minimalism, or what will be described here as 'euphonic',<sup>4</sup> styles.

It might reasonably be assumed that this impression would have changed or died down somewhat since its inception around the time when the Baltic States first gained independence from the Soviet Union. For many people in the Baltic nations, the independence movement and the immediate post-Soviet era represents a moment in history from which everyday life has obviously moved on. In fact, younger generations who grew up in independent countries may not feel any particular connection to these histories. By 2008, Kevin Platt had proclaimed that 'the post-Soviet' was 'over'.<sup>5</sup> However, judging by repeated evocations of outdated tropes in western media and music criticism, a narrow picture formed by key events and works from this moment has, for many outside the region, become an essential, defining image. In 2019, the August edition of *Gramophone* demonstrated the persistence of entrenched tropes. The cover page featured a large black and white photograph: a popular close-up shot of Arvo Pärt<sup>6</sup> in which the composer, eyes closed in

---

<sup>1</sup> Tom Huizenga, 'The Silence and Awe of Arvo Pärt', NPR Music website, June 2 2014 (accessed online at <https://www.npr.org/sections/deceptivecadence/2014/06/02/316322238/the-silence-and-awe-of-arvo-p-rt?t=1571406195540>, 18.10.19).

<sup>2</sup> See Google Images search results for 'Arvo Pärt CD cover' ([https://www.google.com/search?q=arvo+part+cd+cover&safe=strict&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjz47Tg-KXIAhXzSxUIHWgYBTAQ\\_AUIEigB&biw=1429&bih=733](https://www.google.com/search?q=arvo+part+cd+cover&safe=strict&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjz47Tg-KXIAhXzSxUIHWgYBTAQ_AUIEigB&biw=1429&bih=733), accessed 18.10.19).

<sup>3</sup> Silver Tambur, 'Arvo Pärt is the world's most performed living composer eighth year running', Estonian World website, January 8 2019 (accessed online, <https://estonianworld.com/culture/arvo-part-is-the-worlds-most-performed-living-composer-eighth-year-running/>, 18.10.19).

<sup>4</sup> The term used in the Lithuanian Music Information Centre's anthology *Landscapes of Minimalism* to distinguish this type of post-minimalist music from more dissonant, 'industrial' styles. (Lithuanian Music In Context II: Landscapes of Minimalism [Vilnius: Lithuanian Music Information Centre, 2011]).

<sup>5</sup> Kevin Platt, 'The Post-Soviet is Over: On Reading the Ruins', *Republics of Letters* 1/1 (2008) (accessed online, <https://arcade.stanford.edu/rofl/post-soviet-over-reading-ruins>, 06.01.2021).

<sup>6</sup> At the time of writing, the fourth Google Images result for the search terms 'Arvo Pärt' ([https://www.google.com/search?q=Arvo+P%C3%A4rt&tbm=isch&ved=2ahUKEwiCIPLN-qXIAhUG44UKHRwMAbEQ2-cCegQIABAA&oq=Arvo+P%C3%A4rt&gs\\_l=img.3..0i67j0i9.2598.2598..2740...0.0..0.92.92.1.....0....1..gws-wiz-img.TNYqmiqEzok&ei=68OpXcLyD4bGlwScmlSICw&bih=733&biw=1429&safe=strict](https://www.google.com/search?q=Arvo+P%C3%A4rt&tbm=isch&ved=2ahUKEwiCIPLN-qXIAhUG44UKHRwMAbEQ2-cCegQIABAA&oq=Arvo+P%C3%A4rt&gs_l=img.3..0i67j0i9.2598.2598..2740...0.0..0.92.92.1.....0....1..gws-wiz-img.TNYqmiqEzok&ei=68OpXcLyD4bGlwScmlSICw&bih=733&biw=1429&safe=strict), accessed 18.10.19).

concentration, cups his hands to his ears, seemingly miming deep listening. Monochrome but for a scattering of blue-green text, the cover reads 'Listening to the Baltic Sound: How Arvo Pärt and his fellow composers embody the spirit of a region'.<sup>7</sup> Tellingly incorporating Finland,<sup>8</sup> the article briefly covers current activities in each country's respective choral scene, concluding that in spite of '(welcome) contrasts' produced by the linguistic differences of each nation, 'there remains a sense of homogeneity'.<sup>9</sup> The twofold aim of this study is to demonstrate firstly why this sort of conclusion is not uncommon in reception of art music from the Baltic States in general, and secondly that there are strongly contrasting elements within the art music canon of Lithuania, the comparatively lower international profiles of which are not coincidental. I will argue that what can be broadly described as 'euphonic' (consonant, slow-moving, minimalist-leaning, folk-or-nature-themed, frequently choral) styles have dominated internationally — and been linked rhetorically to supposed national-historical characteristics, usually hinging around the idea of occupation and defeat — to the extent that they have stabilised into familiar paradigms of Baltic art music. Moreover, I suggest that this has been somewhat to the detriment of a wider recognition of Baltic modernisms, at least in Lithuania where there are many important examples of such trends. Further, I will maintain that there is a correlation between the highly coherent aesthetic palette of spiritual minimalist/euphonic music, attempts to re-brand Estonia in the early 2000s as 'Nordic with a twist', and Estonia's extreme, single-message economic and structural transformations after independence. The greater heterogeneity of post-independence political developments in Lithuania, and its further distance from the 'Nordic' countries (association with which was desirable for the Estonian government in the 2000s in their bid to reject links with Russia and be viewed as more European<sup>10</sup>) is in keeping with the prominence within reproductions of the art music canon of both classically euphonic, 'ritualistic', folk-inspired minimalist musics and of styles that still evoke or engage with modernism. The latter are typically excluded from the popular picture painted, in reception of composers like Pärt and Veljo Tormis, of a slightly mysterious, folksy, remote, natural and wholly un-modern artistic environment. As will be explored in more detail, the notion of being modern/un-modern in a broader sense is loaded in the context of both the Baltic States' repression under the Soviet regime, and of the former political west's gaze on the post-

---

<sup>7</sup> *Gramophone*, Vol. 97, August 2019.

<sup>8</sup> The Estonian and Finnish languages have common Finno-Ugric linguistic/cultural roots (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Finno-Ugric-languages>, accessed 18.10.19) not shared by Lithuania and Latvia (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Baltic-languages>, accessed 18.10.19). As will be discussed, the Estonian government also strongly supported efforts to be perceived as more 'Nordic' after independence.

<sup>9</sup> Ivan Moody, 'Baltic Choral Music', *Gramophone* (Vol. 97, August 2019), pp. 17-21: 21.

<sup>10</sup> Árpád Ferenc Papp-Váry, 'A Successful Example of Complex Country Branding: The "E-Estonia" Positioning Concept and its Relation to the Presidency of the Council of the EU', *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, European and Regional Studies*, 14 (2018), pp. 87-115: 97.

Soviet sphere, which frequently took on an imperialist hue with veiled or overt suggestions that the latter must be somehow less 'developed'.<sup>11</sup>

## **1.1 Negotiating national identities**

While some reviews of euphonic art musics clearly reflect the construction in western-centric discourse of the former Soviet bloc as Other, active and conscious identity construction is of course also ongoing within the Baltic States themselves. The years 2018-2019 saw numerous centenary celebrations for the first period of independence from imperial control in several hundred years for the Baltic nations Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which began in 1918-19.<sup>12</sup> Reaching as far as 2017-2021, a huge variety of events took place to mark this anniversary. The anniversary moment was clearly seen as a golden opportunity by governing and influential groups within the Baltic countries to build on, reshape, and solidify what Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania 'are' and what they are seen to be from outside. With a focus on community-building and entrepreneurship, the centenary events (like any commemorative ritual) seem geared towards establishing and/ or reinforcing favoured norms, resolutions and commitments. In a context where 'nation-building' is brought to the fore in such explicit ways, Benedict Anderson's conception of national identity as an 'imagined community' is profoundly relevant;<sup>13</sup> if the nation or the culture are not objectively identifiable entities, the ways in which they are produced discursively cast light on priorities of the actors who (re)construct them and the moment and context in which they do. Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia are constructs as well as names for real physical landmasses where people live, where history is accrued and real events, social dynamics and power relations shape lives.

The starting point for this thesis is the dual observation that the nation-construct of Estonia seems to project a particularly distinctive image of its own identity, in terms of cultural exports and visual messaging, by comparison with nearby Baltic nations – and that this image seems to correlate neatly with the branding of the most popular 'art' musics from that country. Three main, interlinked possible causes for this emerge in this context: firstly, the individual success of Arvo Pärt, which might be viewed as either a cause or symptom of

---

<sup>11</sup> In an article on white North American exceptionalism, Suzy Hansen cites the 1997 political satire film *Wag the Dog*, set in Albania, and suggests that any given post-Soviet nation chosen for a location would have been received by large proportions of US audiences with the same 'callousness' and indifference — 'an indifference that said, *Some bumblefuck country, it doesn't matter which one they choose*'. (Hansen, 'Unlearning the myth of American innocence', *Guardian*, 8 Aug 2017 [accessed online, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/aug/08/unlearning-the-myth-of-american-innocence>, 06.01.2021]).

<sup>12</sup> Romuald J. Misiunas, 'The Baltic States: Independence and the 20th Century', *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (accessed online, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Baltic-states/Independent-statehood>, 18.10.19); The Baltic states were illegally subsumed into the Soviet Union from c. 1944-1991; the choice to celebrate a centenary of independence starting from 1918 may represent a symbolic erasure of this more recent occupation.

<sup>13</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 2006 [1983]).

this phenomenon; to an extent Pärt has come to be portrayed as almost emblematic of ‘Baltic-ness’ (as in the cited *Gramophone* feature), and as such the reception of his work may simultaneously be seen as a significant site for the construction and negotiation of some international impressions of Baltic identity in a wider sense. Second, the greater geographical, linguistic and cultural proximity of Estonia to ‘Nordic’ countries like Finland. These neighbouring nations were never made part of the USSR and as such retained a ‘Northern’/‘European’ identity that appears to have been considered desirable by Estonian governing bodies in terms of attracting foreign investment after independence from Soviet control in the 1990s — as well as being seen by some as more genuinely reflective of Estonia’s Finno-Ugric cultural roots.<sup>14</sup> The third relevant phenomenon is the development of a national brand for Estonia in the early 2000s.<sup>15</sup> The design concept seemingly drew together the above two points in conjunction with a gallery of ideas extrapolated by marketing experts from a surface-level survey of Estonian culture and put together on the basis of ‘gut feeling’,<sup>16</sup> in a bid to give the country a marketable face appropriate to the priorities of its new, globally-oriented leadership.<sup>17</sup> This thesis will outline familiar interpretative templates for this commonly recurring imagery. Following the conclusion that this construction is a highly pragmatic one and by no means reflective of the wider reality of culture in the Baltic States, the focus will turn to contrasting examples to highlight heterogeneity. The remaining Chapters will look in detail at examples of contemporary Lithuanian classical music which seem to represent a striking departure from the relatively narrow picture painted by the more prominent imagery around composers like Pärt.

The discursive contrasts between more widely-marketed Estonian contemporary classical music and comparatively less well-known Lithuanian composition are drawn on here in the hope of achieving the following: firstly, to contribute to greater awareness of the heterogeneous directions being taken in contemporary classical composition from Lithuania, from which the dominant figure of ‘Baltic art music’ may serve to detract. Secondly, to highlight the problematic nature of some English-language reception of prominent Baltic styles, exploring links to assumptions of an absence of modernism and ideas about constructions of ethnic and cultural identity. I argue that the pervasiveness of the euphonic palette is inextricable from both the partial perspective of western media and the businesslike pragmatism of Estonia’s neoliberal government, and that the comparatively

---

<sup>14</sup> Toomas Hendrik Ilves, ‘Estonia as a Nordic Country’, 1999 speech, Republic of Estonia Ministry of Foreign Affairs website (accessed online, <https://vm.ee/en/news/estonia-nordic-country>, 18.10.19); Eesti Stiil — Estonia Style. Enterprise Estonia. (accessed online, <https://arhiiv.pixel.ee/eas/eesti-brand/2002-2008/2002-eesti-brand-welcome-to-estonia.pdf>, 18.10.19).

<sup>15</sup> Sue Curry Jansen, ‘Designer Nations: Neo-liberal nation branding — Brand Estonia’, *Social Identities* 14/1 (2008), pp. 121-142.

<sup>16</sup> Jansen, ‘Designer Nations’, 136; 122-123; 128.

<sup>17</sup> Hilary Appel and Mitchell A. Orenstein, ‘Why did Neoliberalism Triumph and Endure in the Post-Communist World?’, *Comparative Politics* 48/3 (2016), pp. 313-331: 322.

modernist-leaning tendencies of Lithuania's contemporary art music highlight, in constructions of a Baltic classical canon, a putative absence of modernism which is politically meaningful.

The transition from Soviet historiography (frequently framed as revisionist<sup>18</sup>) to independent historiography (which is also often implicated in debates around revisionism<sup>19</sup>) and its attendant priorities, manifests itself in meaning-making around the years of Estonia's occupation by Germany and Russia. Boris Groys has suggested that in order to establish a meaningful independent identity, formerly-Soviet States must turn to the culture of an unoccupied period.<sup>20</sup> For the Baltic States, apart from a brief era of independence from 1918-1940, occupations had been ongoing for centuries. As such, much subsequent 'ethno-futurist' discourse drew on ideas about autochthonous cultures of the region. Early evidence of people living in and around the landmasses known today as Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania suggests that humans had begun to explore modern Lithuania's landscape in search of food as early as 11000 BC (around the time when Northern Estonia was still emerging from the ice).<sup>21</sup> A large number of discrete cultural communities (including those groups named today as Livonians, Setus,<sup>22</sup> Samogitians, Žemaitians, Aukštaitians, Scalvians, Yotvingians, Prussians, Lettigallians, Semigallians, Selonians, Votians,<sup>23</sup> and more) inhabited the Baltic regions over the next several millennia, ultimately confronting the imposition of Christianity considerably later than other countries in Europe, in the 13th (Estonia and Latvia) to late 14th (Lithuania) centuries.<sup>24</sup> Lithuania did not convert to Christianity until 1387.<sup>25</sup> In many places Christian and pagan systems of belief, mythology and symbolism coexisted in a synergistic state for a long time.<sup>26</sup> The impacts of centuries of forcible rule by imperial Russia, Germany, Sweden, and the putatively anti-nationalist Soviet Union,<sup>27</sup> plus the rarefied cultural atmosphere in moments of independence and rebuilding (the 'National Awakenings' in the nineteenth century<sup>28</sup> and the influential 'ethnofuturist' movement that

---

<sup>18</sup> See Roger D. Markwick, *Rewriting History in Soviet Russia: The Politics of Revisionist Historiography, 1956-1974* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

<sup>19</sup> Volha Charnysh and Evgeny Finkel, 'Rewriting History in Eastern Europe: Poland's New Holocaust Law and the Politics of the Past', *Foreign Affairs*, February 14 2018 (accessed online, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/hungary/2018-02-14/rewriting-history-eastern-europe>, 18.10.19).

<sup>20</sup> Boris Groys, 'Difference between Western postmodernism and Eastern postsocialism', Lecture at Garage Museum Moscow, 21 March 2015 (accessed online, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I7LDLCS4ibM&t=1s>, 19.10.19).

<sup>21</sup> Andres Kasekamp, *A History of the Baltic States, Second Edition* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018 [2010]), 2.

<sup>22</sup> Andrejs Plakans, *A Concise History of the Baltic States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 10.

<sup>23</sup> Kasekamp, *A History of the Baltic States*, 5-6.

<sup>24</sup> Michael F. Strmiska, 'Paganism-Inspired Folk Music, Folk Music-Inspired Paganism and New Cultural Fusions in Lithuania and Latvia' in *Handbook of New Religions and Cultural Production*, ed. Carole M. Cusack and Alex Norman (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 352-353.

<sup>25</sup> Plakans, *A Concise History of the Baltic States*, 67.

<sup>26</sup> Milda Baksys Richardson, 'Reverence and Resistance in Lithuanian Wayside Shrines', *Perspectives In Vernacular Architecture* 10 (2005), pp. 249-267: 249; 253-254.

<sup>27</sup> See Chapter 4: 'Nationalism and Socialism: The Soviet Case', in Nelly Bekus, *Struggle over Identity: The Official and The Alternative "Belarusianness"* (Budapest: Central European University Press: 2010).

<sup>28</sup> Peter Van Elsuwege, *From Soviet Republics to EU Member States: A Legal and Political Assessment of the Baltic States Accession to the EU* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff, 2008), 11.

Anders Kreuger claims 'started as a political joke by an eighteen-year-old poet'<sup>29</sup>) all form part of the discursive construction of these modern states.

The Baltic countries have experienced long years of occupation, with well-known points of overlap between more recent events – a period of self-determination from around 1918 to 1940; Soviet control from the mid-1940s<sup>30</sup>; periods of popular resistance (the guerrilla movement of the 'Forest Brothers'<sup>31</sup>, different incarnations of folk revivalism, the 'Singing Revolution', the 1989 'Baltic Way' [a 'human chain' of protestors holding hands reaching from Estonia to Lithuania]<sup>32</sup>) and the regaining of independence in 1991.<sup>33</sup> These major points of similarity in the narrativisation of modern history are balanced by differentiation further back in the past. In the case of Estonia, the centuries of foreign domination are so regularly used to characterise the country's history that this has become a point of contention. Some writers view Estonia's entrenched narratives of perpetual defeat as having profoundly shaped a distinctive national-cultural ontology, suggesting that relentless occupations, cold weather and unyielding soil fostered in the regional imagination an altogether alternate experience of time itself.<sup>34</sup> Maire Jaanus has asserted that the time of Estonia is monumental (circular, goalless), in contrast to the teleological historical time of the coloniser.<sup>35</sup> Tiina Kala observes aspects of the early history writing of Estonia that impacted the shape of resulting narratives. A significant proportion of the known surviving primary sources on 12th-13th century Estonia and Latvia were written by one person, the German missionary Henrik of Latvia.<sup>36</sup> Violence was rife in the context of Henrik's colonising 'mission'<sup>37</sup> and, as such, early historical sources are filled with accounts of brutalisation of Estonians by Germans. Kala acknowledges that '[v]iolent episodes naturally occupy an important place in the earlier history of any people', but argues that 'the impression they left on the Estonian self-image was that the only precise information we possess concerns violence in which we were the underdogs'.<sup>38</sup>

Dominant narratives of Latvia's history are characterised by similarly violent events – German Christian colonisation and Russian imperial expansion. Modris Eksteins attributes to nineteenth-century Latvians 'a burgeoning [...] self-affirmation that was more often

---

<sup>29</sup> Anders Kreuger, 'Ethno-futurism: Leaning on the Past, Working for the Future', *Afterall* 43 (2017), pp. 116-133: 117.

<sup>30</sup> Misiunas, 'The Baltic States: Independence and the 20th Century'.

<sup>31</sup> Plakans, *A Concise History of the Baltic States*, 360.

<sup>32</sup> Plakans, 404.

<sup>33</sup> Plakans, 398-399.

<sup>34</sup> Maire Jaanus, 'Estonia's Time and Monumental Time' in *Baltic Postcolonialism*, ed. Violeta Kelertas (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006); see also Karl E. Jirgens, 'Labyrinths of Meaning in Aleksandrs Pelēcis' *Siberia Book* and Agate Nesaule's *Woman in Amber: A Postmodern/Postcolonial Reading* in *Baltic Postcolonialism*, 367.

<sup>35</sup> Jaanus, 'Estonia's Time and Monumental Time', 216.

<sup>36</sup> Tiina Kala, 'Estonia from the 13th to 16th Centuries', in *Estonia: Identity and Independence*, ed. Jean-Jacques Subrenat, transl. David Cousins, Eric Dickens, Alexander Harding, Richard C. Waterhouse (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2004): 48-49.

<sup>37</sup> Kala, 'Estonia from the 13th to 16th Centuries', 48-49.

<sup>38</sup> Kala, 'Estonia from the 13th to 16th Centuries', 49.



directed at the perceived foe, represented directly by the dominant Baltic-German nobility and in the background by Russian imperial authority, than at self-cultivation'.<sup>39</sup> An oversimplified narrative of Latvia as a perennially victimised nation is complicated by colonial exploitation committed by the Latvian aristocracy in Tobago, Gambia and Norway in the seventeenth century.<sup>40</sup> According to Aldis Purs, some Latvian nationalists refer back to this short-lived moment of violent expansionism as an example of former 'glories'.<sup>41</sup> Overall, Latvia's history features much oppression, and literary constructions of the nation often reflect this.

Often portrayed in English-language descriptions as a group of three highly similar countries,<sup>42</sup> there are several key shared points in the narrativisation of modern history that could serve to obscure enduring and culturally important differences between these nations. People of the Baltic States do not necessarily self-identify as 'Baltic';<sup>43</sup> in 2011, one irate Estonian politician demanded, 'Who the fuck are the Balts to us?'<sup>44</sup> While highlighting some commonalities of institutional experience, Andres Kasekamp notes, for example, significant differences between the main languages of the three States.<sup>45</sup> Latvian and Lithuanian are more closely related languages – grouped as 'Baltic'<sup>46</sup> while Estonian is a Finno-Ugric language<sup>47</sup> – but in terms of foreign occupation, Latvia and Estonia arguably have a slightly higher proportion of shared experience, while Lithuania's distant imperial past and historical membership in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth mean that, further back in time, Lithuania had stronger cultural ties to Poland than to Estonia and/or Latvia. Nevertheless, much contemporary Lithuanian historiography and education reproduces the narrative of victimhood. Zenonas Norkus, a historian who has studied Lithuania's imperial past, describes this trend:

Many find the idea that their own country was once an imperialist power rather difficult to accept. They once studied and continue to study from school textbooks that tell the story of Lithuania as a perennial victim and martyr at the expense of its more assertive neighbours.<sup>48</sup>

Ideological position notwithstanding, Norkus's framing complicates the image of a country apparently typically viewed as small and passive even by its own citizens. The author's

---

<sup>39</sup> Modris Eksteins, *Walking Since Daybreak: A Story of Eastern Europe, World War II, and the Heart of Our Century* (New York: Mariner Books, 2000), xii.

<sup>40</sup> Purs and Plakans, *Latvia*, 125; 172; 322.

<sup>41</sup> Purs and Plakans, *Latvia*, 322.

<sup>42</sup> Aldis Purs, *Baltic Facades: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania since 1945* (London: Reaktion Books, 2010), 10.

<sup>43</sup> Kasekamp, *A History of the Baltic States*, viii.

<sup>44</sup> Purs, *Baltic Facades*, 9.

<sup>45</sup> Kasekamp, ix.

<sup>46</sup> Vytautas J. Mažiulis, 'Baltic Languages', *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (accessed online, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Baltic-languages>, 19.10.19).

<sup>47</sup> Unnamed author, 'Finno-Ugric Languages', *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (accessed online, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Finno-Ugric-languages>, accessed 19.10.19).

<sup>48</sup> Zenonas Norkus, *An Unproclaimed Empire: The Grand Duchy of Lithuania*, transl. Albina Strunga. (New York and London: Routledge, 2018), 2.

contention that Lithuania's imperial past in fact contributed in some way to the collapse of Soviet rule in the twentieth century,<sup>49</sup> if implausible, is striking in how far the tone represents a departure from the historiography of peaceful protest and/or defeat commonly ascribed to the Baltic States.<sup>50</sup>

Between the 13th and 18th centuries Lithuania had control of a larger area of surrounding Europe;<sup>51</sup> the territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania encompassed parts of modern-day Ukraine and Belarus.<sup>52</sup> Describing earlier structural differences between northern and southern Baltic regions, Kasekamp writes,

The differences in the level of social and political development during the Late Iron Age are illustrated by the number of hillforts: there were approximately 700 hillforts in use in Lithuania, almost 200 in Latvia and fewer than 100 in Estonia. These figures also suggest that Lithuanian society was more hierarchical and placed greater emphasis on martial values, whereas further north, especially in Estonian areas, communities remained more egalitarian, and feminine values were still important.<sup>53</sup>

It may or may not be the case that the actual social organisation of Lithuania in the Middle Ages was a root (if distant) cause of other aspects of modern discourse differentiating the cultural products of this region from nearby states. Emphasising the inherently problematic nature of characterising an entire culture as more peaceful or more warlike (let alone the association of these traits with binary constructions of gender), this thesis will trace related ideas as they filter into modern-day conversations about more recent cultural phenomena.

Early differences were perhaps bolstered by factors such as the warmer climate further south, allowing up to three more weeks of crop growth in the summer<sup>54</sup> compared to more northerly Estonia. Much later differences could be partially attributed to, for example, a significantly lower number of ethnic Russian migrants settling in Soviet-occupied Lithuania than in Estonia or Latvia.<sup>55</sup> This disparity is ostensibly due to Lithuania's lack of a shared border with mainland Russia, which may have had a significant impact on the distribution of hostile actions by the occupying government. In any case, many structures of power can be considered as having material origins. Although some of these 'roots' may be thousands of

---

<sup>49</sup> Norkus, 1.

<sup>50</sup> See Guntis Šmidchens, *The Power of Song: Nonviolent National Culture in the Baltic Singing Revolution* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2014).

<sup>51</sup> S.C. Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending: A Pagan Empire Within East-Central Europe* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000 [1994]), abstract (unnumbered page).

<sup>52</sup> Unnamed author, 'Grand duchy of Lithuania', *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (accessed online, <https://www.britannica.com/place/grand-duchy-of-Lithuania>, 19.10.19).

<sup>53</sup> Kasekamp, *A History of the Baltic States*, 6-7.

<sup>54</sup> Kasekamp, 2.

<sup>55</sup> In the latest Soviet census (1989), numbers of Russian people living in the Baltic States were recorded as follows: Estonia — 475,000, about 30.4% of the population; Latvia — 906,000, about 34%; Lithuania — 344,000, about 9.4%. (Aksel Kirch, Marika Kirch, Tarmo Tuisk, 'Russians in the Baltic States: To be or not to be?', *Journal of Baltic Studies* 24/2 (1993), pp. 173-188: 173.

years gone, the reproductive nature of ways of constructing identity still (at times self-consciously) reflect the imprints of very old ideas in the current era of globalisation and branding.

## **1.2 Narrativising Soviet occupation**

More consistently memorialised than the ancient imperial history of Lithuania are the events and aftermath of the twentieth century power struggle between Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, which ultimately led to the Baltic States being under the control of a Soviet government. The 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact constituted a non-aggression agreement between the USSR and Nazi Germany. Containing a number of 'secret protocols' outlining the distribution of lands between the two powers, the treaty resulted in the assertion of illegitimate claims to territory.<sup>56</sup> The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact paved the way for the USSR to force the Baltic States to accept Mutual Assistance Pacts, giving the Soviet Union the power to establish military bases that Izidors Vizulis claims were 'the beginning of the end of the Baltic States'.<sup>57</sup> Many years later, the era of *glasnost* allowed people in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to openly express their objections to the unlawful annexation of their countries.<sup>58</sup> This moment is popularly linked to a 'snowball effect' of large-scale public protests, international attention, the overt disavowal by Baltic people of Soviet control, and ultimately the collapse of the USSR around the early 1990s. Although the Baltic States had greater cultural freedom during communist rule by comparison with 'the rigid control over artists exercised by the Soviets in their centres of governmental/military strength',<sup>59</sup> the overall experience of occupation was nevertheless traumatic and debilitating for many, as evidenced by texts such as Maire Jaanus's interpretation of post-Soviet Estonian literature through a postcolonial lens.<sup>60</sup> That there would be a desire to reject such a legacy is clear. Indeed, there was a pronounced backlash from prominent spokespeople in the Baltics when, in 2014, the *Guardian* newspaper included the region in the remit of their 'New East' network, projected to publish coverage of events in formerly-Soviet regions.<sup>61</sup> Ambassadors and politicians deemed the project 'misleading', 'unfair', 'deluded', and 'intellectually bankrupt', criticising the newspaper's framing as an insulting and outdated. While the above objections may respond more to a perceived diplomatic slight, the idea of the Baltic States being either 'Eastern' or postcolonial is also related to broader constructions of ethnic identity. Far-right,

---

<sup>56</sup> Plakans, *Concise History of the Baltic States*, 336.

<sup>57</sup> Izidors Vizulis. *The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939: The Baltic Case* (New York: Praeger, 1990), 27.

<sup>58</sup> Kasekamp, *A History of the Baltic States*, 147-150.

<sup>59</sup> Alla Rosenfeld and Norton T. Dodge (eds.), *Art of the Baltics: The Struggle for Freedom of Artistic Expression Under the Soviets, 1945-1991* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press/Wilsted & Taylor: 2002), vii.

<sup>60</sup> Jaanus, 'Estonia's Time and Monumental Time'.

<sup>61</sup> Agata Pyzik, 'What's wrong with being "East" anyway?', *The Guardian*, June 20 2014 (accessed online, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/20/lithuania-latvia-estonia-baltics-guardian-new-east>, 19.10.19).

white supremacist ideology in the Baltic States has risen sharply in recent decades, and it is possible that rejections of postcolonial paradigms for the articulation of collective experience may be attributed in some quarters to illusions of a white/global-northern superiority distinguishing the Baltics from 'other' formerly colonised nations.<sup>62</sup> The desire of some influential groups in the Baltics (particularly in Estonia) to be viewed as more northern European can be understood in terms of the construction of whiteness — particularly since nineteenth-century categories of race, through which whiteness has been weaponised to shore up power and wealth, were invented for primarily economic purposes. As will be revisited later in this study, several ethnically-Caucasian groups (such as Irish<sup>63</sup> and Italian<sup>64</sup> people living abroad) were only 'admitted' to the socially-privileged pantheon of whiteness in living memory. In addition to entrenched structures that benefit people racialized as white, the discrimination faced by many ethnically-Caucasian people of eastern European descent (and increasingly of any non-British nationality) in the UK<sup>65</sup> demonstrates that whiteness is a fluid and continually reconstructed category. It is also possible to see the marginalisation of ethnic Russian residents of Latvia and Estonia since independence<sup>66</sup> as relevant to ongoing reconstructions of 'whiteness' as a violent, exclusionary, imagined category of ethnic privilege and belonging.

Overall, the stakes in representations of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have been high, particularly in the decades after 1991. This study will explore how reflections and inversions of the ideas outlined above can be traced in discourses around music.

### **1.3 Literature Review**

At present there is no other study that explores the specific intersections of issues discussed here. However, much literature naturally exists in several highly relevant areas. I have identified a number of the most pertinent categories of existing literature and organised them broadly according to topic with an overview of significant themes that emerge from each area. The first topic, studies of music in/from the Soviet Union, has been characterised over the last few decades by discussions about freedom, restrictions, ideology and relationship to compositional trends in the political west. Key debates have included questions about

---

<sup>62</sup> David Chioni Moore, 'Is the Post- in Postcolonial the Post- in Post-Soviet? Towards a Global Postcolonial Critique', in *Baltic Postcolonialism*, 20

<sup>63</sup> See Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York and Oxford: Routledge, 2009 [1995]).

<sup>64</sup> See Jennifer Guglielmo and Salvatore Salerno (eds.), *Are Italians White? How Race is Made in America* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003).

<sup>65</sup> Rachel McGrath, 'Young Eastern Europeans Living In UK "Facing More Racism Since Brexit Vote"', *Huffington Post*, August 22 2019 (accessed online, [https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/school-bullying-racism-eastern-european\\_uk\\_5d5e54e1e4b0dfcbd4887d30](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/school-bullying-racism-eastern-european_uk_5d5e54e1e4b0dfcbd4887d30), 19.10.19).

<sup>66</sup> Joanna Hyndle-Hussein and Miryna Kutysz, 'Russian-speakers in Latvia and Estonia', *Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich*, August 15 2004 (accessed online, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-studies/2004-08-15/russian-speakers-latvia-and-estonia>, 19.10.19).

revisionism — the ethics of (re)framing popular artists as dissidents — and the extent to which composers working under the Soviet regime can be said to have had or not had artistic freedom by comparison with counterparts in capitalist democracies.

Post-Soviet studies is a comparatively young field, the immediate applicability of which had already been pronounced ‘over’ within the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I have focused particularly here on post-Soviet studies pertaining to the Baltic States, as the wider USSR comprised such an enormous and diverse region. Studies concerning the Baltic countries have explored the economic transitions of the three States since independence. Questions about why Estonia took the lead in adopting drastic, punitive reforms are discussed in sources such as Bohle and Greskovits 2012,<sup>67</sup> along with the reshaping of international perceptions of the Baltic States; the experience of ethnic Russian people in the region (for example, as discussed in Cheskin 2015),<sup>68</sup> and the particular appeal of neoliberal politics in the post-communist context, as in Appel and Orenstein’s 2016 study.<sup>69</sup> The concept of Baltic postcolonialism in relation to literature is explored in a dedicated anthology (ed. Kelertas, 2006).<sup>70</sup>

Studies of the wider history and culture of the Baltics, while frequently highlighting the heterogeneity of the region, often still appear in ‘pan-Baltic’ packaging — that is, many (English-language) studies still purport to discuss some or other aspect of ‘the Baltic States’. A proportion of literature discusses the experience and impact of occupation, a significant theme in historiography. There are references to the significance of autochthonous pagan/folk cultures and pre-Christian cultural heritage, as discussed for example in Bakšys Richardson 2005;<sup>71</sup> the cultural distinctiveness of the Finno-Ugric heritage of more northerly Baltic regions (explored in Purs 2012);<sup>72</sup> the imperial history of Lithuania (studied by Rowell, 1994);<sup>73</sup> ideas about cultural relationships with and tensions around (the theme of

---

<sup>67</sup> Dorothee Bohle and Béla Greskovits, *Capitalist Diversity on Europe’s Periphery* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2012).

<sup>68</sup> Ammon Cheskin, ‘Identity and Integration of Russian Speakers in the Baltic States: A Framework for Analysis’, *Ethnopolitics* 14 (2015), pp. 72-93.

<sup>69</sup> Hilary Appel and Mitchell A. Orenstein, ‘Why did Neoliberalism Triumph and Endure in the Post-Communist World?’, *Comparative Politics* 48/3 (2016) pp. 313-331.

<sup>70</sup> *Baltic Postcolonialism* (On the Boundary of Two Worlds series, Vol. 6), ed. Violeta Kelertas (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006).

<sup>71</sup> For example, Milda Bakšys Richardson, ‘Reverence and Resistance in Lithuanian Wayside Shrines’, *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* vol. 10 (2005), pp. 249-267.

<sup>72</sup> For example, as discussed in Aldis Purs, *Baltic Facades: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania since 1945* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012) and Thomas Salumets, *Unforced Flourishing: Understanding Jaan Kaplinski* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2014).

<sup>73</sup> For example, Stephen Christopher Rowell, *Lithuania Ascending: A Pagan Empire Within East-Central Europe, 1295-1345* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Zenonas Norkus, *An Unproclaimed Empire: The Grand Duchy of Lithuania: From the Viewpoint of Comparative Historical Sociology of Empires*, transl. Albina Strunga (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2018).

Lankauskas' 2015 work);<sup>74</sup> and legacies of peaceful protest, with the Baltic case frequently cited in broader studies of non-violent civil resistance (for example, in Šmidchens 2007).<sup>75</sup>

Some existing studies on contemporary Baltic classical music were not accessible for this study due to not being available in English or available in the UK at all; the overview here therefore only represents available English-language publications, with the exception of a treatise by Osvaldas Balakauskas and a handful of sources in Lithuanian which provide English-language summaries; the author acknowledges the inherent limitations posed by this. Major artists whose works have been discussed in available publications by Baltic musicologists include Veljo Tormis,<sup>76</sup> Osvaldas Balakauskas<sup>77</sup> and Rytis Mažulis.<sup>78</sup> Tormis and Arvo Pärt receive more attention in English-language scholarship in general than most other composers from the Baltic region; discussion of their work tends to be less technically oriented and typically focuses more on interpretive lenses that strongly favour cultural influences (tensions between religious or spiritual convictions, folk heritage, and the political climate). Work on Mažulis and Balakauskas goes into greater analytical depth; these composers have themselves written various theoretical texts on their own compositional approaches, whereas Tormis and Pärt, whose most popular works are also generally comparatively less complex, have often spoken about intuition, mediation, listening, or facilitating something outside themselves.<sup>79</sup>

Broader studies of contemporary music acknowledge the end of the USSR as a significant global shift, however un-straightforward or intangible, for cultural analysis.<sup>80</sup> Other relevant issues explored in the field include studies on the cultural meanings of minimal music<sup>81</sup> and particularly of so-called spiritual or mystical minimalism.<sup>82</sup> Zooming out further, concepts from critical and cultural studies have contributed to interpretive routes taken in

---

<sup>74</sup> For example, Gediminas Lankauskas, *The Land of Weddings and Rain: Nation and Modernity in Post-Socialist Lithuania* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: Toronto University Press, 2015); Maaire Jaanus, 'Estonia's Time and Monumental Time', in *Baltic Postcolonialism*, ed. Kelertas; Thomas Salumets, 'Jaan Kaplinski and the legacy of intra-European postcolonialism in Estonia', in *Baltic Postcolonialism*.

<sup>75</sup> For example, see Guntis Šmidchens, 'National Heroic Narratives in the Baltics as a Source for Nonviolent Political Action', *Slavic Review* 66/3 (2007), pp. 484-508; Todd May, *Nonviolent Resistance: A Philosophical Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015); Mark Beissinger 'The Intersection of Ethnic Nationalism and People Power Tactics in the Baltic States, 1987-1991', in *Civil Resistance and Power Politics: The Experience of Non-violent Action from Gandhi to the Present*, ed. Adam Roberts and Timothy Garton Ash (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>76</sup> Mimi Daitz, *Ancient Song Recovered: The Life and Music of Veljo Tormis* (New York: Pendragon Press: 2004).

<sup>77</sup> Gražina Daunoravičienė, 'Compositional System of Osvaldas Balakauskas: an attempt to restore the theoretical discourse', *Musicological Annual* 54/2 (2018), pp. 45-95.

<sup>78</sup> Gražina Daunoravičienė, 'Sound architecture of Rytis Mažulis' microstructural canons (from 100 to the 3,448275862 cents)', *Menotyra* 1/30 (2003), pp. 57-68.

<sup>79</sup> For example, Daitz, *Ancient Song Recovered*, 63.

<sup>80</sup> Tim Rutherford-Johnson, *Music after the Fall: Modern Composition and Culture since 1989* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017).

<sup>81</sup> Asta Pakarklytė, 'Black-and-white-post-Minimalism, or the Lithuanian Spleen', in *Lithuanian Music in Context vol 2: Landscapes of Minimalism* (Vilnius: Lithuanian Music Information Centre, 2011); Šarunas Nakas, 'Minimalism in Lithuanian Music', transl. Vida Urbonavičius, Veronika Janatjeva, in *Landscapes of Minimalism*; Robert Fink, *Repeating Ourselves: American Minimal Music as Cultural Practice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

<sup>82</sup> David Dies, 'Defining "Spiritual Minimalism"', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Minimalist and Postminimalist Music*, ed. Keith Potter, Kyle Gann and Pwyll ap Siôn (London: Routledge, 2016 [2013]); Rima Povilionienė and Jūratė Katinaitė, eds. *Music that Changed Time: The Lithuanian Composer Bronius Kutavičius and the Baltic Outburst of Creativity After 1970* (Vilnius: Lithuanian Composers' Union, 2014).

this study: nations and cultures as imagined communities;<sup>83</sup> the socially-constructed, fluid and ephemeral nature of the concept of whiteness;<sup>84</sup> whiteness as a form of (imagined) 'blankness' or neutrality;<sup>85</sup> postmodernism as a paradigm in which contextualising relationships between past and present can be disregarded;<sup>86</sup> the multiple meanings of modernism;<sup>87</sup> the repetitive cycles of 'ordinary criticism' in art-theoretical literature;<sup>88</sup> critical discourse analysis;<sup>89</sup> and the persistence of dialectical thinking and binary structures of representation and meaning in the postmodern context.<sup>90</sup>

### **1.3.1 Studies of music of the USSR**

One of the biggest debates in musicology concerned with the Soviet period is also one of the biggest debates in twentieth century musicology altogether. The 'Shostakovich Wars', centring around criticism of Solomon Volkov's 1979 *Testimony*,<sup>91</sup> comprised a dispute over the extent to which Dmitri Shostakovich can be said to have 'lived all his life in fear and hatred of Soviet power'.<sup>92</sup> Pauline Fairclough identifies Cold War ideological struggles as 'the most powerful influence' on retellings of the composer's biography.<sup>93</sup> Erik Levi explains that a reappraisal of Shostakovich by western music writers from the 1970s coincided with a softening of relations between Soviet and West German authorities; a general trend towards postmodern pluralism in artistic discourse; and the representation of the composer, in *Testimony*, as a "dissident"<sup>94</sup> In *Shostakovich: A Life*, Laurel E. Fay argued that it was impossible for any existing source on the composer to be considered 'remotely reliable', since ideology permeated interpretation at even the most 'basic', factual levels.<sup>95</sup> The present study is not concerned with Shostakovich or the earlier Soviet period; however, debate around this composer persisted not only because of his significance as a figure in general, but because it tapped into wider questions and beliefs about the reality of cultural

---

<sup>83</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York and London: Verso Books, 2003 [1983]); Georgina Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology & the English Folk Revival* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993).

<sup>84</sup> Teresa J. Guess, 'The Social Construction of Whiteness: Racism by Intent, Racism by Consequence', *Critical Sociology* 32/4 (2006), pp. 649-673.

<sup>85</sup> C. Namwali Serpell, 'Vacuity' in *Seven Modes of Uncertainty* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 215.

<sup>86</sup> Fredric Jameson, 'Postmodernism: Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism', in *Postmodernism: Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991 [1984]), x-xi.

<sup>87</sup> Susan Stanford Friedman, 'Definitional Excursions: The Meanings of Modern/Modernity/Modernism', *Modernism/modernity* 8/3, 2001 (accessed online, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/23422>, 26.10.19).

<sup>88</sup> David Bordwell, *Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991 [1989]), 27.

<sup>89</sup> Stuart Hall, 'The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power', in *Formations of Modernity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Bram Gieben (Cambridge: Polity Press and The Open University, 1992); Calum Neil, 'Breaking the Text: an Introduction to Lacanian discourse analysis', *Theory & Psychology* 23/3 (2013), pp. 334-350.

<sup>90</sup> Fredric Jameson, *Valences of the Dialectic* (London and Brooklyn: Verso Books, 2010).

<sup>91</sup> Solomon Volkov, *Testimony: The Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich* (London: Faber and Faber, 1987 [1979]).

<sup>92</sup> Pauline Fairclough, *Dmitri Shostakovich* (London: Reaktion Books, 2019), 9.

<sup>93</sup> Fairclough, *Dmitri Shostakovich*, 9.

<sup>94</sup> Erik Levi, 'A political football: Shostakovich reception in Germany', in *The Cambridge Companion to Shostakovich*, ed. Pauline Fairclough and David Fanning (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 296.

<sup>95</sup> Laurel E. Fay, *Shostakovich: A Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3.

life in the USSR. I maintain that a similar impulse has existed to ‘validate’ twentieth-century Baltic euphonic composers for capitalist sensibilities not only by attributing unequivocally anti-Soviet convictions to individuals, but also by positioning the euphonic paradigm in opposition to Soviet cultural ontologies.

The image of composers working against or around the regime was prominent before the 1970s. Gerald Abraham wrote of the Soviet artistic climate in the early 1940s that “‘clever’ composers like Shostakovich and Knipper’ — in his view, ‘composers who have been obliged to sit on their intellectual safety valves’ — must have been ‘obviously rather ill at ease under these conditions.’<sup>96</sup> Twentieth century criticism often promulgated the perception of Soviet music as bland, vapid, and censored to the point of banality; Abraham described Soviet composition as ‘musical milk’ (‘it may be wholesome but it is not good’<sup>97</sup>). This tendency persists: as Fairclough observes, ‘Russian (or more properly, Soviet) music has frequently been addressed [...] in western scholarship [...] with an underlying assumption of its technical inferiority to music produced in western Europe and America.’<sup>98</sup>

Abraham evokes the theme of surreptitious edginess, claiming, ‘we generally find Soviet music most palatable when the composer has contrived to drop in a spot of vodka on the sly.’<sup>99</sup> Taruskin discusses Abraham’s influential output with a combination of awareness and admiration in *On Russian Music*. Though acknowledging that Abraham’s work was in many ways ‘outdated’ by the time Taruskin was writing around the turn of the 21st century, in some ways the latter writer echoes the old stereotype of ‘musical milk’ in his comment about contemporary Baltic composers consistently writing highly consonant music.<sup>100</sup> My contention is that — notwithstanding the sibling impulse to retrospectively validate composers by framing them as having nurtured passionate anti-Soviet sentiment — the image of toothless blandness (when viewed negatively) or mystical, ritualistic monotony (when viewed positively) followed the Baltics in particular after independence, owing not only to the persistence of Cold War stereotypes but also to strategies adopted to construct a market-friendly Estonian national image and the alignment of some of these tropes with both euphonic megastars and elements of previous ethno-futurist discourses.

In *Such Freedom If Only Musical*, Peter Schmelz explores the ‘unofficial’ music of Soviet composers of the Khrushchev ‘Thaw’ era. Schmelz describes a “‘third space’”<sup>101</sup> of neither active resistance nor enthusiastic compliance, echoing Miłosz’s

---

<sup>96</sup> Gerald Abraham, *Eight Soviet Composers* (London: Oxford University Press, 2007 [1943]), 12.

<sup>97</sup> Abraham, *Eight Soviet Composers*, 12.

<sup>98</sup> Pauline Fairclough, ‘Such Freedom, if Only Musical: Unofficial Soviet Music during the Thaw (review)’, *Notes* 66/3 (2010), pp. 561-563: 562.

<sup>99</sup> Abraham, *Eight Soviet Composers*, 12.

<sup>100</sup> Richard Taruskin, *On Russian Music* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009), 22; 389.

<sup>101</sup> Peter J. Schmelz, *Such Freedom, If Only Musical: Unofficial Soviet Music during the Thaw* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 4-5.



conceptualisations<sup>102</sup> of the secret inner lives of Soviet subjects. Rather than claiming that much-loved composers were avid dissenters or arguing that the degree of repression had been exaggerated, Schmelz paints a more nuanced and ambivalent picture: neither totally forbidden nor endorsed, the works he discusses are neither Soviet nor “anti-Soviet”.<sup>103</sup> Evoking Bakhtinian concepts to explore the particular nature of this liminal, ambivalent relationship to power and agency,<sup>104</sup> Schmelz’s more complex picture is reflected in the concept of a nylon (rather than iron) curtain separating musicians in Cold-War-era Lithuania from non-Soviet European counterparts — not only emphasising the porousness of the supposed barrier between the Soviet sphere and the outside world, but highlighting the inherently global aspirations of the Soviet system, which was never intended to be a hermetic silo cut off from the rest of the world but instead to engage, compete with and influence it.<sup>105</sup> A similar angle is taken up in Marina Frolova-Walker’s work on Soviet music and Socialist Realism, in which she refutes a simplistic image of rigid state controls on artists, painting instead a picture of a profoundly disorientating climate in which what was favoured or not favoured seemed to be constantly shifting or slipping from view.<sup>106</sup>

### **1.3.2 Post-Soviet studies (particularly pertaining to the Baltic States)**

One of the questions that has stood out in conversations on the post-Soviet has been, ‘to what extent is “post-Soviet” still a relevant category?’ — particularly in responses from Baltic representatives to a perceived residual fondness for this paradigm in media of the former political west.<sup>107</sup> While this question was answered in the negative by Platt in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, interest in the term does not appear to have died away; the output of academic literature on the ‘post-Soviet’ continues to date. A related question is whether or not the post-Soviet Baltic States might be viewed through a postcolonial interpretive lens. Some key ideas for this study are put forward in the 2006 anthology *Baltic Postcolonialism*. Alongside topics of selfhood and otherness, silence and ‘aestheticised violence’, editor Violeta Kelertas and other contributors repeatedly revisit the viability of applying postcolonial interpretive paradigms to the Baltic States. Kelertas acknowledges ‘resistance’ to the use of these terms, but argues ‘that Russia was a colonizer and that the [‘decidedly expansionist’] Soviet Union was one as well.’<sup>108</sup> The author notes initial U.S. reluctance to acknowledge

---

<sup>102</sup> Czesław Miłosz, *The Captive Mind* (London: Penguin Books, 2001 [1953]).

<sup>103</sup> Fairclough, ‘Such Freedom (review)’, 562.

<sup>104</sup> Schmelz, *Such Freedom, If Only Musical*, 14-15.

<sup>105</sup> György Péteri, ‘Nylon Curtain — Transnational and Transsystemic Tendencies in The Cultural Life Of State-Socialist Russia and East-Central Europe’ (2004), as cited in Rūta Stanevičiūtė, Danutė Petrauskaitė, Vita Gruodytė, ‘A Nylon Curtain: International Exchanges and Lithuanian Musician Networks in the Cold War Era’ (2018), summary by Ruta Stanevičiūtė (accessed online, [https://www.academia.edu/38449802/The\\_Nylon\\_Curtain](https://www.academia.edu/38449802/The_Nylon_Curtain), 03.12.21), 314.

<sup>106</sup> Marina Frolova-Walker, “National in Form, Socialist in Content”: Musical Nation-Building in the Soviet Republics’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 51/2 (1998), pp. 331-371: 332-333.

<sup>107</sup> Pyzik, ‘What’s wrong with being “East” anyway?’.

<sup>108</sup> Violeta Kelertas, ‘Baltic Postcolonialism and its Critics’ in *Baltic Postcolonialism*, 2.

Baltic independence on putative grounds on the sizes of the nations, noting that the dismissive word ‘tiny’ was often applied to Lithuania where it was not to Belgium or Israel, despite similarities in size and population.<sup>109</sup> This attitude surfaces in a 1989 *Washington Post* item titled ‘Lithuania, the little independence movement that could’.<sup>110</sup> I will argue that this projection, on the part particularly of Anglo-American circles (whether writers, film makers or other discourse producers), of diminutive stature and status may be active in the admiration of ‘folkish’, ‘mystical’ euphonic styles and a sidelining or even assumed absence of modernist ones.

In *Baltic Postcolonialism*, Maaire Jaanus and Arūnas Sverdiolas explore key concepts of time and space. Jaanus’ essay on ‘Estonia’s Time and Monumental Time’ makes the case for a specifically postmodern, postcolonial, Estonian relationship with temporality and the concept of history.<sup>111</sup> In this study I suggest links between the rich collection of ideas highlighted by Jaanus and not only meaningful constructions of Estonian identity but also the marketisation of stereotypes in the branding of both the nation and some of its most successful musical exports. While acknowledging the existence and impact of obstacles to international cultural exchange between the USSR and the capitalist world, Sverdiolas rejects a simplistic model of a deeply restricted Soviet Lithuania turning suddenly into a totally free independent state in the early 1990s, suggesting the metaphor of a sieve to describe the newly permeable boundary between Lithuania and the economic and cultural West (illustrating an uneven, irregular process in the early days due to factors such as linguistic transitions away from Russian).<sup>112</sup> The author describes post-Soviet Lithuanian cultural space as like a honeycomb, where ‘many opposing flourishings and rebirths [were] occurring’ simultaneously.<sup>113</sup> Though aspects of these observations correlate to Jaanus’s picture of a traumatised, fragmented subject — which in turn may be associated with euphonic paradigms through an alleged orientation towards circular, spatial non-teleological, non-historical temporalities — there is also an important emphasis on heterogeneity here. Heterogeneity in an abstract sense is not remarkable, but it bears exploration in a context where there has seemingly been some effort to promote one particular image above others; I will argue that the euphonic palette and what could be called a kind of ‘Baltic brand’ are characterised by homogeneity and exclusion. As such, what has been comparatively overlooked may have been overlooked in meaningful ways. Though many writers have argued that the separation was never total, Thomas Salumets and Violeta

---

<sup>109</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> David Remnick, ‘Lithuania the Little Independence Movement that Could’, *Washington Post*, 6 Aug 1989 (accessed online, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1989/08/06/lithuania-the-little-independence-movement-that-could/36d07767-ef36-4d0a-a4a9-ffe2b23791a4/>, 06.01.2021).

<sup>111</sup> Jaanus, ‘Estonia’s Time and Monumental Time’.

<sup>112</sup> Sverdiolas, ‘The Honeycomb and the Sieve’, 233.

<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*

Kelertas have described independence in terms of the Baltic States' 'encounter' with western Europe and the wider economic global north. While Salumets's focus is on the reservations of Estonian poet Jaan Kaplinski about the potential loss of authentic Estonian or Finno-Ugric cultural heritage in the face of Anglo-American cultural imperialism,<sup>114</sup> Kelertas's essay explores a somewhat more enthusiastic, or at least curious, view, suggesting a positive (or not entirely negative) valence to the new relative freedom to travel, to be a tourist, to (re)construct an identity in relation to a different range of experiences.<sup>115</sup>

Another significant topic concerns new positions taken regarding economic policy after independence and their underlying motivations. Writers have explored the social costs of the right-wing economic 'shock therapy' imposed in Estonia<sup>116</sup> and the specific appeal of neoliberalism in post-Soviet states. Hilary Appel and Mitchell A. Orenstein claim that 'no region has embraced neoliberalism as enthusiastically or persistently as post-Communist Europe and Eurasia', despite predictions that resulting conditions (increased political populism and hardship) would lead citizens to reject the ideological program.<sup>117</sup> The authors suggest that post-Communist neoliberalisation was motivated by a number of factors (including to 'impress potential investors' and 'minimise perceptions of a Communist legacy'<sup>118</sup>) and fell into differently-characterised phases: the first, 'Washington Consensus phase', during which post-Communist countries 'did not have much choice' about liberalisation;<sup>119</sup> a phase in which liberalisation was pursued in order to meet the conditions of EU membership;<sup>120</sup> and a type the authors call 'avant-garde', in which several states enacted extreme, radical economic liberalisation which went beyond and often against advice from international financial institutions. Many states introduced controversial and unnecessary (for EU accession) policies like pension privatisation and a flat tax. Although the initial enthusiasm for neoliberalism in the post-Communist world is seen as unsurprising due to a wish to reject the legacy of Soviet occupation, the authors describe the proportion of nations which adopted these more extreme measures as 'quite extraordinary'.<sup>121</sup>

While Appel and Orenstein demonstrate the surprising intensity of market fundamentalism in several former Soviet States, Bohle and Greskovits explore the heterogeneity of responses, not only across the former USSR but between the Baltic States. The authors show how Estonia's response was comparatively rapid and drastic — followed

---

<sup>114</sup> Salumets, 'Jaan Kaplinski', 435.

<sup>115</sup> Violeta Kelertas, 'Foot-Loose and Fancy-Free: The Postcolonial Lithuanian Encounters Europe', in *Baltic Postcolonialism*.

<sup>116</sup> Toomas Aarand Orav, 'A tale of two Estonias', *Baltic Times*, 28 Mar 2002 (accessed online, <https://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/6206/>, 06.01.2021); Sue Curry Jansen, 'Designer nations: Neo-liberal nation branding – Brand Estonia', *Social Identities* 14/1 (2008), pp. 121-142: 127-9.

<sup>117</sup> Appel and Orenstein, 'Why did Neoliberalism Triumph and Endure in the Post-Communist World?', 313.

<sup>118</sup> Appel and Orenstein, 'Why did Neoliberalism Triumph and Endure in the Post-Communist World?', 316.

<sup>119</sup> Appel and Orenstein, 317.

<sup>120</sup> Appel and Orenstein, 320.

<sup>121</sup> Appel and Orenstein, 321.

by Latvia and contrasting with Lithuania's more diverse, slow-moving post-independence landscape — and highlight possible contributing factors. The Estonian government led by Mart Laar (nicknamed 'Thatcher's grandson') in the early 2000s took a decidedly 'avant-garde' approach to liberalisation, leading to a state in which the degree of inequality<sup>122</sup> was so drastic that commentators spoke of 'two Estonias'.<sup>123</sup> Bohle and Greskovits argue that one factor in the different scale of politically feasible reforms across the Baltics was the comparative difference in the level of urgency around reclaiming a national space and identity — due in turn to the markedly greater scale of ethnic Russian migration into Estonia and Latvia than into Lithuania, and the relatively greater trend in Lithuania of keeping Lithuanian citizens, rather than Russian émigrés, in positions of local power.<sup>124</sup> Drawing on the influence of cultural critics like Jameson and Raymond Williams,<sup>125</sup> I will argue that economic priorities have influenced a now-familiar picture of Baltic contemporary classical music which is often attributed to more intangible factors such as identity or trauma.

### **1.3.3 Studies of histories and cultures of the Baltic region**

Works exploring broader Baltic history and culture also present important themes. Outlines of constructed cultural ontologies emerge from this literature. Some of the most joined-up pictures pertain to Estonia. Ideas explored by Marek Tamm and Kalevi Kull, particularly the conceptualisation of time as spatial, can be seen as variously linked to themes highlighted in Thomas Salumets' work on Jaan Kaplinski, Paul Hillier's work on Arvo Pärt,<sup>126</sup> Mimi Daitz's work on Veljo Tormis, and Maaire Jaanus' work on Tõnu Õnnepalu.

Other studies evoke similar ideas of non-teleological temporalities, the importance of cultural heritage, and the significance of non-intervention, but take a 'pan-Baltic' view, looking through the lens of historical occupations, focusing on the small size of the countries and promoting the impression of a remarkable collective commitment to nonviolence in the face of political repression. While it might be argued that the nonviolence of Baltic independence protests was notable, this phenomenon may have been both somewhat overstated in subsequent narrativisations and better understood as a pragmatic choice rather than a 'natural' inclination. Todd May claims that Estonian protests were characterised by a 'dignity of behaviour',<sup>127</sup> a theme which recurs in May's wider discussions of nonviolent protest. In 2007 Guntis Šmidchens argued that 'something in the Baltic today is working

---

<sup>122</sup> Jansen, 'Designer nations', 129.

<sup>123</sup> Orav, 'A tale of two Estonias'.

<sup>124</sup> Bohle and Greskovits, *Capitalist Diversity on Europe's Periphery*, 98-99.

<sup>125</sup> Raymond Williams, 'Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory', *New Left Review* 1/82 (1973) (accessed online, <https://newleftreview.org/issues/i82/articles/raymond-williams-base-and-superstructure-in-marxist-cultural-theory>, 06.01.2021).

<sup>126</sup> Paul Hillier, *Arvo Pärt*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

<sup>127</sup> May, *Nonviolent Resistance*, 124.

against the human instinct to wage war' and that 'cultural factors must have moved the Baltic public to reject violence.'<sup>128</sup> However, Beissinger's study records testimony from Vytautas Landsbergis, leader of the Lithuanian opposition group Sajūdis, that he "clearly [...] recognised that [the Soviet government] had the power to crush us at any time", and that Sajūdis, on the one hand, were "convinced that the present government of the Soviet Union would neither wish nor dare to adopt Stalin's methods," and, on the other, had been 'prepared to engage in defensive violence as a last resort.'<sup>129</sup> While they are not mutually exclusive, the qualifications above constitute sufficient justification for the peaceful nature of the protests, and further explanations provided (those implying a naturally pacifist character) can be seen as overlapping with other identity-building discourses. I argue in Chapter 2 that these images are also politically and economically convenient constructions.

### **1.3.4 Studies of Baltic contemporary classical music**

Pertinent themes that emerge from writing about Baltic contemporary classical music are concepts of national-cultural identity, peacefulness, repression, trauma, silence, timelessness, mysticism, archaism, folklore and nature. Among the key relevant publications are a pair of life-and-works studies of two Estonian 'giants': a 1997 book on Arvo Pärt by Paul Hillier<sup>130</sup> and a 2004 book on Veljo Tormis by Mimi Daitz.<sup>131</sup> Though acknowledging the risk of over-reliance on an interpretive language which could become 'decorative at best', Hillier delves into interpretation early on, evoking familiar images of orthodox icons, meditation, and transcendence of suffering.<sup>132</sup> Maria Cizmic argues that Hillier and others 'proffer a spiritually inflected version of the canonical "great composer" myth', in which, after Peter Phillips, the composer is not 'a real person creating music in a particular time and place, but [...] a quasi-religious figure hovering beyond history and geography.'<sup>133</sup>

Mimi Daitz's study, by contrast, seems to place more value on the reporting of historical and archival data, and is less interpretive at the outset, opting instead to republish valuable interpolations such as translations of contemporary texts by Tormis and Jaan Kaplinski debating the proper approach to the modern revival of *regilaul* (Estonian runic folk song). Rather than centring a particular theory about the philosophical significance of the composer's output, Daitz's study focuses on archival sources, Estonian periodicals and texts by Tormis himself, as well as the work of other Estonian writers and thinkers. At the same

---

<sup>128</sup> Šmidchens, 'National Heroic Narratives', 487.

<sup>129</sup> Beissinger, 'The Intersection of Ethnic Nationalism and People Power Tactics', 241.

<sup>130</sup> Hillier, *Arvo Pärt*.

<sup>131</sup> Mimi Daitz, *Ancient Song Recovered: The Life and Music of Veljo Tormis* (New York: Pendragon Press: 2004).

<sup>132</sup> Hillier, *Arvo Pärt*, x; 1-23.

<sup>133</sup> Maria Cizmic, *Performing Pain: Music and Trauma in Eastern Europe* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press: 2012), 115-116.

time, various of the primary recurring narratives around Estonian contemporary classical music also emerge in Daitz's study — due in no small part to the fact that Tormis's own voice has been a key catalyst in cementing these narratives. Daitz's work is also usefully read in conjunction with Thomas Salumets's aforementioned writings on Jaan Kaplinski, a contemporary and sometime collaborator of Tormis. Their public debate about *regilaul* and its huge significance for Estonian identity, in addition to the intersections between their ideas and other modern constructions of Estonianness — personal, political and commercial — provide context for this thesis. A key contribution of the present study is to assemble various pieces of discursive background that fit together into a coherent, familiar image of mainstream Baltic classical music and to take a critical view on the circumstances of their prominence. My contention is that the contributing factors to the recurrence of these images include not only positive identity construction and those phenomena described in terms of trauma or transcendence, but also the more prosaic and less marketable economic and political undercurrents to their popularity and international reception.

Both challenging and reflecting some of the preoccupations of Hillier's discussion of Pärt, Cizmic's 2012 book *Performing Pain* is a study of contemporary classical music as a response to collective trauma in primarily European-facing regions of the USSR in the late twentieth century. Cizmic recognises the problematic nature of David Clarke's wholesale rejection of Pärt's postmodernist leanings as universally useless 'relativism', and his implicit embrace of modernist views of history.<sup>134</sup> From the perspective of Jaanus's article on Estonia's circular time and Salumets's work on Kaplinski's 'unforced flourishing', Clarke's challenge could be seen as a predictable symptom of western constructions of cultural hegemony. Schmelz, as Cizmic acknowledges, also makes reference to a putative 'impulse to "catch up" with the West',<sup>135</sup> positing this as a motivation behind serialist experimentation in young Soviet composers such as Pärt. However, Schmelz asserts that the Soviet works he studies are 'by no means anachronistic, inferior or only comprehensible in socio-political terms.'<sup>136</sup> While critical of the trends towards ahistorical romanticism and modernist condescension in reception of Pärt, Cizmic also, perhaps unavoidably, draws on some familiar, evocative ways of describing his music that correlate to the overall conceptual palette that tends to accompany euphonic Baltic styles. While arguing that Pärt's work is 'neither timeless nor ahistorical'<sup>137</sup> in relation to its context, it is still difficult to find an alternative conceptual language when discussing his slow-paced, comparatively tonally static, minimalist-leaning pieces. In discussions of the treatment of musical temporality, perhaps in part due to the kind of language that is available, what emerges is often still a

---

<sup>134</sup> Cizmic, *Performing Pain*, 116.

<sup>135</sup> Schmelz, *Such Freedom*, as cited in Cizmic, *Performing Pain*, 11.

<sup>136</sup> Fairclough, 'Such Freedom (review)', 562.

<sup>137</sup> Cizmic, *Performing Pain*, 117.

sense of otherness from an assumed norm. Whether or not musical observations like these are considered factually true, the task of discourse analysis is to evaluate the reality being constructed by the way in which it is asserted that they are.

Whether through a spiritual or psychoanalytic interpretive lens, the theme of transcending the pain of reality has recurred in the reception of art music from the former Soviet Bloc. This ties in to the longstanding preoccupation in Estonian historiography in particular with 'violence in which we were the underdogs.'<sup>138</sup> It might be argued that this is an empty observation, since a reality of centuries of occupation would understandably produce cultural phenomena that reflect this experience. However, Tiina Kala claims that the universality of the narrative of endless suffering and martyr-like endurance of trials on the part of Estonian people is disproportionately reproduced in historical writing about the nation.<sup>139</sup> The story of an oppressed, folklike, quasi-mystical culture fits comfortably alongside the enthusiastic yet at times problematic reception of Pärt and Tormis; a certain Cold War hangover of cultural paternalism; literary-critical readings of authors like Kaplinski and Tõnu Õnnepalu;<sup>140</sup> conceptions of the Estonian nation as postcolonial; and models of Estonian epistemology like Tamm and Kull's.<sup>141</sup> This is the kind of picture that invites further questioning precisely because it seems so coherent.

While there is a strong correlation between the dominant imagery and particular composers of Estonian classical music, there are also key figures from Latvia and Lithuania whose works have been received with similar interpretive tendencies. As regards Latvian classical music, Pēteris Vasks is a name frequently mentioned in conjunction with folkloric, natural and ecological inspirations.<sup>142</sup> Lithuanian icon Bronius Kutavičius has often been discussed in yet more closely comparable tones to Veljo Tormis. *Music That Changed Time*,<sup>143</sup> a 2014 anthology edited by Rima Povilionienė and Jūratė Katinaitė, explores 'the Baltic outburst of creativity after 1970', with a primary focus on Kutavičius and his cultural impact. The book addresses such conceptual areas as an interest in 'archaic cultures', minimalist writing, a preoccupation with ritual, and distinctive treatments of 'time-space forms.' The present study will later explore music by Bronius Kutavičius's son, Tomas Kutavičius, and other contemporaries, broadly demonstrating the stylistic heterogeneity that exists alongside the much lauded euphonic, mystical and folk-inspired tendencies so prominent in the late twentieth century. Although some Lithuanian composers have also produced work that fits quite neatly with the coherent picture traced above, there are many other prominent elements in Lithuanian contemporary classical music that clash with this

---

<sup>138</sup> Kala, 'Estonia from the 13th to 16th Centuries', 48-49.

<sup>139</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> Salumets, *Unforced Flourishing*; Jaanus, 'Estonia's Time'.

<sup>141</sup> Tamm and Kull, 'Toward a reterritorialization of cultural theory'.

<sup>142</sup> 'Pēteris Vasks', *Ondine* (accessed online, <https://www.ondine.net/?lid=en&cid=4.2&oid=583>, 07.01.21).

<sup>143</sup> Povilionienė and Katinaitė, *Music That Changed Time*.

tidy image, evincing an artistic heterogeneity that stands out as much as the comparative political heterogeneity experienced by the nation in the years after independence.

Art music in Lithuania, like in other Soviet Republics, was affected by periodic ideological shifts within the half-century of Soviet rule; as elsewhere, the 'Thaw' under Krushchev was accompanied by the emergence of more heterogeneous and eclectic styles. As Rūta Stanevičiūtė writes, the 1960s saw a departure from the nation-building preoccupations of the previous decade in the form of a range of new approaches and styles that, the author asserts, represented 'paradoxical combinations' – of 'western' techniques ('dodecaphony, serialism, sonorism, aleatorics, micropolyphony'), recently-'rehabilitated' Russian modernisms ('Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Stravinsky'), 'impulses of the first wave of modernism' ('Neo-Classicism, neo-folklorism, and Neo-Impressionism') and the beginnings of a concerted 'folk' revivalist movement, particularly concerned with traditional *sutartinės*.<sup>144</sup> Serialism in this context, though received with great enthusiasm in Lithuania according to Daunoravičienė,<sup>145</sup> was somewhat eclipsed by the attractions of 'newer music experiences' (works by Penderecki, Lutosławski and Ligeti)<sup>146</sup>; the Polish sonorist movement, while its impact on Lithuanian art music was not closely documented by composers,<sup>147</sup> was influential in terms of experimental approaches to notation for Lithuanian composers like Vytautas Montvila, Antanas Rekašius and Vytautas Barkauskas.<sup>148</sup> However, the non-euphonic Lithuanian art musics with which this thesis is primarily concerned are stylistically distinct from the sonorist trend; most of the pieces discussed here can be loosely described as paratonal and lattice-based with some element of rhythmic drive and/or a certain cellular-repetitive orientation.

More analytical studies of contemporary Baltic classical music tend not to draw on the same interpretive frameworks that characterise the more 'socio-political' studies. In part, this is because analytical observations may be viewed as ends in themselves, not necessarily requiring contextual information to be relevant; in part it is because the music that apparently more readily lends itself to these studies is more likely to have been written with abstract formalist motivations and to have been conceived, perhaps consciously, as at a remove from euphonic associations; and in part it is because the very criteria by which a work is likely to be judged appropriate for analytical attention tend to take it further away from very specific aspects of the rhetoric so often deployed in relation to Pärt and Tormis:

---

<sup>144</sup> Rūta Stanevičiūtė, 'Modernisation of Lithuanian Music during Cold War Era: Early Trajectories and Their Reception', *Lithuanian Music In Context vol. I: Lessons of the Avant-Garde* (Vilnius: Lithuanian Music Information and Publishing Centre, 2011), 24.

<sup>145</sup> Gražina Daunoravičienė, 'The Lithuanian Path to Modernism in Music', *Lithuanian Music In Context vol. I: Lessons of the Avant-Garde* 53.

<sup>146</sup> Stanevičiūtė, 'Modernisation of Lithuanian Music', 24.

<sup>147</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>148</sup> *ibid.*



namely, simplicity, non-intervention, and diminishment of the author. The present study has referred to English-language analytical texts on Osvaldas Balakauskas and Rytis Mažulis (both by Gražina Daunoravičienė), Egidija Medekšaitė<sup>149</sup> (by Christopher Fox), and Julius Juzeliūnas<sup>150</sup> (by Ben Lunn). Some of the more in-depth analytical case studies of contemporary Baltic art music don't discuss the music in relation to other Baltic musical products and cultural or political phenomena; as analytical case studies, this is not necessarily within their intended remit. The more contextualised studies conversely often tend either to avoid more modernist-leaning music and/or to follow now well-trodden interpretive lines (timeless, spiritual, traumatised, magical, folklike, national-cultural identity). This study will aim to bring aspects of analytical studies closer to the contrasting interpretive trends, which in turn will be subject to discursive analysis and considered in light of specific economic and political circumstances. The present study is also a significant contribution to English-language scholarship on contemporary Lithuanian art music in that many of the works discussed here have not received prior scholarly attention in English; the study also includes new interviews conducted with composers whose music has not been the subject of English-language academic work previously.

The case studies conducted in the main body of this thesis (Chapters 3-6) will be of Lithuanian composers and pieces. These comparatively detailed studies will be contrasted with a more generalised (because it is both more familiar and more stereotyped) image of the reception of examples of commercially successful, spiritual minimalist or 'euphonic' aesthetic trends, outlined in Chapter 2. The motivations for focusing on contrasts between the most dominant imagery and some contrasting strands of contemporary Lithuanian composition include the notable distinctness in some strands of historiography and wider constructions of Lithuanian culture — which, even as these discourses are still clearly aligned with broader 'pan-Baltic' representational trends on some levels, nevertheless seem to contrast markedly with dominant narratives when compared with discursive counterparts surrounding Latvia and Estonia. The most popular 'pan-Baltic' euphonic compositional styles and their associations will be painted in broad brush strokes in the next Chapter; however, while these styles loom large on the art-musical landscape, they by no means preclude the existence of modernist trends in Estonian and Latvian classical music. For context, the section below provides a short introduction to musical modernism in early twentieth-century Latvia and Estonia, followed by an overview of some of the most significant figures in contemporary art music from Latvia and Estonia.

#### **1.4 Modernism in early-twentieth-century Estonia and Latvia**

---

<sup>149</sup> Christopher Fox, 'Woven: The Music of Egidija Medekšaitė', *Tempo* 73/288 (2019), pp. 47-58.

<sup>150</sup> Lunn, 'Juzeliūnas, the seed of a modern Lithuanian music'.

This thesis draws on a certain, highly visible image of 'Baltic' (largely Estonian) art music that, it will be argued, is characterised by a striking absence of, or even apparent opposition to, modernist tropes. This paradigm is considered in comparison with various trends in Lithuanian art music which more overtly engage with modernism, demonstrating a clear contrast. However, to avoid the somewhat contentious implication that Estonian or Latvian art music in general has actually been characterised by an *absence* of modernism (although this impression may emerge from some of the music criticism reviewed in Chapter 2, and has been more or less explicitly suggested elsewhere in relation to Baltic or Soviet culture<sup>151</sup>), the following section briefly considers early-twentieth-century modernist musical trends in Estonia and Latvia, drawing on the work of musicologists Mart Humal and Jānis Kudiņš. Humal's discussion of Estonian musical modernism from the first half of the twentieth century identifies three historical phases: pre-modernism (roughly 1900-1910, dominated by the works of Rudolf Tobias), early modernism (c. 1910-1919, led by the work of Mart Saar), and mature modernism (c. 1920-1940, to which the most significant contributors were, first Heino Eller, after Saar became more interested in folk-inspired composition, and then Eduard Tubin and Eduard Oja, following Eller's own turn to more folkloric themes).<sup>152</sup> In its first, expressionist-leaning, stage, as Humal explains, the 'New Music' idiom gained little purchase; the first New Music-style works to appear in Estonia emerged around 1910. Early Estonian modernist experiments tended to draw on the influence of Scriabin rather than the likes of the more 'radical' Schoenberg.<sup>153</sup> In 1911 Saar produced a number of more experimental works for solo piano or voice and piano. Humal identifies *Skizze* and *Must lind* as Estonia's 'first atonal works', describing these pieces as characterised by Scriabin's influence, by extensive whole tone harmony, and a 'mystical', 'ambiguous' effect.<sup>154</sup> This is borne out in *Skizze*, which wears its strong whole-tone colour on its sleeve through emphatic, repeated scalic figures, supporting the implication that Saar's non-tonal harmony in contemporary works was conceived in a pre-serialist, more romantic-leaning, vein. In *Must lind*, Humal says that dissonant chords 'irresistibly pull the music towards the chaos of atonality', suggesting experimental, relatively unstructured extensions of tonal harmony rather than a planned approach.<sup>155</sup> Humal's references elsewhere to 'coloristic' and 'impressionistic' writing combined with 'elementary' forms lends

---

<sup>151</sup> Ruta Paidere, 'The Dilemma of a Latvian Composer', *Unearthing the Music* (accessed online, <https://unearthingthemusic.eu/posts/the-dilemma-of-a-latvian-composer/>, 29.01.21); Boris Groys, 'Difference between Western postmodernism and Eastern postsocialism', Lecture at Garage Museum Moscow, 21 March 2015 (accessed online, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I7LDLCS4ibM&t=1s>, 19.10.19).

<sup>152</sup> Mart Humal, 'On Modernism in Estonian Music, 1900-1940', *Lithuanian Musicology* 16 (2015), pp. 16-23.

<sup>153</sup> Humal, 'On Modernism in Estonian Music', 16-17.

<sup>154</sup> Humal, 'On Modernism in Estonian Music', 17-18.

<sup>155</sup> Humal, 'On Modernism in Estonian Music', 20.

weight to the view that Saar's harmonic forays into a New Music idiom were indeed closer to Scriabin's romantic works than the calculations of more systematic atonal compositions.

It is interesting that these compositions by Saar and other works by Eller (such as his Second Quartet of 1930, somewhat redolent of Ravel) are implicitly considered by Humal to be adequate evidence of modernism having demonstrably occurred in the Estonian classical canon — not because they are not (I would agree that they are) but because of work by fellow musicologist Jānis Kudiņš which interprets the situation of Latvian classical music during essentially the same period quite differently. Although Humal acknowledges that, from '1900 to 1940, due to the general situation of musical culture, modernism did not find a response and did not acquire a leading position in Estonia',<sup>156</sup> his article accepts that there was sufficient modernist musical activity in early twentieth-century Estonian classical music for it to be classified into different periods. Conversely, while Kudiņš does identify some features of modernistic composition in Latvian art music of the inter-war years, making reference to a handful of relevant composers, overall he suggests that modernism was at least marginal and fragmentary, if not dismissed, discouraged or irrelevant, in Latvian composition at this time.<sup>157</sup> Interestingly, Kudiņš asserts that both Estonian and Lithuanian composers were more interested in modernist composition than their Latvian counterparts in the pre-WWII period.<sup>158</sup>

Kudiņš identifies a number of factors that he argues contributed to the relatively minimal showing of modernist composition in early- to mid-twentieth-century Latvia. One major issue, in the author's view, was the enormous dominance and influence of one individual — the composer Jāzeps Vītols (1863-1948) — during the years when professional classical music as an institution in Latvia was first being established. Vītols — the founder of the Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music, formerly the Riga Conservatory — 'approached the aesthetics of expressionism' in songs composed in the early twentieth century, but is also presented as largely responsible for the 'stylistically conservative tendencies' that endured even after the First World War, when 'Latvian society's hands' finally held some power and cultural influence after years of foreign occupation.<sup>159</sup> Additional causes for the general lack of enthusiasm for modernism identified by Kudiņš included a widespread conservatism on the part of audiences at the time, the fact that Riga had not historically 'been a residence of some lord (sovereign) or a university town', and the essentially nascent state of Latvia's professional music institutions and sense of identity around this time, meaning that modernist experiments were not a priority.<sup>160</sup>

---

<sup>156</sup> Humal, 22.

<sup>157</sup> Jānis Kudiņš, 'Modernism as a Marginal Phenomenon in the Context of National Musical Culture: Some Local Historical Experiences in Latvia between the Two World Wars', *Lithuanian Musicology* 16 (2015), pp. 40-51.

<sup>158</sup> Kudiņš, 'Modernism as a Marginal Phenomenon', 45.

<sup>159</sup> *ibid.*, 50.

<sup>160</sup> *ibid.*

The author points to the stylistic dominance of the St Petersburg Conservatory and Rimsky-Korsakov as still another factor in compositional conservatism in Latvia at this time. Kudiņš notes that '[a]lmost no Latvian composer during this period' experienced an internationally-oriented (beyond Russia) education.<sup>161</sup> In Lithuania there was perhaps greater heterogeneity in these terms — for example, interwar modernist Jeronimas Kačinskas, who produced notably radical microtonal works for his moment and context, had studied with Alois Hába at the Prague Conservatory.<sup>162</sup> However, Saar, who elsewhere made comments about his own love of dissonance — which he himself seemed to perceive as illicit or excessive<sup>163</sup> — had also studied with Rimsky-Korsakov at the St Petersburg Conservatory (as did Stravinsky), somewhat contradicting the idea of a notable correlation between this institutional background and subsequent compositional conservatism.<sup>164</sup> The conclusions arrived at by Humal and Kudiņš show that a significant factor in the canonisation of modernism is the issue of what or who is considered to be modernist in a given context. The known presence of foreign influence (for example, composers having studied abroad in Prague or Kiev) may have been a contributing factor to this in relation to later composers. Echoing Gražina Daunoravičienė's discussion of a 'short-lived flowering' of modernism in interwar Lithuania,<sup>165</sup> Kudiņš makes passing reference to a 'separate twinkle of modernity between the two World Wars' in Latvia<sup>166</sup> — although these fragmentary and diluted manifestations don't seem, in Kudiņš's account, to constitute the extent of modernist tendencies that Humal attributes to the Estonian context — and far less the experimental microtonal works of Jeronimas Kačinskas as discussed by Daunoravičienė. Though the two authors make a number of similar-sounding statements about the fact that, in both countries, modernism never really took root or became a very significant aesthetic movement in the first half of the twentieth century, the majority of Humal's article is dedicated to identifying fingerprints of modernism in contemporary works, while a large proportion of Kudiņš's is dedicated to exploring the contextual obstacles to modernism becoming established. The conclusion seems to be, for Humal, that Estonia had significant emergent modernist leanings in the pre-war twentieth century, and for Kudiņš, that Latvia didn't.

Lithuanian modernism in the first half of the twentieth century was likewise characterised by an unstraightforward emergence; institutions were similarly dominated by Juozas Gruodis (1884-1948), a highly influential composer of romantic nationalist (though

---

<sup>161</sup> *ibid*, 40.

<sup>162</sup> Daunoravičienė, 'Exiled Modernism', 125.

<sup>163</sup> 'Mart Saar', Estonian Music Information Centre website (accessed online, <https://emic.ee/?sisu=heliloojad&mid=32&id=81&lang=est&action=view&method=biograafia>, 07.01.21).

<sup>164</sup> 'Mart Saar', Estonian Music Information Centre website (accessed online, <https://emic.ee/?sisu=heliloojad&mid=32&id=81&lang=est&action=view&method=biograafia>, 07.01.21).

<sup>165</sup> Daunoravičienė, 'Exiled modernism', 122.

<sup>166</sup> Kudiņš, 'Modernism as a Marginal Phenomenon', 45.

also described as ‘moderate modernist’) music.<sup>167</sup> M.K. Čiurlionis (1875-1911), whose symbolist paintings and elegiac symphonic tone poems place him in a similar mold to Scriabin, died of pneumonia at only 35 years of age.<sup>168</sup> Julius Juzeliūnas (1916-2001), whose work is described by Ben Lunn as a ‘seed of Lithuanian modernism’,<sup>169</sup> did not begin to explore a modernist-leaning language until the 1960s.<sup>170</sup> After this time, the decade when Pärt’s ‘unofficial’ works reached an experimental zenith,<sup>171</sup> and when key Lithuanian modernist Osvaldas Balakauskas was writing his early atonal student works in Kiev,<sup>172</sup> there appears to have been something of a divergence — at least in terms of which composers and styles have become most internationally successful — between the more heavily euphonic leaning northern states (compounded by the influence of Pärt’s famous stylistic revolution and the monophonic nature of the songs centred in folk revival movements) and Lithuania, where Balakauskas’ own considerable pedagogical influence arguably matched that of locally-legendary ‘ethno-futurist’ Bronius Kutavičius (whose folk-inspired experiments embraced a greater degree of ‘modernist-leaning’ harmony owing to the more dissonant quality of *sutartinės*).<sup>173</sup>

## **1.5 Contemporary art music from neighbouring Baltic States,**

### **Estonia and Latvia**

Although an image of some of the most popular styles of Estonian contemporary art music has been presented here as a kind of emblematic counterpoint to modernist heterogeneities in Lithuanian composition, new music from both of the two more northerly Baltic States, Estonia and Latvia, has of course branched in many more directions than the most commercially prominent euphonic genres. As in any discussion of music histories, the question is not only what kinds of music have been imagined, produced, or even performed, but what has been most replayed, promoted, celebrated, and remembered, as well as how it has been represented. In order to further contextualise the closer studies of Lithuanian contemporary art music that will follow, this section introduces a number of Estonian and Latvian composers. Mati Kuulberg (1947-2001) and Mari Vihmand (b. 1967) have written works that lean closer to modernism than euphonicism (as did Pärt), but may still be

---

<sup>167</sup> Šarunas Nakas, ‘Juozas Gruodis’, LMIC (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/composers/gruodis/#bio>, 07.01.21).

<sup>168</sup> ‘Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis’, LMIC (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/composers/ciurlionis/#bio>, 07.01.21).

<sup>169</sup> Lunn, ‘Juzeliūnas’.

<sup>170</sup> Daiva Parulskienė, ‘Integrity of Man and Music. In memoriam Julius Juzeliūnas’, *Lithuanian Music Link* no. 3 (2001-2) (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-3-october-2001-march-2002/integrity-of-man-and-music-in-memoriam-julius-juzeliunas/>, 07.01.21).

<sup>171</sup> Schmelz, *Such Freedom*, 226.

<sup>172</sup> ‘Osvaldas Balakauskas’, LMIC.

<sup>173</sup> Schmelz, *Such Freedom*, 226.

associated with natural, emotional, magical, folkloric themes and are not as prominent in national music historiography as some major Lithuanian modernist composers. Some of the biggest names in Estonian contemporary art music are Helena Tulve, Erkki Sven-Tüür and Lepo Sumera. Born in 1972 in Tartu, Tulve studied at the Estonian Academy of Music<sup>174</sup> and is among the most well-known and successful of contemporary Estonian composers after almost deified figures like Pärt and Tormis. The composer's stated interests in Gregorian chant and oral traditions,<sup>175</sup> while by no means unusual, also serve as points of continuity with wider discourses on Baltic art music, as do the claims that she is 'influenced by natural patterns, organics and synchronicity'<sup>176</sup> and 'interested in the perception and apprehension of depth in space-time.'<sup>177</sup> The idea of 'organicism' may evoke an a-metric inclination in Tulve's work which is a key element in its immediate aural distinction from the often comparatively regularly pulsed euphonic choral minimalisms or neo-romantic orchestral works that have been among the most popularly successful Baltic music exports. The Estonian Composers' Union website mentions 'sound centrality'<sup>178</sup> as a significant feature of Tulve's composition, a term which may refer to a perceived prioritisation of aural effect over more systematic approaches. Much of Tulve's music — including older works like *Õö* (*Night*, 1997) and *Lijnen* (2003) as well as more recent compositions like *Maa süda* (*Heart of the Earth*, 2017) and *Tundmatuis vetes* (*Unknown Waters*, 2018) — sounds loose, timbral, not 'harmonically' conceived in a traditional 'vertical' sense (though there is no sense that timbre is more important than pitch overall). Textures are dynamic, constantly gliding and moving. The composer is quoted as saying,

Music composition is, for me, always a meeting with the unknown. For me, creation is not an activity I already know, but a voyage of discovery into the unknown. (...) I try to move in a direction where music is more and more linked with the whole world, all life and thought.<sup>179</sup>

There are echoes here of familiar tropes of channelling or charting an unfamiliar dimension such as also characterise reception of Pärt and Tormis. Similar ideas drift to the surface in observations by Wolfgang Sandner:

One of the fine qualities of her music is that much of it works as if it were not composed, rather as if it just happened, as if the instrument were playing itself rather than being played, as if the music were emanating from a set of wind chimes. In her

---

<sup>174</sup> 'Helena Tulve', Estonian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.emic.ee/?sisu=heliloojad&mid=58&id=101&lang=eng&action=view&method=biograafia>, 07.01.21).

<sup>175</sup> 'About Helena Tulve — A Short Biography', Helena Tulve website (accessed online, <http://helenatulve.ee/about.html>, 07.01.21).

<sup>176</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>177</sup> 'Helena Tulve', Estonian Composers Union (accessed online, <http://www.helilooja.ee/en/members/helena-tulve/>, 07.01.21).

<sup>178</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>179</sup> 'Helena Tulve', Estonian Composers Union.

music forms do not jostle their way into the foreground. Their structures are like rocks or trees: everything is self-evident.<sup>180</sup>

Sandner's comments tap into concepts of mediation and non-intervention, evoking images of nature; these themes play a significant role in euphonic music discourse, as discussed in Chapter 2.

Erkki-Sven Tüür (b. 1959, Kärdla), who taught Tulse, studied at the Tallinn Academy of Music.<sup>181</sup> Tüür's earlier work was with a prog rock band, and he began to focus primarily on classical composition from the mid-1980s.<sup>182</sup> Given that this is well known, and since his music is full of the accented rhythmic activity that Tulse's output tends to sidestep, Gerald Fenech is not the only critic to have suggested that Tüür's work has 'the insistent drive of rock';<sup>183</sup> similarly recurrent is the observation that his composition is 'both uncompromisingly modern and above-average accessible'.<sup>184</sup> Like Tulse and many other contemporary composers, Tüür 'has been interested in Gregorian chant'.<sup>185</sup> His interests also include 'minimalism, linear polyphony and microtonality, twelve-tone music and sound-field technique',<sup>186</sup> both linking him to and distinguishing him from Baltic twentieth-century classics but ultimately signifying a cosmopolitan eclecticism which tends not to proliferate in the rhetoric of their standard marketing.

Tüür's biography explains that the core fingerprints of his music include 'an intense energetic transformative dimension'.<sup>187</sup> One manifestation of this, particularly evident in *Lighthouse* for string orchestra (1997), is a penchant for metric modulation of dynamic, *marcato* material. Tüür's work often involves some form of *perpetuum mobile* — a feature which could be seen as similar to the complex, syncopated motoric ostinati often favoured by Osvaldas Balakauskas. What is different in Tüür's *perpetuum mobile* material is the habit of eschewing a sense of perpetual yet unstable-seeming continuity in favour of a series of evolutions through different metres. Differently from the ways in which Tulse's approach to composing has been described (tending to draw on images of the ineffable or 'natural'), writing on Tüür's website about his own processes of composition show that, in addition to references to 'existential questions', he conceives of his work in quite technical conceptual terms, evoking computer coding and genetics in the description of his 'vectorial method'.<sup>188</sup> Tüür's music, which bears some similarities to Finnish contemporaries Magnus Lindberg

---

<sup>180</sup> Helena Tulse', World Music Days.

<sup>181</sup> 'Erkki-Sven Tüür', Estonian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.emic.ee/?sisu=heliloojad&mid=58&id=95&lang=eng&action=view&method=biograafia>, 07.01.21).

<sup>182</sup> 'Biography', Erkki-Sven Tüür website (accessed online, <https://www.erkkisven.com/cv>, 07.01.21).

<sup>183</sup> Gerald Fenech, 'CD Review: Erkki-Sven Tüür — Exodus', (accessed online, <http://www.classical.net/music/recs/reviews/e/ecm01830a.php>, 07.01.21).

<sup>184</sup> Jens F. Laurson, 'Erkki-Sven Tüür's Whistling Desert-Fowl', *Classics Today* (accessed online, <https://www.classicstoday.com/review/erkki-sven-tuurs-whistling-desert-fowl/>, 07.01.21).

<sup>185</sup> 'Biography', Tüür website.

<sup>186</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>187</sup> 'Biography', Tüür website.

<sup>188</sup> *ibid.*

and Einojuhani Rautavaara, is quite complex in construction, though the end product is, as has been observed, very accessible-sounding.

Tüür studied with Lepo Sumera (1950-2000), described as ‘one of the greatest Estonian symphonists of all time as well as a leading figure in the electroacoustic music circles’.<sup>189</sup> Sumera in turn was a student of Heino Eller (1887-1970)<sup>190</sup> — an already-mentioned composer, a successor of Mart Saar, who is named elsewhere as a key proponent of Estonian (moderate) modernism.<sup>191</sup> Despite a career sadly cut short, Sumera explored a range of approaches and methods in his influential work. The Estonian Music Information Centre notes that the composer worked with ‘free dodecaphony and collage techniques’ in the 1970s and subsequently ‘turned to tonal and modal devices, applying minimalist techniques to large-scale compositions’ in the 1980s.<sup>192</sup> His first Symphony, a piece deploying ‘repetitive-minimal structures as building blocks of a large-scale symphonic composition’, is held to have been a catalyst for a “style revolution” in Estonian classical music.<sup>193</sup> Sumera’s work is associated on his EMIC composer page with a ‘neo-expressionist idiom: [...] free flow of thought, tonal and modal harmony, sound field technique, merging of symphonic dramaturgy and minimalist repetitions’.<sup>194</sup> His piano work [*Piece from the Year*] 1981 evinces the latter, with a highly repetitive cellular inclination. Minimalism also dominated in Lithuanian music across the 1980s and beyond, though there was a greater tendency towards dissonance, harsher timbres and a ‘mechanical’ feel. In 1981 the ostinati are more regular and the harmonic language more consonant. Accordingly, links have been acknowledged in reception both to ‘Nordic New Simplicity’ and to the Estonian *regilaul* frequently associated with Veljo Tormis.<sup>195</sup>

Links between these three composers range from the more tangible (that Tüür studied with Sumera and Tulve studied with Tüür) to the more conceptual: Tüür and Sumera have both favoured tonal/modal leanings and repetition seemingly inspired by minimalism; Sumera and Tulve seem to share a preoccupation with timbre; all three have expressed an interest in Gregorian chant (though this is by no means an uncommon contemporary inclination). In terms of contrast, there appears to be a divergence particularly between Tüür and Tulve in the verbal discourses surrounding their work. While reception of Tulve’s work veers close to the potentially undermining trope of having mediated some ineffable external

---

<sup>189</sup> ‘Lepo Sumera’, World Music Days (accessed online, <https://www.worldmusicdays2019.ee/en/bio/lepo-sumera/>, 07.01.21).

<sup>190</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>191</sup> Humal, ‘On Modernism’.

<sup>192</sup> ‘Biography — Lepo Sumera’, Estonian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.emic.ee/?sisu=heliloojad&mid=58&id=90&lang=eng&action=view&method=biograafia>, 07.01.21).

<sup>193</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>194</sup> ‘Lepo Sumera’, Estonian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.emic.ee/lepo-sumera>, 07.01.21).

<sup>195</sup> Guy Rickards, ‘Sumera To Reach Yesterday’, *Gramophone* (accessed online, <https://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/sumera-to-reach-yesterday>, 07.01.21).



inspiration, explications of Tüür's approach to composition are peppered with highly technical language and references to creative and intellectual labour<sup>196</sup> — arguably a more modernist (not to mention masculine-gendered) image of the composer at work.

Significant figures in the contemporary music of Latvia include a former student of Tulve's — Santa Ratniece (b. 1977), who 'specialises' according to one reviewer, in 'an otherworldly mosaic with the sounds always in motion rather than stasis.'<sup>197</sup> Reception of Ratniece's work leans still more strongly towards tropes of the ineffable, reflecting the impact of Pärt's career. For example, references to language reminiscent of the interpretive lens applied to spiritual minimalism recur, while the works reviewed are not apparently based on religious imagery or scripture. One review of *Saline* describes 'wheeling and plunging music that seems to draw on orthodox chant.'<sup>198</sup> In a similar vein, it continues,

As with so much else we hear from this composer *Chu dal* ['Silent Water'] communicates as if we are listening in on a religious rite which is for the moment beyond our understanding. Any composer who creates a piece of music with the word 'Silent' in the title clearly wants to challenge herself ... and us. Like *Horo horo hata hata*, three-quarters of the way through the music subsides into silence. The singing then resumes with the choir seeming ecstatically to intone fragments of an alleluia through downy elements of birdsong.<sup>199</sup>

A contemporary of Ratniece, Andris Dzenītis (b. 1978), who has subsequently enjoyed success as a film composer,<sup>200</sup> studied with major Lithuanian modernist Osvaldas Balakauskas in addition to studies in Riga and Vienna.<sup>201</sup> Reception of Dzenītis' work tends to focus on the expressive and emotional dimension, also drawing modernism and spirituality into the frame. Ingrida Zemzare writes,

Dzenītis's skilfulness in availing the 20th century modernism traditions [and] the expressive nature of his own talent [...] create a floating musical time outside any time and space with no place for social conflicts, only for alterations of emotions and vibrations of soul.<sup>202</sup>

Richard Morrison describes the composer's work as the 'aural soulmate' of Oscar Miłosz's 'tortured poetry'<sup>203</sup> while Charles Warren calls *Mara* an 'embodiment of a cosmic spirit that embraces [...] everything'; a 'spiritual evocation'.<sup>204</sup> There is a strong tendency towards

---

<sup>196</sup> 'Biography', Tüür website.

<sup>197</sup> Rob Barnett, 'Review: Santa Ratniece, *Saline*', MusicWeb International website (accessed online, [http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2017/Sep/Ratniece\\_saline\\_LMIC024.htm](http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2017/Sep/Ratniece_saline_LMIC024.htm), 07.10.21).

<sup>198</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>199</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>200</sup> 'Home', Andris Dzenītis website (accessed online, <https://dzenitis.webs.com>, 07.01.21).

<sup>201</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>202</sup> Ingrida Zemzare, *Diena*, 2004, as quoted in 'Press Reviews', Dzenītis website (accessed online, <https://dzenitis.webs.com/pressreviews.htm>, 07.01.21).

<sup>203</sup> Richard Morrison, *London Times*, 2004, as quoted in 'Press Reviews', Dzenītis website.

<sup>204</sup> Charles Warren, *newyorkarts*, 2018 as quoted in 'Press Reviews', Dzenītis website.

familiar allusions to ineffability and timelessness; in the context of neoliberal structural reforms in Latvia in the 2000s, the perception of this music as having ‘no place for social conflicts’ may be meaningful, eschewing dialectical ontologies in a similar way to the blank, postmodern slate of Brand Estonia, discussed in Chapter 2.

Rihards Dubra’s (b. 1964) later work is more explicitly religious than that of either Ratniece or Dzenītis, as ‘all of his works have a spiritual content at their foundation.’<sup>205</sup> In a similar vein to Tolve, Tūūr and Pärt, Dubra is described as having been inspired by Gregorian chant as well as minimalism,<sup>206</sup> though ‘at the same time, the fusion of the means is romantic’,<sup>207</sup> lending his (frequently choral) music a stronger euphonic bent than some of the other work discussed in this section. Of all the Latvian and Estonian composers named above, Dubra comes closest to this dominant style. Standing in contrast to his output is the work of Santa Bušs (b. 1981), whose music is much more avant-garde-sounding by comparison. *Calligraphie Abstraite* (2012), for ensemble, is completely atonal and prioritises timbre and gesture over more traditional notions of melody or harmony, exploiting extended playing techniques and referencing the work of abstract painter Georges Mathieu. The distinctiveness of Bušs’s aesthetic is not lost on the composer herself, who expressed a feeling of otherness from the mainstream of Latvian contemporary music in an interview with Ben Lunn:

a few years ago an article discussed my work with the sentence: “my music is present in the scene, it has a strong presence, but doesn’t belong to the scene; I don’t fit” [...] I was not very aware of this, until I saw it written. At the moment I have also made myself move outside of Latvia for many reasons, either out of learning and sheer curiosity of travelling. [...] Having this cultural life, supported by foreigners outside my native country has really changed me. I really don’t feel I fit in the scene, both because of my living and my music, I cannot say where I fit with my music or my living.<sup>208</sup>

Ģederts Ramans<sup>209</sup> (1927-1999) and Romualds Grīnblats<sup>210</sup> (1930-1995) are two other Latvian composers whose work has tended more towards modernist or avant-garde inclinations than euphonic minimalism or romantic nationalism — but they, like Vihmand and Kuulberg, are either somewhat subsumed into dominant interpretive discourses or are not typically highlighted as major significant figures in the national art music story (Grīnblats in particular may be associated more with Russian music). Apart from Bušs, who has

---

<sup>205</sup> ‘Dubra, Rihards (1964)’, *Musica Baltica* (accessed online, <https://www.musicabaltica.com/en/composers-and-authors/dubra-rihards/>, 07.01.21).

<sup>206</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>207</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>208</sup> Ben Lunn, ‘Interview — Santa Buss’, *Baltic Musical Gems*, 27 May 2017 (accessed online, <http://balticgems.blogspot.com/2017/05/interview-santa-buss.html>, 07.01.21).

<sup>209</sup> ‘Ģederts Ramans’, Latvian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.lmic.lv/en/composers/gederts-ramans-2731#work>, 26.01.21).

<sup>210</sup> ‘Biography’, Romualds Grīnblats website (accessed online, <https://www.romualdgrinblat.com/biography>, 26.01.21).

expressed a feeling of difference from some perceived norm, among many of the other prominent Estonian and Latvian composers discussed here there are a number of connections. One of the most salient is the frequent recurrence of the language of the spiritual, organic, natural, emotional, ineffable, cosmic, and ritualistic. In some cases this is obviously related to the composer's intentions — for example, Dubra generally writes explicitly religious music. However, it is my contention that the consistent reappearance of these tropes goes beyond a prosaic description of straightforwardly spiritual leanings on the part of composers, but that, instead, they have become part of the canonic language used to interpret and market Baltic classical music. The prominence of Pärt, Vasks, Tormis and Eriks Ešņvalds has contributed to the prominence of a particular interpretive lens in the reception of Baltic music. The recurring images of spirituality, eternity, nature, mysticism, folklore, religion and ritual have become facets of what Bordwell has called 'ordinary criticism'<sup>211</sup> (itself almost a ritualistic practice in its circular reinforcement of norms). As will emerge in the following Chapter, there is arguably more to this trend than merely a common tendency towards that which has been tried and tested. In light of the new political priorities of the Baltic States in the post-Soviet decades, these additional motivations may be seen as equally salient to a habitual drift towards entrenched language. The apparent significance of these trends casts new light on contrasting strands of cultural, historiographic and musical discourses around Lithuania, which seem to drift further from mainstream narratives than do corresponding collections of ideas about Latvia and Estonia.

## **1.6 Lithuanian contemporary music networks**

Networks of contemporary classical music in Lithuania are largely centralised. Founded by composer Juozas Gruodis (1884-1948) and a group of his peers in 1941,<sup>212</sup> the Lithuanian Composers' Union is a thriving organisation at the time of writing. While this structure has benefits, some Lithuanian composers offered differing perspectives on this. Some have observed, as mentioned in places in Chapters 5 to 7, that the Composers' Union can have a somewhat limiting effect, selecting only certain kinds of work to promote; that festival circuits may see the same names featured multiple years in a row rather than a broader distribution of opportunities; or that the route to recognition as a producer of music in Lithuania is particularly narrow, often requiring a degree from the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre as a kind of validation. At the same time, it has been suggested that particular characteristics of post-Soviet institutional structures in Lithuania have allowed

---

<sup>211</sup> Bordwell, *Making Meaning*, 27.

<sup>212</sup> 'Lithuanian Composers' Union', Lietuvos Kompozitorių Sąjunga (LCU) website (accessed online, <https://www.lks.lt/en/about-us/>, 28.10.19).

female composers to flourish and succeed rather than being marginalised in favour of male counterparts. Activities of the Lithuanian Composers' Union include the annual contemporary music festival 'Gaida',<sup>213</sup> held in Vilnius. Music by Gaida's artistic director, Remigijus Merkelys, is discussed in Chapter 5. Gaida is 'the main, the largest, and the most prominent festival of modern music in Lithuania and all Baltic countries'<sup>214</sup> and is active in commissioning new works by Lithuanian composers. While providing a significant platform for Lithuanian composers, Gaida has also frequently centred American

<b>Year</b>	<b>Focus composers at Gaida Festival</b>	<b>Lithuanian composers with featured works/premieres</b>
<b>2019</b>	Tristan Perich, Peter Adriaansz, Thomas Adès, Brigitta Muntendorf, Phillip Glass, Brian Eno.	Dominykas Digimas, Justė Janulytė, Vytautas V. Jurgutis, Bronius Kutavičius, Julius Juzeliūnas, Žibuoklė Martinaitytė.
<b>2018</b>	Julia Wolfe, Magnus Lindberg, Phil Niblock.	Loreta Narvilaitė, Egidija Medekšaitė, Rūta Vitkauskaitė, Tomas Kutavičius, Albertas Navickas, Vykintas Baltakas, Rytis Mažulis.
<b>2017</b>	David Lang, John Adams, Yannis Kyriakides, Yann Robin.	Justina Repečkaite, Albertas Navickas, Rytis Mažulis, Algirdas Martinaitis, Žibuoklė Martinaitytė, Tomas Kutavičius, Justė Janulytė, Dominykas Digimas.
<b>2016</b>	Steve Reich, Phillip Glass.	Vykintas Baltakas, Vytautas Germanavičius, Vytautas V. Jurgutis, Anatolijus Šenderovas, Justė Janulytė, Julius Juzeliūnas Žibuoklė Martinaitytė, Ramūnas Motiekaitis, Rūta Vitkauskaitė, Zita Bružaitė.
<b>2015</b>	Terry Riley, Francesco Filidei.	Marius Baranauskas, Onutė Narbutaitė, Egidija Medekšaitė, Ričardas Kabelis, Tomas Kutavičius, Jurgis Juozapaitis, Justina Repečkaite, Albertas Navickas, Ignas Krunglevičius, Vykintas Baltakas, Veronika Krausas, Justė Janulytė, Gediminas Gelgotas, Mykolas Natalevičius.

<sup>213</sup> 'Gaida 2019', Vilnius Festivals website (accessed online, <https://www.vilniusfestivals.lt/gaida-2019-2/>, 19.10.19).

<sup>214</sup> 'Contemporary Music Festival "Gaida" 2018', *LT Life*, October 21 2018 (accessed online, <https://ltlife.lt/lt-life-english/contemporary-music-festival-gaida-2018/>, 19.10.19).

2014	Phillip Glass, Hanna Kulenty, Heiner Goebbels.	Ugnė Giedraitytė, Rūta Vitkauskaitė, Justina Repečkaite, Algirdas Martinaitis, Ramūnas Motiekaitis, Vytautas Laurušas, Onutė Narbutaitė, Bronius Kutavičius, Vytautas V. Jurgutis, Martynas Bialobžeskis.
------	--	---

Figure 1.1 – Table of focus composers and featured Lithuanian composers at Gaida Festival from 2014-2019 (information from Vilnius Festivals website, see footnote 210).

minimalism or post-minimalism. The main featured composers in 2017 were David Lang and John Adams, and in 2018 the spotlight was on Julia Wolfe. In spite of popular rejections of the word ‘minimalism’ and other aesthetic ‘isms’ (such as by Lang in an open interview at the 2017 Gaida festival), the term is commonly deployed by writers connected to the Lithuanian Music Information Centre (abbreviated to LMIC in this thesis) in the description of cellular-repetitive music by Lithuanian composers. Post-minimalism has a strong showing in contemporary Lithuanian art music, and the decision to foreground hugely successful U.S. artists like Wolfe, Adams, Reich, Riley, Glass and Lang in Gaida’s programming serves to underline this prominence. The accompanying table (Figure 1.1) shows some of the spotlight artists of Gaida festivals for the last few years<sup>215</sup> (before 2014 it becomes less clear from the online programmes who the main featured composers, if any, were) along with the Lithuanian composers whose works were commissioned by or featured in the Gaida festival that year.

### **1.7 Overview of contents**

Chapter 2 establishes a conceptual backdrop for the remaining Chapters. Heterogeneity and modernist leanings in an art music tradition are unremarkable but for the fact that they can be seen to rest somewhat in the shadow of an extremely successful brand — one which tends to rhetorically sideline or obscure things which might contradict its universalising implications. This Chapter presents (primarily Anglo-American) discourse samples from several decades around the reception of some of the most popular Baltic composers of euphonic, spiritual minimalist, neo-romantic, folk-inspired music. Having established recurring tropes, the Chapter shows that many of these correlate to three other discursive clusters: 1) key elements of a twentieth-century Estonian ethno-futurist discourse of folk revival and identity-building, particularly linked to the struggle for independence; 2)

<sup>215</sup> Gaida festival webpages for festivals 2010-19, accessed online through Vilnius Festivals (<https://www.vilniusfestivals.lt/en/>, 19.10.19).

pervasive Cold War stereotypes about the status, power, capacities and ‘character’ of post-Soviet countries, characterised by repeated assumptions of an especially non-violent nature, a collective naïvety, and recurring use of words like ‘tiny’<sup>216</sup> and ‘little’<sup>217</sup>; and 3) the post-independence rebranding project, concurrent with the introduction of extreme neoliberal economic policies, embarked upon by powerful ruling groups in Estonia in the early 2000s. Having established these links, the Chapter argues that in many ways these discourses, tropes, and images can be characterised according to what they exclude. One of the thematic groups that is conspicuously absent from all of the above discourse clusters is a certain face of modernism; a cosmopolitan, rational, industrial, formalist, academic, powerful — and to an extent implicitly imperialist — face. In each case, the absence of this face of modernism has a slightly different significance. In the Estonian ethno-futurist discourse, this modernism is of the coloniser and is irrelevant for Estonian and Finno-Ugric identity.<sup>218</sup> For the Cold War triumphalist discourse, a projection of innocent, folkish ‘backwardness’, with its own obvious relationship to a colonialist mindset, is necessary to construe the Soviet regime as the inevitable losers of history and the wider Communist bloc as helpless victims waiting to be rescued by the capitalist global north. Least tangibly, but with equally political implications, the rebranding of post-independence Estonia can be seen to reject the modernist social-structural aspirations of the Soviet period, leaving a blank historical space behind it and painting a picture of a fresh, blank, digital, postmodern nation full of potential for the future — still framed as ‘tiny’ but with new competitive superpowers in the form of its comparatively unregulated, ‘avant-garde’ economic structures and unprotected workforce. This broad discursive landscape relies to varying degrees on the exclusion of an urban, industrial, cosmopolitan face of modernism. This thesis will highlight the constructed, fictitious nature of the implied absence, rejection or irrelevance of modernism in relation to the above projections of ‘Baltic’ identity, as crystallised intensively in the reception of certain art music styles, by exploring at length a range of musics which express decisive modernist, non-euphonic, and at times anti-euphonic leanings.

To begin with, Chapter 3 provides an overview of some key trends in modernist music, particularly approaches to serialism, in early-to-mid-twentieth-century Lithuania, and introduces ‘exiled modernist’ composers who left the country amid Stalinist repressions, as well as approaches adopted by those who remained. The Chapter subsequently focuses on Osvaldas Balakauskas (b. 1937), a figure who is typically framed as demonstrating an unusual commitment to modernism for his context; his 1980s treatise on harmonic writing, *Dodekatonika*, is summarised, alongside discussion of pieces from different stages of his

---

<sup>216</sup> Kelertas, ‘Baltic Postcolonialism and its Critics’, 2.

<sup>217</sup> Remnick, ‘Lithuania the Little Independence Movement that Could’.

<sup>218</sup> Jaanus, ‘Estonia’s Time and Monumental Time’, 221; Thomas Salumets, ‘Jaan Kaplinski’, 435.

career. Having established this strand of (at least in principle) overt and unapologetic modernism in Lithuania from the mid-twentieth century onwards, Chapter 4 looks at a group of younger composers whose early works are typically narrativised as a rebellion against the still-dominant euphonic, neo-romantic, moderate, and folk-themed stylistic paradigms of the time. This Chapter introduces the machinist composers, a group that emerged around the mid-1980s with works that, at least retrospectively, have been portrayed as a radical rejection of prevailing conservative compositional norms. Machinist pieces are typically post-minimalist, highly repetitive and slower-moving in terms of harmonic motion but with dynamic surface energy; clashingly dissonant and deploying deliberately (comparatively) ‘grating’, mechanical or digital timbres; and accompanied by verbal discourse that seems to represent a deliberate step away from euphonicism. The machinists, whose place in the Lithuanian art music canon has been framed by Pakarklytė as the final instalment of a master narrative of national music,<sup>219</sup> (have been seen to) represent a rejection of euphonic dominance — but they also retain some shared fingerprints with popular consonant minimalist styles. Focusing on works by Nomeda Valančiūtė (b. 1961) and Rytis Mažulis (b. 1961), the Chapter discusses a number of studies and considers how these pieces relate to ideas about futurism, historicism, oldness and newness.

Composers who became most successful *after* this last stage of a national music narrative have typically not been portrayed as part of some dialectical trajectory of Lithuanian art music history, or indeed of any cohesive movement or school. Chapter 5 turns to two individuals who were born almost at the same time as Mažulis and Valančiūtė, but who can be understood as composers more in terms of networks (professional, familial, cultural) than movements: Tomas Kutavičius (b. 1964) and Remigijus Merkelys (b. 1964). Pieces by Merkelys, an enthusiastic constructivist interested in musical applications of number and geometry, and Kutavičius, a jazz pianist and son of a legendary euphonic-national composer, display some sonic similarities (dissonant, post-tonal, pitch-centred, rhythmic, cellular-repetitive, energetic, often ostinato-driven), but these two composers, in different ways thoroughly embedded in European professional networks and institutions of art music and jazz, have very different perspectives on formalism, emotionality, rationalising and intuiting. The following two Chapters introduce composers born in the 1970s and 1980s who left Lithuania some time after independence, and explores their varying perspectives on and relationships with the Lithuanian art music scene. The focus of Chapter 6 is Vykintas Baltakas (b. 1972), an outspoken composer who expressed, at the time of our 2017 interview, a pronounced feeling of outsidership in relation to Lithuanian art music institutions. Baltakas left the country in the late 1990s as a young student and established a career

---

<sup>219</sup> Pakarklytė, ‘Black-and-white post-Minimalism’, 29.

abroad. Many of his early works express a strong frustration with what he calls the 'soup' of the '80s and '90s, when the scene was dominated by euphonic, folk-inspired, minimalist, spiritualist and heavily sentimental musics. Baltakas, who has returned to live in his home country in the last couple of years, has been preoccupied in music with ideas of non-linearity, but has situated himself creatively at a very deliberate remove from major Lithuanian trends. Quite differently from Baltakas, who was almost desperate to leave Lithuania in the late '90s in order to chase artistic and cultural experiences he had felt cut off from, the two composers discussed in Chapter 7 — Justina Repečkaitė (b. 1989) and Albertas Navickas (b. 1986) — seemed to view their departures not so much as an escape, but more as something either plainly pragmatic or at least less emotionally loaded. These composers, both former students of Osvaldas Balakauskas and sharing some interests in spectral and timbral approaches to music, discuss the influence of their tutor as well as their relationships with ideas of national belonging (many of which they feel are arbitrarily imposed for the sake of discursive coherence or convenience). The study concludes by readdressing the overall heterogeneity and stylistic diversity, in contrast to the dominant euphonic 'Baltic' paradigm, displayed across the works studied here, and revisits and re-questions the power of this paradigm having highlighted its constructed nature through introducing many contrasting approaches and angles. The dominant Baltic art music paradigm is considered in a new light, casting further doubt on the essentialist ideas that already emerge from discourse around the most internationally successfully euphonic styles, as will be demonstrated in the next Chapter.



## 2. Euphonicism: Cultural branding and western criticism

As Fairclough observed in relation to Shostakovich studies, the Anglo-American critical gaze on contemporary Baltic art musics has inevitably been shaped by ideological constructs, particularly in the wake of the Cold War. Many writers reproduced proffered narratives of a homogeneous, a-modern, spiritual, folkish Baltic cultural paradigm (epitomised by figures like Pärt, Tormis, and Jaan Kaplinski) – at times interpreting popular spiritual minimalist leanings as reflective of some inherent regional character. This tendency may not have altogether dissipated, but the dust has settled somewhat and it is possible to view related discourses through a more historical lens. A perceptible correlation exists between the notably consistent outward-facing aesthetic countenance of more northern, particularly Estonian, art music and the comparatively more unified, rapid, single-message institutional transitions after independence, accompanied in the northernmost country by drastic socioeconomic reforms and the commissioning of ‘Brand Estonia’. This contrasts instructively with greater institutional heterogeneity and relative slowness of change in Lithuania and, correspondingly, comparatively less unified aesthetic discourses, at least on an internationally visible level. Features that seem to be consistently marginalised in marketing materials and commercially successful music alike — dissonance, angularity, motor rhythms, images of urban industrial modernity, sharp lines and bold colours — are conspicuous in their absence. David Dies acknowledges the prevalence of the trope of a rejection of modernism by spiritual minimalist composers, but ultimately seems to accept the idea that these musics developed out of the same dislike of serialism and its attending ideologies attributed to the mainstream minimalist movement in the US.<sup>1</sup> Looking past face-value explanations of aesthetic preference to other, more pragmatic factors, this Chapter contrasts hauntology<sup>2</sup> and heterogeneity as symptoms of differentiated rates of institutional change that have at times been distorted in Anglo-American music-critical discourse through an essentialist lens.

Many popular, internationally-visible Baltic art music styles are accompanied by recurring discursive trends. This Chapter will discuss how these trends may relate to a marketing campaign targeting the outward-facing image of Estonia; what they appear characteristically to encompass or exclude; and how this could be related to wider matters of representation and political, economic and institutional change. As the most-performed living art-music composer almost every year in the 2010s,<sup>3</sup> many people interested in

---

<sup>1</sup> David Dies, ‘Defining “Spiritual Minimalism”’, in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Minimalist and Postminimalist Music*, ed. Keith Potter, Kyle Gann and Pwyll AP Siôn (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 317-318.

<sup>2</sup> Mark Fisher, ‘What is Hauntology?’, *Film Quarterly*, 66(1) 2012, pp. 16-24: 20

<sup>3</sup> Tambur, ‘Arvo Pärt is the world’s most performed living composer eighth year running’, 2019.

classical or film music will be familiar with Arvo Pärt. Familiarity with Pärt’s musical work may be accompanied by a strong tacit awareness of the rhetoric and imagery that tends to surround this composer. Pärt’s commercial identity is vivid and recognisable – partly, of course, owing to his considerable commercial success. The following table (figure 2.1) contains examples of recurring tropes and imagery as they appear in a number of articles about and reviews of Pärt’s music from various English-language (mostly UK and US) media outlets between 1989 and 2017.

Publication / author / date	Relevant quotes
<i>New York Times</i> (Kozin, 1989)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shimmeringly mystical, devotional quality</li> <li>• [a] mystical enigma</li> </ul>
<i>Gramophone</i> (Cowan, 1999)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* marked lack of musical ‘activity’</li> <li>* a few simple but beautiful ideas</li> <li>* extreme simplicity</li> <li>* deceptively uncomplicated</li> <li>* hangs suspended</li> <li>* subtle</li> <li>* sustained intensity that aids concentration</li> <li>* the voice of internal exile, self-communing and highly personal but wholly accessible</li> </ul>
<i>Guardian</i> (Wigley, 2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* music that conjures an instant image</li> <li>* plangent</li> <li>* repeated stark tones</li> <li>* sparse</li> <li>* severe if ineffably beautiful music</li> <li>* pure, spiritually inflected work</li> <li>* stirring resonances</li> <li>* yearning delicacy</li> </ul>
<i>Los Angeles Times</i> (Swed, 2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* mystical aura</li> <li>* meditative music</li> <li>* a man not of this world</li> <li>* otherworldly</li> <li>* haunting beauty</li> </ul>
<i>New York Times</i> (Schweitzer, 2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* mournful, introspective lament</li> <li>* mystical</li> <li>* slow, introspective style</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* solemn, shimmering haze</li> <li>* delicate chimes</li> <li>* serenity</li> <li>* meditative moods</li> <li>* glacial pace</li> <li>* seething tension</li> <li>* hauntingly beautiful</li> </ul>
<i>New York Times</i> (Lubow, 2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* a whiff of church incense</li> <li>* resonate profoundly</li> <li>* harmonic stillness</li> <li>* unbelievable calm and brilliance</li> <li>* seeming simplicity</li> <li>* total meditative state</li> <li>* like raindrops on a windshield</li> <li>* the silence that is being broken is as palpable as the music being played</li> <li>* a web of sustained notes that shimmer and glisten</li> </ul>
<i>Gramophone</i> (Cowan, 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* austerely meditative</li> <li>* weeping cadences</li> <li>* seemingly timeless</li> <li>* haunting bass drone</li> <li>* infinitely strange</li> <li>* gentle</li> <li>* deep spiritual engagement</li> </ul>
<i>Telegraph</i> (Hewett, 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* sublime</li> <li>* otherworldly</li> <li>* radiantly euphonious</li> <li>* quiet and meditative</li> <li>* primal simplicities</li> <li>* strange new light</li> <li>* [composer must have traits of] patience, naivety and indifference to public scorn</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* “one is capable of doing anything, if one only listens attentively enough” [Pärt quote]</li> <li>* put his faith in the simple truths his ear was telling him</li> <li>* radiant, harmonious intervals</li> <li>* sturdy simplicities</li> <li>* ancient musical devices</li> <li>* mystery</li> <li>* new sort of truth</li> </ul>
<i>Limelight</i> (unnamed author, 2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* vertiginous excitement</li> <li>* spiralling serenity</li> <li>* haunting</li> <li>* inexorably building sostenuto lines</li> <li>* the Estonian wizard</li> <li>* towering and slightly ursine [of conductor Tõnu Kaljuste]</li> <li>* simplicity is ... captivating</li> <li>* elegiac</li> <li>* overenthusiastic and distracting application of artificial snow</li> </ul>
<i>NPR Classical</i> (Huizenga, 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* slow, pure, simple, yet powerfully focused</li> <li>* musical combination of awe and silence</li> <li>* austere</li> </ul>
<i>365Bristol.com</i> (Caddick and Anderson, 2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* radical, reductive, introspective, impassioned and intensely personal</li> <li>* haunting dissonance</li> <li>* anguished intensity</li> <li>* flickering with dreamy oscillations</li> <li>* eventually, quietly, hauntingly fading away into silence</li> <li>* totally hypnotic, tranquil, dreamily endless aural will o’ the wisp</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* gently repeated</li> <li>* sublime, heart-meltingly lilting lullaby</li> <li>* delicate, tender intimacy and quiet yearning</li> <li>* intense, magnetic, hypnotic, introspective, prayerful, profound, compelling, luminous, meditative: these are all words that could easily be used to describe Arvo Pärt's wholly unique musical soundscape</li> </ul>
<i>Classic FM</i> (Brunning, 2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* unique, atmospheric and compelling</li> <li>* ancient sounds</li> <li>* the world of monasteries</li> <li>* strikingly minimalist</li> <li>* hauntingly simple</li> <li>* gentle</li> <li>* slow-moving</li> <li>* magic</li> <li>* stillness</li> <li>* almost divine</li> <li>* state of infinity</li> <li>* beautifully transcendent</li> <li>* still and lyrical</li> <li>* full of emotion</li> <li>* slow, exquisite musical meditation</li> <li>* perfectly peaceful</li> </ul>
<i>Financial Times</i> (Nepil, 2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* flaccid</li> <li>* simplistic</li> <li>* soothing sonorities fail to cast a spell</li> <li>* musical spiritualism</li> </ul>
<i>Telegraph</i> (Brown, 2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* profound, spiritual music</li> <li>* indefinable power</li> </ul>
<i>Guardian</i> (Smith, 2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* mystical minimalism</li> <li>* immense stillness</li> <li>* mesmeric, free-floating</li> </ul>

<i>Guardian</i> (Molleson, 2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* light-filled music</li> <li>* most popular choice [of music for people who are dying]</li> </ul>

Figure 2.1 – Table showing samples from (UK/US) reviews of and articles about Arvo Pärt's music, 1989-2017.

The table below (figure 2.2) shows examples taken from similar writings (articles with dates provided range from 2000-2018) on the Estonian composer Veljo Tormis (1930-2017), Latvian composers Pēteris Vasks (b.1946) and Pēteris Plakidis (1947-2017), and a number of CDs and concerts advertising compilations of contemporary 'Baltic' classical music (mostly choral) by various artists.

<b>Publication / author / date</b>	<b>Relevant quotes</b>
<i>ClassicalNet</i> (Tuttle, 2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* ancient power</li> <li>* paradoxically contemporary</li> <li>* shamanistic rain-dance</li> <li>* natural, non-operatic quality</li> <li>* fresh and challenging like a stiff Baltic breeze</li> <li>* strikingly beautiful</li> </ul>
<i>Gramophone</i> (Fanning, 2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* sung drones propel us back through the centuries to a time when folk and sacred music could be imagined growing from the same stem</li> <li>* attractive</li> <li>* a rich tradition, euphonious and for the most part proudly rooted in national folk traditions</li> </ul>
<i>Guardian</i> (Service, 2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* bland invention</li> <li>* a dispiriting poverty of musical imagination</li> </ul>
<i>Gramophone</i> (Fanning, 2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* soft but evocative choral breezes from the East</li> <li>* authentic performances</li> <li>* it's not all slush</li> <li>* the gift of spinning long threads of musical thought from apparently unpromising material</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* coming rather too close to Pärt's patent tintinnabuli idiom for comfort</li> <li>* doubts are niggling as to whether the first five movements [...] [are] ever going to do anything original</li> <li>* superb gift for sustaining a long floating line</li> <li>* much of this work is very soft-centred</li> </ul>
<i>Classics Today</i> (Vernier, 2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* broad umbrella of "tonalism"</li> <li>* repetitive elements</li> <li>* nothing particularly innovative here</li> <li>* voices spend lots of time whispering, panting, groaning and swooping</li> <li>* minimalist mannerisms</li> <li>* impressive for its beautiful unison and close interval singing, and for its powerful ending (that should have come about two minutes sooner)</li> <li>* listeners interested in exploring beyond the choral music world in which most of us mortals reside and perform will be at least enlightened if not compelled to hear more.</li> </ul>
<i>Gramophone</i> (Rickards, 2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* considerable aural imagination (albeit with a debt to Bartók)</li> <li>* postmodern tonal idiom</li> </ul>
<i>Hyperion</i> , (Jackson, 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* magical little tone poem</li> <li>* just a few chords, simple triads that are subtly piqued</li> <li>* static backdrop</li> <li>* the piece doesn't really go anywhere, it simply <i>is</i>, full of innocent wonderment at the close of the day</li> </ul>
ECM Reviews (unnamed author, 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* [Estonian Philharmonic Choir]'s restraint is in full flower</li> <li>* reverence</li> <li>* uncanny ability to soak us in a feeling</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* shamanic drum and tense use of silence</li> <li>* peers into the heart of elemental forces and further into the human condition</li> <li>* proves the power of song to be a guiding light through adversity</li> <li>* ethereal</li> <li>* gentle enough to break apart from a sigh</li> <li>* appeal to nature as a source of art</li> <li>* whistling winds</li> <li>* monastic solemnity</li> </ul>
Hyperion (Gough, 2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* strong affinity with the meditative power of nature</li> <li>* distinct character of Latvian folk music</li> </ul>
<i>Telegraph</i> (Allison, 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* too much easy listening</li> <li>* theme of northern light</li> <li>* Baltic connection</li> <li>* single, meditative arc</li> <li>* haunting lines</li> <li>* repeated incantations</li> <li>* mood of increasing fervour</li> </ul>
<i>Guardian</i> (Reinvere, 2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* free in narrative fantasy</li> <li>* incorporating [...] sounds of village life or birdsong</li> <li>* sparse in development</li> <li>* “I don’t use folk melody — it is folk melody that uses me” [Veljo Tormis quote]</li> <li>* drew on [the] power [of singing] to express [...] forest pantheism</li> </ul>
<i>Planet Hugill</i> (Hugill, 2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* elegiac, folk-like</li> <li>* beautifully shaped with a sense of a still, quiet centre</li> <li>* focused, serious and intent</li> <li>* folk-ish melodic lines</li> <li>* meditative</li> <li>* spare, short and intense</li> <li>* hanging in mid-air</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* completely magical</li> <li>* the four songs didn't so much tell a story as each evoked a particular mood</li> <li>* flowing, long-breathed</li> <li>* melancholy</li> <li>* straightforward, though beautifully constructed</li> </ul>
<i>Toccata Classics</i> (unnamed author, nd.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* rooted in the melodic character of Latvian folk music</li> <li>* remarkable strength and beauty</li> <li>* remarkable and moving</li> <li>* shares some points of contact with the "Holy Mystics" among other Baltic composers, such as Arvo Pärt and Pēteris Vasks</li> </ul>
<i>Toccata Classics</i> (b, unnamed author, nd.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* unique</li> <li>* quasi-minimalist rhythmic vigour of Estonian runic singing</li> <li>* tingling with excitement, energy, and power</li> </ul>
<i>MusicWebInternational</i> (Arloff, nd.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* music that is "off the beaten path"</li> <li>* [performer] writes that all four composers on his disc "share a fundamental conviction that music has the power to transcend suffering and heal the human spirit"</li> <li>* attractive</li> <li>* a wonderful and ethereally beautiful work that expresses feelings of nostalgia and loss in the most unmistakable way</li> <li>* incredibly powerful</li> <li>* a luminosity that shines within the music</li> <li>* made my hair stand on end with its hugely effective evocation of those feelings he seeks to describe</li> <li>* quietness</li> </ul>

	<p>* echoes of folk music which further enhance the feeling of timelessness</p> <p>* the most satisfyingly relaxing work I have heard in a long time</p>
--	--

Figure 2.2 – Table showing samples from (UK/US) reviews of and articles about other Baltic (mostly Estonian and Latvian) contemporary classical composers, 2000-2018.

In many positive and important ways, it is possible to map these ideas onto significant currents in 20th-century discourses of Estonian cultural identity. Drawing on the work and ideas of Jaan Kaplinski and others,<sup>4</sup> a broad set of relevant themes can be extrapolated. In short, and to simplify a diverse and nuanced body of literature, it is possible to see recurring references to:

- ritual (whether ‘folk’ or religious)
- a sense of ancientness or ‘timelessness’ (whether in a ‘folk’ or orthodox religious interpretation)
- a sense of diminished authorship and a focus on intuition or ‘mediation’; a recognition of the primacy of nature (or of God – just not of humans).
- the idea that space takes priority over time; postmodern paradigms of time and history as circular, repetitive or goalless.

The conceptual imbrications between the work of composer Veljo Tormis and poet Jaan Kaplinski provide an illustrative focus. Responding to the perceived threats of ‘intra-European postcolonialism’ and the ‘rush to join the west’, as well as historical occupations, Soviet erasure and Russification, Kaplinski conceived of an idealised ‘Finno-Ugric mode of seeing’.<sup>5</sup> The group of concepts he saw as aligned with this mode includes: artlessness;<sup>6</sup> the value of minimal intervention and ‘unforced flourishing’;<sup>7</sup> ‘blandness’ — a lack of concern for strict differentiation or exactitude, prioritising ritualistic, monotonous repetition over innovation and progress;<sup>8</sup> and respect for the balance of nature.<sup>9</sup> Kaplinski’s poetry paints fond portraits of the unforced and the everyday:

The snow's melting. The water's dripping.

<sup>4</sup> Salumets, *Unforced Flourishing* (2015); Thomas Salumets, ‘Conflicted Consciousness: Jaan Kaplinski and the Legacy of Intra-European Postcolonialism in Estonia’, in *Baltic Postcolonialism* (2006); Mimi Daitz, *Ancient Song Recovered: The Life and Music of Veljo Tormis* (New York: Pendragon Press, 2004); Maire Jaanus, ‘Estonia’s Time and Monumental Time’, (2006); Veljo Tormis, ‘Some problems with that regilaul’ (2007 lecture at the Viljandi Culture Academy, accessed online [http://www.tormis.ee/Some\\_problems\\_with\\_that\\_regilaul.pdf](http://www.tormis.ee/Some_problems_with_that_regilaul.pdf), 20.10.19); Marek Tamm and Kalevi Kull, ‘Toward a reterritorialization of cultural theory: Estonian theory from Baer via Uexküll to Lotman’, *History of the Human Sciences* 29(1) 2016 (accessed online, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0952695115617407>, 20.10.19).

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Salumets, *Unforced Flourishing*, 157.

<sup>7</sup> Salumets, *Unforced Flourishing*, 26.

<sup>8</sup> Salumets, *Unforced Flourishing*, 35; 158; 165. Salumets, ‘Conflicted Consciousness’, 443.

<sup>9</sup> Salumets, *Unforced Flourishing*, 33.

The wind's blowing (gently).  
The boughs are swaying. There's a fire in the stove.  
The radiators are warm.  
Anu is doing exercises on the piano.  
Ott and Tambet are making a snowman.  
Maarja is preparing a lunch.  
The wooden horse is looking in from the window.  
I am looking out of the window.  
I am writing a poem.  
I am writing that today is Sunday.  
That the snow's melting. That the water's dripping.  
That the wind's blowing, etc., etc.<sup>10</sup>

According to Salumets, the idea of 'unforced flourishing',

[...] conceives of two otherwise separate and contradictory processes as one: it conveys engagement and attentiveness, but our involvement is directed towards bringing to fruition what happens of its own accord. Expressing a complex matter all too simply, one might say that Kaplinski's intention is to "invent nothing" and thus "receive everything", to borrow Gerhard Richter's words about his kindred existential perspective and sense of diminished authorship.<sup>11</sup>

Coined by Salumets, the term reflects Kaplinski's 'challenge to firmly entrenched and reified core conceptions', most notably the assumption 'that human fulfilment depends predominantly on assertive, goal-bound initiative.'<sup>12</sup> He goes on to explain that, 'built on a distinctly different foundation, "unforced flourishing" calls for diminished intervention in favour of an engaged responsiveness without agenda.'<sup>13</sup> Emphasising the poet's 'sense of "artlessness" as a desired aesthetic effect', Salumets highlights a 'deep and unqualified identification with the nonhuman world' as the 'very richest' manifestation of unforced flourishing in his thought.<sup>14</sup> Kaplinski believed in the value of minimal intervention and the relative insignificance of human goals. In conjunction with the rejection of anthropocentrism and a belief in self-organising systems redolent of anarchism, this ontology is positioned as a discursive other to rationality in the Weberian *zweckrational* sense: rationality defined as a highly or maximally efficient relationship between input and output, deliberate cause and

---

<sup>10</sup> Jaan Kaplinski, 'The snow's melting', transl. Jaan Kaplinski and Fiona Sampson (accessed online, <http://www.estlit.ee/elis/?cmd=writer&id=46378&txt=20046>, 20.10.19).

<sup>11</sup> Salumets, *Unforced Flourishing*, 26.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*

intended effect, decisive action and desired outcome.<sup>15</sup> Salumets' pithy paraphrase of the overarching sentiment — 'don't touch that rock, Sisyphus'<sup>16</sup> — unfolds more subtly in this 'biophilic' extract from Kaplinski's *Through the Forest* (1996), which follows the heading:

I have no principles.  
in my depths are no thoughts.  
in the depths is clear water that flows  
in the dimness over stones, a few shells, or caddis fly,  
minnows  
and roach,  
water-moss and speedwells  
that tremble in the current  
like the strings of an instrument, only unheard.  
At the bottom of stream are no thoughts, only  
flowing, only the current's categorical  
imperative  
which bends and bows with it  
the mosses and speedwells, the fish and caddis flies,  
teaching some to cling to the stones on the bottom,  
others to the flowing water itself, which is called  
swimming.<sup>17</sup>

Kaplinski's worldview encompasses his interpretation of the significance of ancient Estonian *regilaul* folk song. Salumets says that 'to capture the essence of its unique appeal for Kaplinski [...] means to recognize and welcome the regi song's astonishing inartistic modality, a remarkable "blandness"'.<sup>18</sup>

The poet's recognition of a positive valence of ambiguity<sup>19</sup> in the characteristic parallelisms of *regilaul* verse encompasses a correspondingly diminished significance for language, taxonomy, classification, symbols, and systems designed to maximise efficient action. There is more to say about *regilaul* in particular, and about the connections that may be drawn between the ways it is frequently described in relation to time and some of the most prominent discourses of minimalist music, both spiritual and otherwise. Many aspects of Kaplinski's characterisations of *regilaul* are conceptually mirrored in other cultural and historiographical framings of the runic song. Observations by Tormis and others also suggest

---

<sup>15</sup> Ana Petrov, 'Are We Still Evolutionists?: The Reception of Max Weber's Theory of Development', in *Critical Music Historiography: Probing Canons, Ideologies and Institutions* (ed. Vesa Kurkela, Markus Mantere) (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2015), 97.

<sup>16</sup> Salumets, *Unforced Flourishing*, 25.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Salumets, *Unforced Flourishing*, 158.

<sup>19</sup> Salumets, 'Conflicted Consciousness', 443.

a discursive opposition to anthropocentric agency and rationalism. Regarding his own relationship with the folk songs, Tormis said 'I am more a mediator than composer or arranger', and that 'it is not I that makes use of folk music, it is folk music that makes use of me.'<sup>20</sup> In the 2007 lecture "Some Problems With That Regilaul", Tormis laid out fourteen points for consideration. Here are two of the most salient ones for the discussion in hand:

9) The *regilaul* is a ritual song and not a means of communication.

10) The *regilaul* is supra-individual culture, the cultural atmosphere that stretches out above us like the sky. One should not aim for setting a model based on the *regilaul* as performed by a particular singer, and linking it with the so-called 'great' singers.<sup>21</sup>

Salumets relates Estonian folklorist Jakob Hurt's 1902 characterisation of *regilaul* as like the 'ancient tendrils' of a 'primeval forest, which refuse to be transformed into artful gardens of modern culture'.<sup>22</sup> The idea of Estonia viewed as Other/underdeveloped/ primitive in comparison to (formerly) 'Western Europe' – a phenomenon Kaplinski emphatically feels is symptomatic of a form of self-colonisation – is reflected in Salumets' explication:

In the course of their 700-year colonising process, as Kaplinski sees it unfold, Estonians find their culture wanting, particularly during the period of national awakening in the 1860s and 1870s. Estonia was perceived to be lacking in what Europe's centers took for granted: stone buildings, churches, palaces, poetry with end rhymes, manor houses, cities, abstract words, a Protestant ethic, a national epic, song festivals, fraternities, operas, the devil, a standard literary language, a single God, and other manifestations of the mentality associated with the colonisers.<sup>23</sup>

Maire Jaanus's essay 'Estonia's Time and Monumental Time', in which she asserts that the time of Estonia is repetitive, cyclical, feminine, Other, ecological, eternal, static, goalless, hysterical, and linked to a history of oppression,<sup>24</sup> serves to link an image of Baltic postcolonialism strongly to the collection of tropes that have historically functioned as 'western' imperial rationalism's discursive others. This in turn serves to reinforce a discursive link with popularly-cited characteristics of minimalism, cf. static time, circularity, repetition, endlessness, goallessness, and more related tropes of otherness in relation to modernism and/or an implicitly colonial teleological orientation.

---

<sup>20</sup> Salumets, 'Conflicted Consciousness', 443.

<sup>21</sup> Tormis, 'Some problems with that regilaul', 2007.

<sup>22</sup> Salumets, *Unforced Flourishing*, 157.

<sup>23</sup> Salumets, 'Conflicted Consciousness', 435.

<sup>24</sup> Jaanus, 'Estonia's Time and Monumental Time'.

Many of the above examples can be seen as positive identity constructions relating to a hugely important pro-independence moment, linked with internal movements of empowerment and self-identification. The valence of this type of imagery is necessarily altered when it is wielded by different speakers in, say, an Anglo-American context, particularly with regard to the commodification of Baltic art musics and the residual ideological impacts of the Cold War on contemporary Anglo-American discourse. Having identified this cluster of distinctive qualities, it is possible to map related concepts onto the rhetorical superstructure of cultural discourse and to argue that aesthetic and conceptual connections can be drawn between key threads of cultural discourse and the marketing and reception of the most successful Baltic music exports to date. However, a side effect of the popularity and coherence of this particular postmodern palette may be seen in its potential to obscure a greater diversity of styles, ideas and movements generated by artists from the three Baltic countries.

## **2.1 Heterogeneity**

Other Baltic art musics — notably, some of the most significant Lithuanian contemporary art music — may share many of these fingerprints but also have a comparatively more visible legacy of twentieth-century modernism which is less prominent in mainstream English language discourses. The Baltic States are often erroneously homogenised. Of course, it is not surprising that the sum of trends in art and music should express variety and contrast in any given context — but it is not unusual to encounter the claim that the Baltic countries or other post-Soviet nations essentially did not experience modernism, so absolute was its ‘repudiation’.<sup>25</sup> According to Boris Groys, one of the tactics ostensibly deployed with the aim of (re)building an identity free from any associations with the USSR was the idea of ‘going back’ to pre-occupation-era art and culture to find something ‘authentic’, erasing the Soviet experience from cultural memory as both alien and entirely irrelevant. In a lecture on the ‘difference between Western postmodernism and Eastern post-socialism’, Groys claimed:

Western postmodernism was a reaction against the modernist canon [...] The emergence of this type of postmodernism was impossible in Eastern Europe because the conditions under which art was practiced there were completely different. The modernist canon was never established and institutionalised in Eastern Europe, so the revolt against it had no sense.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> Ruta Paidere, ‘The Dilemma of a Latvian Composer’, *Unearthing the Music* (accessed online, <https://unearthingthemusic.eu/posts/the-dilemma-of-a-latvian-composer/>, 29.01.21).

<sup>26</sup> Groys, ‘Difference between Western postmodernism and Eastern post socialism’, 2015.

He also suggested that:

...for the Eastern European artist and Russian artist, to move on means, in fact, to go back [...] to the national cultural identity before it was repressed and distorted by communism. Here the question emerges, of course, how far they have to go back to be able to rediscover and reappropriate the cultural capital. Obviously Russians have to go at least to 1916, maybe to 1913. That means that on the way to post-communist normalisation, globalisation, they have to abandon and subtract from the, let's say, cultural bank account...almost the whole twentieth century. The situation of other post-socialist countries is not so dramatic. They have to go back merely to the period before World War II. But they still lose several decades, and in terms of cultural capital, under the conditions of international competition, this is not so negligible an amount of time.<sup>27</sup>

In the case of the Baltic States, the interwar decades in fact constituted the only period of full national independence in many centuries; for Estonia, they had been the only moment of freedom in roughly 700 years.<sup>28</sup> During this period of independence and the era of national awakening in the nineteenth century, various strands and siblings of modernism in the arts may have flourished and withered for any number of reasons.<sup>29</sup> It is also relevant that, although the Soviet establishment infamously suppressed and discouraged certain forms of modernist art, in other ways their epistemologies and policies (teleological, centralised, organised, rationalised, progress-driven) can be read as profoundly modernist. If postmodernism is understood as a reaction to a broad cultural climate, and not only to surface-level stylistic trends in artworks, then it need not necessarily be the case that postmodernism in post-Soviet States is viewed, as Groys implies, as an uncanny successor to an absent modernism.

However, although it is vital that modernism, in whatever definition, is not framed as some kind of necessary evolutionary stage – or indeed as a normative good – it is well known that even Arvo Pärt, who is generally portrayed as epitomising the most prominent kind of 'euphonic' palette, also wrote experimental avant-garde or modernist works before his 'tintinnabuli' phase. There still exist popular tropes which hold that the central powers of the Soviet Union effectively succeeded in erasing modernist, experimental or progressive tendencies in music and art in the twentieth century – and this is not an accurate picture. But 'modernist' leanings do seem to be comparably more marginalised in the internationally-visible image of Estonian and to an extent Latvian art musics by comparison with projections

---

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Salumets, 'Conflicted Consciousness', 435.

<sup>29</sup> See Chapters 'Poland and Lithuania' and 'The Baltic States of Latvia and Estonia' in S.A. Mansbach, *Modern Art in Eastern Europe: From the Baltic to the Balkans, ca. 1980-1939* (Cambridge and New York: New York University Press, 1999).

of a Lithuanian canon. This study does not aim to put forward an argument regarding the existence of a strictly comparable modernist canon in the northerly Baltic States – in which case, works by figures like Mart Saar, Heino Eller, Mati Kuulberg, and Ģederts Ramans would necessarily be discussed in more depth – but instead aims to examine some potential significances and sources of the discursive emphasis placed on, and the apparent privileging of, what can reasonably be described as a postmodern aesthetic in terms of reception, interpretation, and promotion.

In addition to some (already-cited) important cultural roots of the aesthetic discourses in question, the prevalence – and the distortion – of these images is a matter of reception; in the context of this study I examine primarily Anglo-American examples. One striking case is a 1995 article from the British *Sunday Telegraph*,<sup>30</sup> which was written about the Latvian composer Pēteris Vasks, but serves as a representative sample of some of the reductive and fantastical post-socialist clichés that circulated at the time. But recurring in the ways that English-language writers have depicted Arvo Pärt himself, it is also possible to see particular trends. A notable phenomenon is the recurrence of pairs of concepts which, on the one hand, emphasise his supposed intuitive, abnormal genius and, on the other, paint pictures of an irrational, emotional individual who struggles to express feelings in words. The discursive binary of being simultaneously more-than and less-than an imaginary normal standard of intellect is strongly reminiscent of David Graeber's assertion that the subject who has (or is supposed to have) less power in a relationship is often framed as being simple, 'backward', irrational or unintelligent – but, at the same time, also 'somehow mystically wise',<sup>31</sup> preternaturally intuitive or instinctual, in touch with nature or 'streetwise'; this trend can be seen in countless representations of marginalised people. It also reflects Stuart Hall's observation that the Other is often required to represent something inciting attraction and something provoking repulsion at one and the same time.<sup>32</sup>

In a 2002 *New Yorker* article, Alex Ross cited the 'unsentimental evidence of record sales'<sup>33</sup> as an indicator of the significance of Pärt's work. Pondering the significance of this mass appeal and of the composer's allegedly 'uncanny voice', the article theorised:

He has put his finger on something that is almost impossible to put into words—something to do with the power of music to obliterate the rigidities of space and time.

One after the other, his chords silence the noise of the self, binding the mind to an

---

<sup>30</sup> Stephen Jackson, 'Out of Latvia on a Snowball', *The Sunday Telegraph*, February 26 1995 (accessed online at Stephen Jackson website, <https://stephenjacksonmusic.wordpress.com/2015/06/16/the-music-of-peteris-vasks/>, 20.10.19).

<sup>31</sup> David Graeber, *The Utopia of Rules: On Technology, Stupidity, and the Secret Joys of Bureaucracy* (New York: Melville House, 2015), 69-70.

<sup>32</sup> Stuart Hall 'The Spectacle of the Other', in *Representation, Second Edition* (ed. Stuart Hall, Jessica Evans and Sean Nixon) (Milton Keynes: Open University, 2013 [1997]), 228, 257.

<sup>33</sup> Alex Ross, 'Consolations: The Uncanny Voice of Arvo Pärt', *New Yorker*, December 2 2002 (accessed online, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2002/12/02/consolations>, 20.10.19).



eternal present. For this reason, anecdotes of listeners' experiences, whether extreme or mundane, may give a better account of the music than any analysis of its inner workings.<sup>34</sup>

Here the author frames the composer as being in touch with something powerful yet non-verbal and/or inarticulable (and therefore non-rational?). Silencing the 'noise of the self' surely also means silencing language, discourse, and the symbolic order, as these are what constitute the subject. Positioning Pärt as both inspired and irrational – intuitive and emotive, not analytical – is to situate him on the more organic side of a kind of nature-culture dichotomy (or spectrum). In a classical othering strategy, the composer is repeatedly represented as being both more and simultaneously less than an unspoken standard of normality or some anonymous but more rational cultural counterpart. Even the ways that writers describe the composer as an individual tend to make him seem somehow unusual, different (from 'us', i.e. normative Eurocentric standards of reason and rationality governing hegemonic discourse). The article acknowledges these trends at the same time as reproducing them:

Pärt is a gaunt man with a pale, gentle face and mournfully powerful eyes. His bald pate is balanced by a tightly curled beard of a few inches' length. He has been described as "monkish" so often that a German musicologist has undertaken a deconstruction of the term, but the word still springs to mind unbidden: he could pose for an icon of St. John Chrysostom, or another of the literary saints. Yet, when his large eyes fix on you, he becomes more worldly and formidable; his stare seems to ask, "Are you serious?" At times, he is unexpectedly impish, even antic. He needs few words to make himself understood, using a repertory of quasi-operatic gestures and clownish faces.<sup>35</sup>

Highlighting his alleged penchant for non-linguistic forms of expression, the description here seems to link Pärt to irrationality, the unconscious, the body, and childhood. In fact, the languages in which the interview was conducted – English and German, presumably encompassing the reviewer's first language and the composer's third or fourth – may have been more relevant. The excerpt effects the uncanny evocation of images of someone very ancient/wise (St. John Chrysostom) and someone very young ('impish', 'clownish'), mirroring the common interpretations of Pärt's postmodern compositional juxtapositions of very old and new musical ideas. If this characterisation of his person is accurate then that is certainly a convenient coincidence; more important, either way, is that it serves to make the composer himself seem almost strange. The article's poetic closing lines also zero in on the significance of the non-linguistic and emotive, claiming that, while trying to make himself

---

<sup>34</sup> Ross, 'Consolations'.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*

understood during their conversation the composer had ‘stopped, frustrated at the inability of either English or German to bring his image to life’, produced a pen ‘as if that would explain everything’, and exclaimed that “‘Schubert’s pen” ... “was fifty per cent ink, fifty per cent tears”.’<sup>36</sup> The general idea that what composers ‘want to say’ can only adequately be expressed in music, not verbally, is a popular one, but in other cases it may be less common to highlight an actual perceived failure or breakdown in everyday interpersonal verbal communication to illustrate this. The intensification and personification of existing ideas about intangibility, inarticulability, and the uselessness of words when talking about emotion and meaning in music is used here, however inadvertently, to characterise Arvo Pärt as an individual in a way that overlaps with both positive internal and othering external constructions of Estonian cultural identity. It should be acknowledged that these recurring images of ‘mysticism’, simplicity and naturalness may in some instances constitute demeaning representations, as in the aforementioned *Sunday Telegraph* article about Pēteris Vasks, which made sweeping, unfounded claims about Latvians in the 1990s (‘these people know nothing yet of guile’) and accused the composer of producing work that ‘lacked the qualities of a mind in dialogue with itself.’<sup>37</sup>

The idea that the Baltic states are particularly or even peculiarly peaceful is also widely promulgated. Guntis Šmidchens’s claim that ‘something in the Baltic today is working against the human instinct to wage war, and this is a good reason to study Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania’<sup>38</sup> is intended as a positive statement. The same can be said for much of the rhetoric surrounding the Velvet Revolution. The phenomenon of the Baltic Way, when citizens of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania linked hands in a line stretching across the entire region in protest against occupation, has great symbolic importance and is regularly cited as a character-defining event for these nations. In Todd May’s *Nonviolent Resistance: A Philosophical Introduction*, the author explains that ‘the independence movement that finally liberated Estonia from Soviet rule was achieved without violence’, suggesting that ‘there were many reasons for this having to do with the *historical character of the Estonian people* — for example, the importance of song in their repertoire of protest’.<sup>39</sup>

While these hugely significant events obviously deserve recognition and remembering, it should also be noted that the framing of cultures, from a pseudo-normative global-Northern perspective, as especially or abnormally peaceful, passive, spiritual or nonviolent can also function as a form of othering. In fact, violent resistance movements fought against the

---

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Stephen Jackson, ‘Out of Latvia on a Snowball’, *The Sunday Telegraph*, February 26 1995 (accessed online at Stephen Jackson website, <https://stephenjacksonmusic.wordpress.com/2015/06/16/the-music-of-peteris-vasks/>, 20.10.19).

<sup>38</sup> Guntis Šmidchens, ‘National Heroic Narratives in the Baltics as a Source for Nonviolent Political Action’, *Slavic Review* 66(3) 2007, pp. 484-508: 508.

<sup>39</sup> Todd May, *Nonviolent Resistance: A Philosophical Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), 4-5 (italics mine).

invading Soviet forces in all three countries in the twentieth century. The Forest Brothers were a group of armed fighters who lived in wooded areas in the three Baltic countries in the early years of Soviet occupation and fought a guerrilla war while waiting for a western intervention that never came.

Anatol Lieven describes the

eight years of partisan warfare against Soviet rule which followed the Soviet reconquest in 1944. The original resistance movement was made up of soldiers serving in the German forces, others who had collaborated with the Germans and had reason to fear the Soviet authorities, and of course patriotic Balts in general. In Lithuania, priests played a leading part. In due course, and as Soviet deportations gathered pace, the ranks of the resistance were swollen by others who preferred to die fighting than be deported to an unknown fate in Siberia, and by peasants facing collectivisation.<sup>40</sup>

The author notes that the 'resistance was at its fiercest in Lithuania, where the "Forest Brothers" had a general staff, printed newspapers, and ran training courses for officers', adding that although their Latvian and Estonian counterparts 'were no less brave', they were 'a good deal less organised'.<sup>41</sup> Although it is believed that 'the Soviet side formed provocateur units to kill people and then blame the partisans', it is also claimed that the Forest Brothers committed their own horrifying share of 'atrocities against local communists and auxiliaries and their families'.<sup>42</sup> A group of resistance partisans sexually assaulted the local Komsomol Secretary in the Lithuanian district of Joniškis<sup>43</sup> – an act of violence and degradation used as a tool of fear and control. These stories cast empirical doubt on the already implausible and essentialising suggestion that 'Baltic peoples' are or were intrinsically or naturally less violent than any other large regional demographic. Other non-peaceful (self-violent) acts of protest included the devastating public self-immolation of 19-year-old Romas Kalanta in May 1972. Aldis Purs relates:

Hippies did not scare the KGB, but student restlessness did. [...] Romas Kalanta set himself on fire in a public square in Kaunas. He died of his injuries and student unrest in Lithuania followed. Kalanta has been remembered as a political hero and martyr [...] Ultimately his own motives became irrelevant to those that rioted in the wake of his death for greater Lithuanian national rights.<sup>44</sup>

Contemporary Baltic citizens seemingly had as much capacity to do harm to themselves and others as any other human beings. The ultimate prioritisation of non-violent resistance is

---

<sup>40</sup> Anatol Lieven, *The Baltic Revolution: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and the Path to Independence* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997 [1993]), 88.

<sup>41</sup> Lieven, *The Baltic Revolution*, 89.

<sup>42</sup> Lieven, *The Baltic Revolution*, 90.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> Purs, *Baltic Facades*, 80.

more sensibly read as a pragmatic response to historical threats and actualities of lethal violence and deportation by a more powerful totalitarian state apparatus than as some curious or charming character trait. Beissinger explains that the practice of civil resistance took advantage of the compromised authority (and diluted powers of reprisal) of the newly part-liberalised state, following *glasnost*, in two ways. Firstly, it seized on the 'gap between the regime's pretence that it represented genuine public will and the reality of widespread antipathy to Soviet rule.'<sup>45</sup> Authorities in earlier periods had simply enforced unpopular policies through openly violent repression; loosening this grip on the populace entailed the risk of having to allow the validation of dissenting voices. In a similar vein, non-violent resistance 'exploited the new information milieu in which criticism of a once secret and infallible regime had become normalised.'<sup>46</sup> The resistance government's refusal to follow orders to disarm or to rule out violence if no other option was available<sup>47</sup> contribute to destabilising the myth of an inherent Baltic pacifism.

In other words, framing the Baltic States as intrinsically, culturally nonviolent is misleading. To do so in a way that makes them seem strange or special is a problematic discursive move. It may be impossible to measure just exactly how violent or otherwise the conduct of all protesters in these regions was by comparison with dissidents in other areas, but this is not the most important issue at hand. Stuart Hall asserts the value of focusing on discourse rather than on facts-versus-ideology, explaining that the latter is commonly understood in terms of

a distinction between true statements about the world (science) and false statements (ideology), and the belief that the facts about the world help us to decide between true and false statements. But Foucault argues that statements about the social, political or moral world are rarely ever simply true or false; and 'the facts' do not enable us to decide definitively about their truth or falsehood, partly because 'facts' can be construed in different ways. The very language we use to describe the so-called facts interferes in this process of finally deciding what is true, and what false. [...] Moreover, certain descriptions, even if they appear false to us, can be made 'true' because people act on them believing that they are true, and so their actions have real consequences. [...] The language (discourse) has real effects in practice: the description becomes 'true'. Foucault's use of 'discourse', then, is an attempt to sidestep what seems an unresolvable dilemma — deciding which social discourses are true or scientific, and which false or ideological.<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> Beissinger, 'People Power Tactics in the Baltic States', 240.

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*, 239.

<sup>48</sup> Stuart Hall, 'The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power', in *Formations of Modernity* (ed. Stuart Hall and Bram Gieben) (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), 292-293.

Tropes of stillness, ritual and prayer are rife in descriptions of popular Baltic art music. The image of so-called Baltic cultures as somehow more spiritual and peaceful — transcending the dull, polluted grind of modernity — is similarly linked to the strong part that has been played by folklore and natural imagery both in postcolonial discourses of identity-building and in the post-independence packaging of identity for tourist consumption. Following Hall and Foucault, some of these ideas can be viewed as neither true nor false, but as potentially constructing new and non-neutral layers of discursive reality as they are reproduced. The more exoticising representations seem to paint a picture of a mystical collective Other with a special, magical quality of difference, calling to mind Johannes Fabian's ideas about the implicit imperialist tendencies of anthropology, one of which concerns the tendency to confront otherness as though it does not exist in the same time as the observer;<sup>49</sup> this is a trait that can also be seen to characterise much writing about Pärt. Furthermore, and critically, many of these representations seem to portray a Baltic Other with a lack of agency. It is agency and pragmatism, as well as heterogeneity, which this study particularly seeks to reassert – not just on an individual, exceptionalist level, looking at figures like Pärt, but on a wider structural level, relating that agency to a radical, socially ambivalent project of national reinvention.

## **2.2 Brand Estonia**

This discussion remains focused for now on Estonia for the reason that, uniquely at first among the Baltic States and much of the rest of the world, this country underwent a concentrated programme of rebranding – alongside drastic economic reforms – in the years following independence. As such, this is an illustrative case from which to draw some of the key elements of wider-reaching constructions of a 'Baltic brand' with which actual heterogeneities, even within the fairly narrow field of contemporary Lithuanian art music, can clearly be contrasted. In addition to the role of external commentators, powerful groups internal to Estonia also endorsed a particular perception of their country for pragmatic reasons. In 2002 the Estonian government commissioned Interbrand, a British company, to produce 'Brand Estonia.'<sup>50</sup> Although many other nations subsequently commissioned new national brands, Estonia's was one of the earliest and most visible ('exemplary') cases.<sup>51</sup> The result was a style guide, explaining how to represent the country abroad in line with its new image. Key concepts included *fresh, radical, Nordic, resourceful, ecological* and

---

<sup>49</sup> Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 37.

<sup>50</sup> Jansen, 'Designer Nations', 123.

<sup>51</sup> Jansen, 'Designer Nations', 124.

*European*, and one of the central messages was ‘Nordic with a twist’.<sup>52</sup> At this time, Estonia, somewhat more rapidly than the other Baltic states, was undergoing radical structural shifts. The transfer in administration from Soviet to independent government would be a major event in any case, but even in the context of inevitable widespread change across the post-communist Baltics, Estonia seemed to lead the way in terms of the speed and depth of subsequent transformations.

Governments in the Baltic States were concerned about the international perception of their respective countries, as tourism and foreign investment had suddenly become a factor in their economic success. Brand Estonia was based in part on interviews with

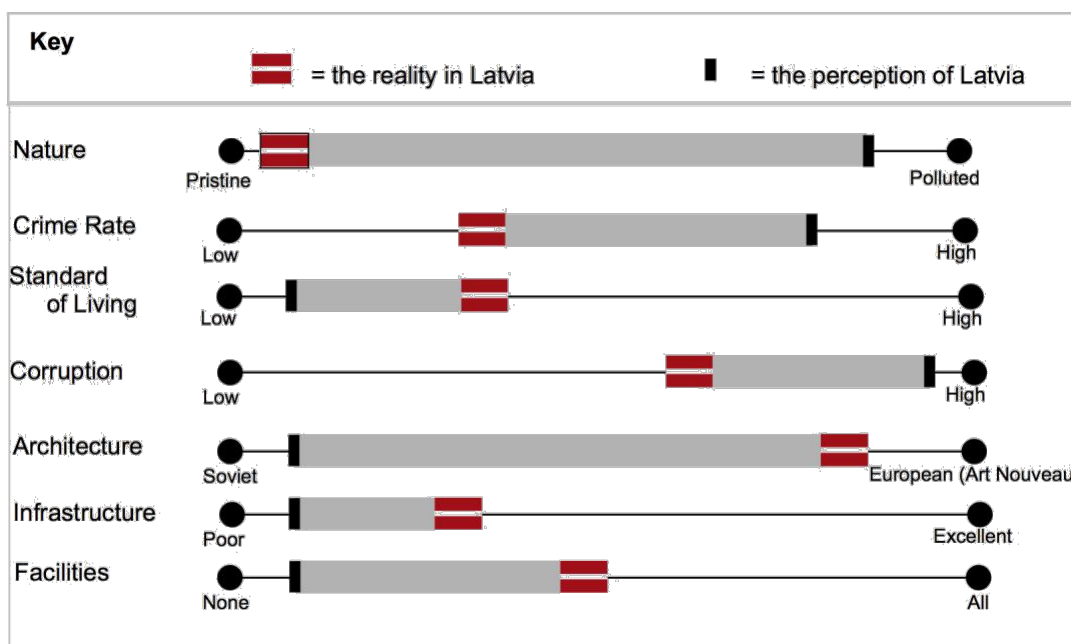


Figure 2.3 – image showing perceptions and reality about Latvia (Frasher et al.).

foreign businesspeople<sup>53</sup>; the Latvian government, who followed suit to consult on their own national brand soon after, also conducted interviews with foreign nationals.<sup>54</sup> The Latvian Brand report quotes a number of individuals’ more disheartening responses, from a tourism and investment perspective, to questions about their perceptions of Latvia in the early 2000s:

“Its just not on my radar...when I go to the Baltic sea...I don’t even think or have any perceptions about what lies on the other side.” – 34 year-old German consultant

“Do they have normal stuff in the shops?” – 29 year-old British MBA student

“The first thing that comes into my mind...nothing really...I’ve no idea.” – 31 year-old Italian marketer

<sup>52</sup> *Eesti Stiil*, 68.

<sup>53</sup> Jansen, ‘Designer nations’, 128; *Eesti Stiil*, 49-50.

<sup>54</sup> Spencer Frasher, Michael Hall, Jeremy Hildreth, and Mia Sorgi, Report: ‘A Brand for the Nation of Latvia’, Said Business School, University of Oxford, September 1 2003 (accessed online as published on Latvijas Institūts website, [http://li.lv/upload/Final\\_Pilot\\_Branding\\_Report.pdf](http://li.lv/upload/Final_Pilot_Branding_Report.pdf), 20.10.19), 17.

“It’s packed full of Nazi sympathisers....” – 27 year-old Jewish American

“I’m not entirely sure where that is.” – 37 year-old British lawyer

“Probably a bit grim...” – 40 year-old British academic <sup>55</sup>

Figure 2.3<sup>56</sup> shows some of the issues identified in the Latvian image study, including misconceptions about levels of crime, pollution and amount of Soviet architecture in Latvia. Figure 2.4<sup>57</sup> shows examples from a comparable survey of Estonian and international respondents for the development of Brand Estonia, which aimed for a more positive light by focusing on how Estonia could reflect and embody what foreign investors were looking for. While Latvia’s branding campaign research focused quite strongly on negative misconceptions, Estonia’s honed in on alleged qualities and characteristics of the nation and people that could be refashioned into attractive traits for foreign investors. The new government’s drastic right-wing economic policies<sup>58</sup> already laid the foundations for Estonia’s ambivalent arrival as a daring new contender with limited regulations and under-protected workers in a neoliberal global market. The brand seemed tailored to deepen this impression by attaching favourable associations to a redesigned image of what Estonia and Estonians essentially ‘were’. Themes and images highlighted for focus by the updated Brand Estonia design guide – which is available online,<sup>59</sup> as is the 2002 nation-branding handbook for Estonia, *Eesti stiil (Estonian style)*<sup>60</sup> – include sparsity, nature, water, plants, weather, boulders, bogs, clouds, blue, green, purple, fog, snow and ice. These images, like the euphonic paradigm in musical discourse, can be seen to correlate to the results shown in Figure 2.4, where respondents identified calm, peacefulness, seriousness, introversion and reflectiveness as fairly accurate characterisations of Estonian culture, while ‘dynamic’, ‘open’, extravagant’ and ‘mostly interested in fun’ scored lower. ‘Diversity’ is pinpointed as a significant message; the guide advises that this concept ‘conveys the layers of our culture – Estonia as a place in-between (east and west; nordic and rustic, etc)’. The guide recommends that users ‘Show contrasts: nature/technology, snow/soil, water/land, eastern europe/nordic, traditional/modern, digital/natural, typical/weird, boulders/fog’. One sample photo, of a foggy, rainy, grassy scene featuring a retreating, umbrella-wielding figure, is accompanied by instructive copy that explains ‘Sparsity means openness. It displays our pure nature and low population density, but also that there is lots of room to discover.’<sup>61</sup> The

---

<sup>55</sup> Frasher et al., ‘A Brand for the Nation of Latvia’, 7.

<sup>56</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> ‘Eesti Stiil — Estonia Style’. Enterprise Estonia (2002), 54; 56. (accessed online, <https://arhiiv.pixel.ee/eas/eesti-brand/2002-2008/2002-eesti-brand-welcome-to-estonia.pdf>, 18.10.19).

<sup>58</sup> Jansen, ‘Designer nations’, 127-128.

<sup>59</sup> ‘Design’, Brand Estonia (accessed online, <https://brand.estonia.ee/design/>, 20.10.19).

<sup>60</sup> ‘Eesti Stiil — Estonia Style’.

<sup>61</sup> ‘Imagery’, Brand Estonia (accessed online, <https://brand.estonia.ee/design/imagery/>, 20.10.19).

‘how-to’ notes add, ‘Nature shots should display fog and/or clouds if possible’<sup>62</sup> — another visual trope that has recurred in euphonic music marketing.

Table 3. *Perceptions of Estonia*

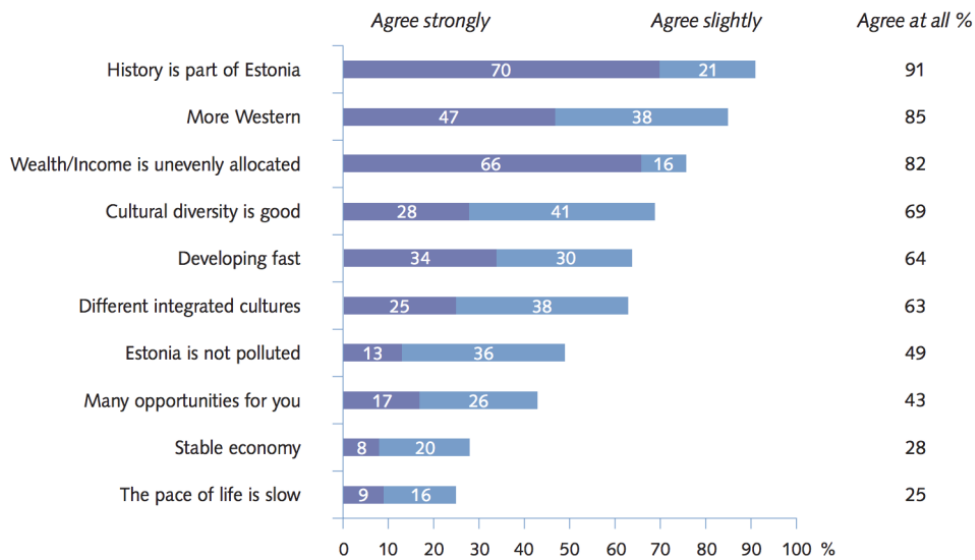


Table 5. *The ‘typical’ Estonian personality*

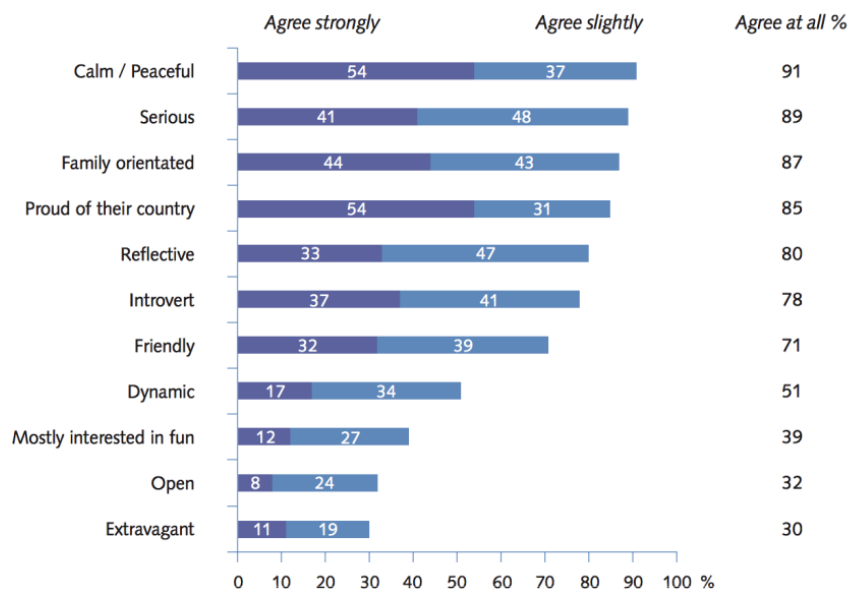


Figure 2.4 — Opinion polls regarding statements and characteristics about Estonia (*Eesti Stiil*).

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*



There are restrictive terms of use on the Brand Estonia imagery – which at the time of writing is still live and has since been updated. The terms state that the permitted and appropriate use of the images and design materials is ‘to introduce the Republic of Estonia, the Estonian society or different fields of the Estonian economy’, and, as such, they will not be reproduced here. However, by navigating directly to the website, it is possible to view various samples of the style specifications; various pages, such as ‘imagery’, ‘colours’, etc., can be found at <https://brand.estonia.ee/design/>. This carefully considered design reflects the business-like tone of one respondent quoted in Latvia’s national brand report (‘We can’t change that we’re a peasant culture. It may be tacky, but we have to play it up as best we can’<sup>63</sup>). For reasons of copyright, it is also not possible here to reproduce album covers of the many recordings of popular ‘Baltic art music’ that have circulated through classical markets since Arvo Pärt’s 1984 *Tabula Rasa* release with ECM. However, a search reveals that this album and the wider rhetoric of its interpretation has clearly played a part in influencing subsequent releases. Among covers that can be found on Google Images, common themes include water (droplets, lakes, or the ocean); grey, white, and blue palettes; symmetrically framed wooden posts (tree stumps or the remains of a dilapidated boat dock) in empty landscapes; vast, empty spaces with no humans or animals, or the distant silhouette of birds against a mountain, or a tiny rowboat on a vast lake; fog, clouds, aurora borealis; light and shadow in monochrome images; rocks, boulders, pebbles, shells, feathers, leaves, branches, and natural shapes. Many of the images described here come from covers for recordings of music by Pärt, but they also include releases by Tormis and a number of compilations (such as *Baltic Voices* volumes 1-3 and *Baltic and Beyond*). The aesthetic correlation between this body of album artwork and the photography prototypes and verbal style instructions that can be viewed on Brand Estonia’s ‘imagery’ page is marked.

The stereotypical picture of Soviet iconography or aesthetics is already vivid from its many ‘ironic’ recyclings in popular culture, and provides a strong contrast with the images described above. One, typically, has sharp lines, regular shapes, and jagged edges; the other has soft lines, irregular shapes, and smooth, blurry, foggy textures. One is, stereotypically, bright red, while the other is both more muted and lower contrast, and favours cooler, more ‘natural’ colours. Various contrasts between the visual/stylistic, conceptual, and more implicit or extrapolated associations of these loose signifying clusters are suggested below:

---

<sup>63</sup> Frasher et al., ‘A Brand for the Nation of Latvia’, 8.

Digital (post-industrial)	Industrial
'Nature' / landscapes / weather	Humans
Wild / rural	Urban / industrial-agricultural
'Nordic' / 'western'	'Slavic' / 'Eastern'
Blue	Red
Cold / grey / muted tones	Warm / bold / saturated tones
Round / 'natural' shapes	Angular / abstract shapes
Soft / blurred / translucent textures	Solid / sharp / block textures
Postmodern	Modernist
Sparse	Busy
Neoliberal	Authoritarian communist

In the course of confronting the aesthetic priorities that characterise Brand Estonia and the marketing conventions of euphonic music, in line with Hall and Foucault's ideas about the active, productive nature of discourse, this study aims to interrogate the different realities that are constructed through them rather than what they might literally mean. Repeated implications, as outlined previously, of a sort of special quality of euphonic Baltic music from around the early 2000s raise the question of what is excluded from this highly coherent picture. Naturally, the aesthetic trends of one period may be seen as a reaction to and rejection of what came before, especially if there is any sense that what came before was imposed. What is striking in this case is the extent and coherence of the visual messaging compared with other examples, and the fact that so many writers reproduced these projected images as a kind of reality.

The idea of systematic exclusion as a fundamental cornerstone of image-formation is evocative of Marina Frolova-Walker's deconstruction of some forms of Russian romantic nationalist composition, in which she highlights the tactic of a *via negativa* or negative strategy.<sup>64</sup> The author explains that some of these composers and theorists explicitly acknowledged that the way to write 'Russian music' was not to attempt to identify what that might actually sound like – probably an impossible task – but instead to consciously eschew any compositional features and patterns that seemed too stereotypical of any other established national style.<sup>65</sup> By this logic, emphatic or exaggerated identity constructions are not just characterised by selective exclusion, but thoroughly reliant on it. I use the term hauntology to characterise this phenomenon, because it emphasises the significance or power of the absent element. Mark Fisher says that hauntology 'can be thought of as

---

<sup>64</sup> Marina Frolova-Walker, "National in Form, Socialist in Content": Musical Nation-Building in the Soviet Republics', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 51/2 (1998), pp. 331-371: 349-50.

<sup>65</sup> Frolova-Walker, 'National in Form, Socialist in Content', 344.

fundamentally about forces which act at a distance—that which [...] insists (has causal effects) without (physically) existing'.<sup>66</sup> For Colin Davis, hauntology '...supplants its near-homonym ontology, replacing the priority of being and presence with the figure of the ghost as that which is neither present nor absent, neither dead nor alive'.<sup>67</sup> According to Derrida, for whom exclusion is a necessary and fundamental ingredient of all meaning, 'to haunt does not mean to be present, and it is necessary to introduce haunting into the very construction of a concept'.<sup>68</sup> The absences in Brand Estonia can be framed differently than Soviet or Baltic post-communist cultures have often been: not in terms of a lack or of something found wanting (be it 'vodka',<sup>69</sup> 'guile' or 'the qualities of a mind in dialogue with itself'<sup>70</sup>), but of something decidedly strategic. Frolova-Walker's assessment of the Russian nationalist technique is that it was 'very prosaic'<sup>71</sup> – and this is something that seems important to emphasise, in light of the tendency to frame some of the most widely visible Baltic art music as magical, otherworldly, and so on, in fundamentally othering ways. As Frolova-Walker observes, 'the composer is not [...] the conduit for the ineffable groanings of the Russian soul, but merely a practical musician who has learned the trick of avoiding certain turns of phrase in order to create a distinctive stylistic ambience'.<sup>72</sup>

Veljo Tormis, an Estonian composer whose treatment of the monophonic *regilaul* has been received as an oeuvre of incredible cultural importance, once argued that these folk songs could not be harmonised<sup>73</sup> – at least, not according to western common-practice ideas about harmony. There may be echoes in this statement of the kinds of tactical avoidance prescribed above. However, I am not so interested in ascertaining whether or not Tormis, Pärt, or any other successful and popular Baltic art music composer used a '*via negativa*' approach as consciously as Rimsky-Korsakov. The more salient point is the reluctance or inability of some writers, evident in some previously-explored examples of criticism, to accept that these composers were also practical musicians who learned tricks in order to create a distinctive stylistic ambience. This, of course, does not necessarily preclude such artists from having a profound connection with and concern for the preservation of their national culture or religion. However, it should be recognised that when the suggestion that an artist displays a special kind of strange, irrational, intuitive, 'natural' genius is prioritised over the assumption that, first and foremost, they have studied, they are skilled, and they have laboured to create effective and distinctive pieces of music that relate meaningfully to their

---

<sup>66</sup> Mark Fisher, 'What is Hauntology?', *Film Quarterly*, 66(1) 2012, pp. 16-24: 20.

<sup>67</sup> Colin Davis, 'Hauntology, spectres and phantoms', *French Studies*, 59(3) 2005, pp. 373-379: 373.

<sup>68</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, (transl. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 2006 [1993]): 202.

<sup>69</sup> Abraham, 12.

<sup>70</sup> Jackson, 'Out of Latvia on a snowball'.

<sup>71</sup> Frolova-Walker, 'National in Form', 344.

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> Martin Anderson and Veljo Tormis, "'We Should Know Who We Are": Veljo Tormis in Conversation', *TEMPO*, New Series, no. 211 (2000) pp.24-27: 26.

cultural context, some insidious representational strategies may be at work. Furthermore, the assertion that a subject is both more (magically intuitive) and less (practically rational) than an alleged norm has precedents in oppressive and power-loaded relationships. Some commentators perceived Brand Estonia as a cynical project;<sup>74</sup> in any case, it is certainly not evidence of the wide-eyed naïvety imposed on people from Baltic countries in earlier-discussed sources. In a similar vein, an excessive focus in reception on a composer's intuition or identity often equals a failure to acknowledge the skill, commitment, opportunities, training, experience, labour, and repeated trial-and-error experimentation that can also be crucial to producing successful and meaningful music.

What seems to emerge overall from earlier comparisons is a relatively more unified, streamlined and coherent aesthetic 'message' in many more visible cultural exports of the northernmost Baltic country, seemingly correlating with Estonia's rather faster and more radical post-socialist reforms. There are also links between Brand Estonia's aesthetics, Kaplinski's ethos of non-intervention ('attentive inaction'), and 'deep ecology' – a *laissez-faire* environmental philosophy of 'checks and balances'. The social ecologist Murray Bookchin sees deep ecology as an implicitly neoliberal ideology, because it is founded on the baseline assumption that inequalities are a part of nature<sup>75</sup> – a necessary part, in fact, of a 'self-organising' system, which is another favourite concept of Kaplinski's<sup>76</sup> – and that 'natural' imbalances shouldn't be interfered with. This is relevant because, at the time of Brand Estonia's conception and release, figures within the Estonian government were implementing drastic right-wing economic policies – what then-Prime Minister Mart Laar described as 'shock therapy'<sup>77</sup> – in the name of economic recovery. At this time, as Sue Jansen explains:

Estonia created and ratified a new constitution and legal system, which reduced the role of the state in the economy; the government streamlined privatisation, introducing a stable national currency that was soon made an equivalent of the Deutschmark, eliminating price controls, selling off state properties, underwriting business loans in lieu of unemployment benefits, offering retraining programs especially in the information technology sector, introducing a flat tax with no corporate tax, and eliminating tariffs.<sup>78</sup>

The new socioeconomic order in post-independence Estonia seemed to favour entrepreneurialism, and encouraged cheap labour and foreign investment. Even within a

---

<sup>74</sup> Jansen, 'Designer nations', 122; 136.

<sup>75</sup> Murray Bookchin, 'Social Ecology versus Deep Ecology: A Challenge for the Ecology Movement'. Originally published in *Green Perspectives: Newsletter of the Green Program Project*, 1987. (accessed online, [http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/ANARCHIST\\_ARCHIVES/bookchin/socecovdeepeco.html](http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/ANARCHIST_ARCHIVES/bookchin/socecovdeepeco.html), 20.10.19).

<sup>76</sup> Salumets, *Unforced Flourishing*, 24.

<sup>77</sup> Jansen, 'Designer nations', 127.

<sup>78</sup> Jansen, 'Designer nations', 127-8.

context where all three ‘Baltic Tiger’<sup>79</sup> economies were undergoing radical and hugely important changes, Estonia appears to have stood out by comparison, as some key steps tended to happen slightly earlier there, and with marginally less internal political resistance than for example, in Lithuania. The latter state had more successfully built up a national ruling elite of native Lithuanian communists during Soviet occupation,<sup>80</sup> and tolerated comparatively stronger residues of left-wing politics after independence than the Estonian government under Laar, who ‘was adamant in his rejection of any socialist legacy’.<sup>81</sup>

Without entertaining the essentialist idea that this nation had some inherent quality that would explain the quicker rate and more focused direction of change, there are more pragmatic, material reasons why powerful groups in Estonia may have been more inclined or able to make these choices. Without wanting to understate the seriousness of the experiences of any one group or region, it is relevant that, during Soviet occupation, a comparatively higher number of ethnic Russian communists emigrated to Estonia and Latvia than to Lithuania, and a higher proportion of positions of power in the latter country remained in the hands of Lithuanian people.<sup>82</sup> The culturally destructive programmes of linguistic and institutional Russification might therefore be seen to have had a comparatively more widespread or extensive reach in the more northerly States. It may be suggested that the impact of these numbers of ethnic Russian émigrés would make the immediate and radical transformation and replacement of Soviet-era institutions and structures seem relatively more urgent for cultural and linguistic reassertion in Estonia, whereas Lithuanian institutions changed slightly more slowly – and it must be emphasised here that this is meant specifically in terms of a comparison with Estonia – seeing a greater degree of heterogeneity and resistance. Bohle and Greskovits write that, in contrast to the case in Lithuania, ‘Estonian and Latvian power holders have [...] pursued a nationalising project to reverse the effects of the massive influx of Russian speakers in Soviet times’.<sup>83</sup>

### **2.3 Lithuanian art music: alternative paradigms**

It is critical to recognise that all three Baltic countries had fundamentally similar experiences in the sense that they all endured Soviet occupation and subsequently strove to rebuild their nations after regaining independence. But it may be that certain geographical differences, such as Estonia’s quite large shared border with mainland Russia, while Lithuania has no

---

<sup>79</sup> Michał Kowalczyk, ‘Are Baltic States still Baltic Tigers?’, *Obserwator Finansowy*, July 31 2017 (accessed online, <https://financialobserver.eu/baltics/are-baltic-states-still-baltic-tigers/>, 20.10.19).

<sup>80</sup> Dorothee Bohle and Béla Greskovits, *Capitalist Diversity on Europe’s Periphery* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University, 2012), 99.

<sup>81</sup> Bohle and Greskovits, *Capitalist Diversity*, 124.

<sup>82</sup> Bohle and Greskovits, *Capitalist Diversity*, 98-99.

<sup>83</sup> Bohle and Greskovits, *Capitalist Diversity*, 97.

border with the mainland – and a number of other factors relating to geography and proximity which contributed to Estonia being viewed as a desirable location for Foreign Direct Investment<sup>84</sup> – were involved in the formation of certain political, cultural and economic contrasts, even between countries that were all engaged in a very similar process of moving forward that was of course of equally critical importance everywhere. It is possible that these differences are at the root of the gap between Estonia's highly concentrated re-branding programme and economic reforms, and the comparatively more heterogeneous processes apparent in Lithuania.<sup>85</sup> In any case, the emphasis apparently placed on a stylistic palette which seems almost to represent the inverse of modernism in visible representations of Estonian or more northern Baltic art music may be more helpfully understood in terms of the transmutation of once-liberatory discourses into political and cultural commodities than essentialist notions of identity. As explored above, these latter ideas underpinned much of the rhetoric deployed by some Anglo-American music-writers who tended to pay less attention to differences between individual post-Soviet nations, at least in the late '90s and early 2000s.

In terms of music and composers discussed, so far there has been more of a focus on Estonia (and to a lesser extent Latvia), due to evidence of explicit efforts to link particular kinds of concepts to the outward-facing image of the more northerly region. As would be expected, Lithuania also has plenty of examples of euphonic minimal music that could be related to the ideas discussed so far. In 'What is the Lithuanian Brand of Minimalism?', Šarunas Nakas writes

There were many musical, psychological, and social reasons determining what was then referred to as the beginning of 'non-conflicting' and 'primitivist' music. These were the times of the disco rage, and composers would admit that they heard fresher things in pop music, than they did on the inert academic stage. The most important, however, was the fact that avant-garde music was excessively cosmopolitan, and had difficulty transmitting relevant artistic messages in an occupied country — not lacking in literature and art, which had mastered the Aesopian language. Perhaps that is why, from its very beginning, minimalism naturally connected with the principal idea of the 20th-century Lithuanian music — which declared the necessity of linking the modern musical language with the features of folk music.<sup>86</sup>

A seminal creator of this latter type of work in Lithuania is Bronius Kutavičius (b.1932), of whom Inga Jankauskienė observed 'his oratorios have enjoyed popularity in Lithuania

---

<sup>84</sup> Evelin Kaarma, 'Estonia as a Target Country for Foreign Direct Investment: Attractive Aspects for Investors', Bachelor Thesis, Tallinn University of Technology (2017), 25; 31.

<sup>85</sup> Bohle and Greskovits, 98-119.

<sup>86</sup> Šarunas Nakas, 'What is the Lithuanian Brand of Minimalism?', *Lithuanian Music Link no. 8*, 2004, Lithuanian Music Information Centre website (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-8-april-september-2004/what-is-the-lithuanian-brand-of-minimalism/>, 21.10.19).

among those who do not like modern contemporary music at all.<sup>87</sup> Vykintas Baltakas, who was briefly taught by Kutavičius, spoke about the composer's role in the mass popularity of folk music in the years leading up to Lithuania's second liberation:

...he is much more direct, and his music was very popular, because suddenly it came together with all these political changes and the political movement of, you know, they had this 'Singing Revolution'. And his music is very much related to all this 'ethno' music, et cetera. And somehow, we'd never had contemporary music being so popular as in these times. Everybody knew his name - it was sort of like Verdi in the Italian revolution. And he is very... intriguing. He doesn't know much, he doesn't read much, he doesn't speak many different languages, so... he's kind of like a very simple man, actually.<sup>88</sup>

Kutavičius, whose work evinces a strong fixation with the ancient pagan history of Lithuania and has had a profound effect on ensuing musical developments, first came to prominence in the 1970s.<sup>89</sup>

Marina Lobanova writes that 'heightened attention to space-time forms is found in those composers who decided to recreate ritual forms', identifying as an archetypal example Kutavičius's 1978 oratorio *The Last Pagan Rites*, with the observation that it 'combines a subtle treatment of the statics, laconism and simplicity of what is essentially folkloric material with innovatory composition.'<sup>90</sup> Inga Jankauskienė also notes the work's 'ritual-like character', commenting on its emergence during communist rule in terms that strongly echo various discursive framings of Pärt and Tormis. The author explains that the work is particularly famous in Kutavičius's home country 'because [it was] something of a manifesto or declaration of independence for the Lithuanian people', adding characteristically that '[t]hrough the [oratorio] contained no political words, people understood what the composer wanted to say.'<sup>91</sup> The text itself recalls the conceptual concerns of work like Veljo Tormis's *regilaul* settings and collaborations with Jaan Kaplinski. Kutavičius's chamber oratorio uses words by contemporary Lithuanian writer Sigitas Geda, whose lyrics in the middle section express common thematic preoccupations for folk-inspired euphonic styles (seasons, nature, agriculture, pre-Christian religion):

*Don't cut the green stem of the green oat of yesterday of the summer green.*

---

<sup>87</sup> Inga Jankauskienė, 'The role of text in meaning formation', in *Musical Semiotics in Growth*, ed. Eero Tarasti, Paul Forsell, Richard Littlefield (Imatra and Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 499.

<sup>88</sup> Interview with Vykintas Baltakas, Brussels, December 2017.

<sup>89</sup> 'Bronius Kutavičius', Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/composers/kutavicius/#bio>, 21.10.19).

<sup>90</sup> Marina Lobanova, *Musical Style and Genre: History and Modernity*, transl. Kate Cook, Amsterdam (OPA: Harwood Academic Publishers, 2000), 93.

<sup>91</sup> Jankauskienė, 'The role of text', 499.

*Don't break the green stem of the green oat, the green grasshopper of the green God.*<sup>92</sup>

Born two years later than Tormis, the preoccupations of Kutavičius's output appear similar in many ways to those of his Estonian contemporary. Although there is frequently a strong emphasis on the potentially subversive, national-cultural significance of these euphonic, folk-inspired or spiritual minimalist styles, there is a fundamental ambivalence inherent in the fact that, structurally if not culturally speaking, euphonic Baltic minimalism could be understood as a Soviet product. Created in a Soviet context by composers often educated in Russian/Soviet institutions by Russian/Soviet educators, and manifested in works commissioned, received and shaped by Soviet funding bodies, audiences, panels and critics, there is (at least) a two-fold nature to the folk-euphonic paradigm. This is in keeping with the focus on a 'third space', as discussed by Schmelz and others — a conceptual, half-private mode of thinking which was neither for nor against the regime and might therefore quite explicitly produce cultural artefacts that could be interpreted as either. This potential ambiguity on the part of composer-subjects mirrors a great capacity for vagueness and indirect allusion in wider official Soviet discourse that Andrejs Veisbergs has variously described, with regard to the Latvian context, as a penchant for 'euphemisms' (the 'main concentration' of which appeared in the political sphere), a characteristically 'Aesopian language' and the deployment of 'ingenious periphrasis'.<sup>93</sup>

Although the 'national "grand narrative"' of Lithuanian minimalism,<sup>94</sup> and of much Baltic classical music in general, is considerably influential, many have disputed its universalising influence. Frolova-Walker's work on Socialist Realism explores the complexities of the relationship with 'national music' and nation building in the USSR, wherein rules often seemed to bend in line with what was politically convenient at a given moment; at some points the celebration of tropes of national specificity in the satellite countries was frowned upon unless they could also be framed as 'revolutionary', while in others it was encouraged.<sup>95</sup> Explicitly 'national' features are not the only ideologically fluid aspect of some Soviet era classics upheld today as hugely culturally significant for occupied satellite countries. For example, aspects of Tormis' work that may be interpreted as radically culturally empowering, even subversive, can also be read as conforming quite neatly to Soviet ideals.<sup>96</sup> Schmelz details the trajectory of experimentation leading up to Pärt's turn to his tintinnabuli style; the composer (eventually, following a long break) developed his new

---

<sup>92</sup> Jankauskienė, 'The role of text', 501.

<sup>93</sup> Andrejs Veisbergs, 'Nazi and Soviet Dysphemism and Euphemism in Latvian', in *Baltic Postcolonialism*, 155.

<sup>94</sup> Pakarklytė, 'Lithuanian Spleen', 29.

<sup>95</sup> Marina Frolova-Walker, 'National in Form, Socialist in Content', 333

<sup>96</sup> Claire McGinn, 'The "bland invention" of Veljo Tormis: notions of complicity and resistance in art music of the ESSR', *Music, Individuals and Contexts: Dialectical Interactions* (conference proceedings), ed. Nadia Amendola, Alessandro and Cosentino Giacomo Sciommeri (Rome: Società Editrice di Musicologia, 2019), pp. 349-358.



aesthetic after having pushed quite hard in a more modernist direction and being pushed back against by critics.<sup>97</sup> It is possible to view this ultimately genre-defining shift as a response to increasingly damning critical reactions to his more complex and dissonant experiments, perhaps further supporting the ambivalent idea that Baltic post-minimalism can be understood as a Soviet product. Even more directly, Asta Pakarklytė has interpreted Baltic minimalist styles eulogised in national terms as being perhaps rather more rooted in late Soviet cultural life than might be widely acknowledged. Pakarklytė's article 'Black-and-white Post-minimalism: Or, the Lithuanian Spleen' draws on the influential idea, presented in Robert Fink's *Repeating Ourselves*, that mainstream U.S.-associated minimal music styles reflected the banality and the simultaneously unfulfilling and self-perpetuating cycles of repetition of late capitalist consumer culture. Pakarklytė suggests that, rather than simply being a covert North American import, Lithuanian post-minimalism might have its own distinct roots in a peculiarly Soviet experience of cultural banality and sameness:

the late Brezhnevian stagnation, hunger for consumption and uniformity of production, poor supply and lack of diversity, grim everydayness and melancholic subsistence. Grey apartment blocks, cable radio and rusting garages, the same domestic appliances in every home (VEF, Snaigė, Audra), nearly identical Zhiguli cars, weekdays seasoned with *tefteli* and "Sprat in tomato sauce"-type preserves, secondary school uniforms and ubiquitous bas-relief heads of Lenin, invariable ideological "advertisements" on initial pages of any kind of press — all that could develop into a kind of analogue of the "culture of repetition," yet of an entirely different nature.<sup>98</sup>

Notwithstanding these various articulations of greater complexity or even equivocality in the understanding of folk-inspired, spiritually-inflected, euphonic or post-minimalist styles from the Baltic States, the basic template of interpretation tends to stick to the same kinds of trends described earlier. As above, this is in large part because the musics in question may strongly conform to, and are often accompanied by verbal confirmation of, a certain set of expectations. However, as stated previously, this study is concerned not with arguing that these descriptions are untrue, but with the dual task of identifying significant trends that they overlook or obscure, and with assessing the at times all-too-coherent universal picture that they implicitly paint and the additional representational agendas this could be seen to serve.

Attending 'Baltic Voices', a conference and festival of contemporary music in Seattle in 2004, Taruskin observed what he perceived as a marked trend towards what might have been described elsewhere as euphonicism:

---

<sup>97</sup> Schmelz, *Such Freedom*, 230-232.

<sup>98</sup> Asta Pakarklytė, 'Black-and-white Post-minimalism: or, the Lithuanian Spleen', *Lithuanian Music in Context vol. 2: Landscapes of Minimalism* (Vilnius: Lithuanian Music Information Centre, 2011), 32-33.

[Onutė] Narbutaitė is a great composer. [...] Yet however individual, imaginative and skilled, her musical mind is subject to the same influences as the minds of her musical contemporaries, and her work conformed in its stylistic evolution to the same norm. No one attending [...] could miss the fact that, virtually without exception, the music of every Baltic composer – young or old, Slavic or Scandinavian, male or female, left or right, post-Soviet or pre-NATO – followed the same trajectory: the more recent the work, the more consonant (or to put it more contentiously, the less dissonant). Not “tonal.” Not “Romantic.” Not “retro.” Consonant.<sup>99</sup>

Taruskin’s comment is another, if more measured, version of the commonly recurring descriptions of contemporary Baltic classical music outlined in this Chapter. Whether or not it was a fully accurate representation of the work showcased at the event in question, the function of Taruskin’s account was to weave a particular narrative about Baltic contemporary art music (of some sort of culturally-conditioned ‘need’<sup>100</sup> for greater consonance), presumably to cater for art music fans who were not overly familiar with the scene. The wider, emphatically constructed picture of Estonian-ness or pan-Baltic identity that emerges from the discourses discussed above is reliant on selective exclusion for its heightened effect, regardless of its political implications in a given setting. However, there is a great deal more heterogeneity in the historical and present art music scenes of the Baltic States than might be assumed based on recurring discursive trends; this thesis explores a range of contrasting modernist, constructivist, dissonant, and quite self-consciously un-euphonic musics by Lithuanian composers. The prototypical impression of a ‘Baltic’ contemporary classical style is not representative of the Lithuanian contemporary art music scene, and it also overlaps strongly with Estonian late-twentieth-century discourses of cultural identity and Estonian post-independence marketing strategies (though this does not mean that it is representative of the Estonian or Latvian contemporary music scenes either).

In the Estonian context, the correlation between political developments and the euphonic brand is particularly evident, while in Lithuania the relationship is somewhat more disjointed. The recurrent tropes that make up the dominant Baltic art music paradigm are conceptually consistent with various important, internally-constructed ideas about Estonian cultural identity. They also resurface in the materials of Brand Estonia, a campaign launched in tandem with Laar’s extreme *laissez-faire* economic reforms (which in turn share some ideological fingerprints with the non-interventionist philosophy espoused by Kaplinski). The cluster of ideas surrounding the most visible euphonic styles in music writing are also consistent with potentially othering stereotypes about Estonian identity (narratives of passivity, victimhood and innate spirituality). Modern Lithuanian art music does provide

---

<sup>99</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> *ibid.*

examples which can be seen as aligned with this heavily constructed euphonic template. However, a key argument of this thesis is that the seemingly greater (or at least more visible) heterogeneity and modernist tendencies in contemporary Lithuanian classical music discourse may also be mapped onto heterogeneities in a number of other areas. These include the political landscape post-independence (in turn influenced by other geopolitical factors such as extent of Russian immigration during occupation); certain personalities that held sway in art music circles during the Soviet period; cultural memory of the ancient imperial history of Lithuania; and the particular materials picked up by folk revival movements.

In the most prominent international constructions of a Baltic art music canon, dissonant, formalist, modernist styles are often conspicuously absent, excluded in favour of an over-representation of euphonic styles that have been framed as their rhetorical and ideological opposite. However, Lithuanian art music has seen many influential examples of the former, and I argue that this greater heterogeneity stems from a variety of, often political, factors. Having established a highly contrasting backdrop, the following Chapter will turn to an exploration of modernist composers in inter-war and mid-century Lithuania, and their various modes and methods for mediating formalism and atonality in their context, with a particular focus on the 'enthusiastic' and outspoken modernist Osvaldas Balakauskas.

### 3. 'Difficult music': Osvaldas Balakauskas and Soviet-era modernisms

*[Interviewer]: Would you say you write difficult music in general?*

*[Balakauskas]: Yes, yes. It's not my purpose to write difficult music. But... it's my fate.<sup>1</sup>*

Gundega Šmite's overview of the modern history of Baltic music, shown in Figure 3.1,<sup>2</sup> traces familiar outlines, distinguishing between the 'isolation' and 'denial of modernism' often attributed to Soviet years and the greater freedom typically attributed to the period after the USSR. Although this may broadly apply to all the Baltic States, there remains a difference between the degrees of modernist art that have been preserved in the internationally visible cultural canons of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania today. Asta Pakarklytė maintains that the 'rumour of the blind "iron curtain"' blocking direct influence on musicians in Soviet republics from (for example) the US wholesale, has been swallowed and reproduced only by 'some credulous Anglo-American critics'.<sup>3</sup> Still, this is not to deny that the obstacles faced by musicians in the Soviet-ruled Baltic states and in the political west were somewhat different. Gražina Daunoravičienė writes of Lithuanian modernism's 'short-lived flowering' and subsequent exile in the twentieth century;<sup>4</sup> this Chapter will touch on the impact and approaches of a number of Lithuanian modernist composers, both 'uncompromising' figures who left the country and others who stayed and worked around the particular challenges of their context. However, the main focus will be Osvaldas Balakauskas (b. 1937), who did not leave Lithuania except to study in Kiev, did not openly disavow abstract formalism, complexity, constructivism or dissonance, barely engaged with popular 'folk' inspirations and was nevertheless a highly successful and influential artist who is numbered among Lithuanian art music's 'living classics'. As such, he is frequently highlighted as an unusual and distinctive figure.

This Chapter will establish that there were prominent ('moderate') modernist trends in twentieth-century Lithuanian art music, and that Balakauskas can be seen both as conspicuously declining to adopt some of the most common mediating strategies seemingly preferred to make modernist leanings more widely palatable, and as occupying a stylistic and rhetorical in-between place, developing his own theoretical justifications for

---

<sup>1</sup> W.C. Bamberger, 'Fate and Osvaldas Balakauskas and Fate', *Of Fret Rattle & Underwater Skylabs* (Maryland: Wildside Press, 2013), 143.

<sup>2</sup> Slides shared by the composer via email, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Asta Pakarklytė. 'Black-and-white Post-minimalism, or the Lithuanian Spleen', 31-2.

<sup>4</sup> Gražina Daunoravičienė, 'Exiled modernism: Lithuanian Music Through the Second World War', in *Baltic Musics/Baltic Musicologies: The Landscape since 1991* (ed. Kevin C. Karnes and Joachim Braun) (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 111-134: 122.



Figure 3.1 - Gundega Šmite's periodisation of Baltic art music history from a lecture on the subject.

his approaches but avoiding the popular and politically malleable routes of folklore and national-cultural tropes altogether. Balakauskas is often framed as a notably non-conformist voice, but it is also the case that some aspects of his work have been more moderate or traditional than descriptions of his music might imply. Without any suggestion that one stance would be of greater value or authenticity than another, it is illuminating to explore the strategies and tendencies of Balakauskas's music in light of contrasting, but equally potentially exaggerated, claims that he was hugely radical and/or that his context was hugely artistically repressive and limiting. It is true that Balakauskas stands out in the landscape of Lithuanian art music, not least due to the length of his career and his personal influence as a thinker and teacher, but his modernism is also, of course, unavoidably shaped by its context. Some writers have answered the question of 'how he was able to be understood at all'<sup>5</sup> during, for instance, the more restricting Brezhnev regime, by highlighting Balakauskas's experience in politics and emphasising his personal skills in diplomacy. I will explore how elements of both his 1980s compositional treatise *Dodekatonika* (also previously summarised in English by Daunoravičienė, 2018<sup>6</sup>) and his music are simultaneously distinctive and strikingly modernist in the context of mid-to-late-twentieth-century Lithuanian art music, but at the same time can be read as working around, rather than against, prevailing anti-formalist attitudes and a general ambivalence towards modernism. This Chapter will combine musical analysis of pieces from across Balakauskas'

<sup>5</sup> As rhetorically posed by fellow composer Vyckintas Baltakas (interview with Claire McGinn, Brussels, 2017).

<sup>6</sup> Gražina Daunoravičienė, 'Compositional System of Osvaldas Balakauskas: An Attempt to Restore the Theoretical Discourse', *Musical Annual* 54/2 (2018), pp. 45-95.

career with an exploration of the *Dodekatonika* treatise which is primarily discursive — going beyond such fundamental musical matters as its explicit basis in structures derived from consonant fifths to consider the ideological pliability of its rhetoric.

Many of Balakauskas's works provide illustrative examples of a broad emergent style, or at least a combination of characteristics, that recurs among and constitutes a conceptual and thematic affinity between a large proportion of the pieces discussed throughout this thesis: a tendency towards (in this case frequently octatonic) paratonality, a lattice-based orientation, and penchant for repetitiveness and/or non-linearity. These traits are apparent in his approach to form (which, Vykintas Baltakas [Chapter 6] says, 'doesn't want to go anywhere'<sup>7</sup>); his exacting rhythmic patterns, and a belief in the primacy of (of course, culturally- and historically-contingent) 'foundations' like twelve-tone melody and harmony. Balakauskas's interests in composers like Bach and Schoenberg further evince the centrality of equal-tempered harmonic relationships and counterpoint. His music, like Mažulis's, does not obscure an underlying grid axiom, and is characterised by distinct lines, succinct attacks and releases and sharp, precisely-cut blocks. The latter image mirrors Ben Lunn's description of Balakauskas's former student Justina Repečkaitė's (Chapter 7) work,<sup>8</sup> but a striking difference in effect is apparent – in large part owing to Balakauskas's explicit position that timbral effects are like 'wallpaper'<sup>9</sup> that can only be layered over the bones of a sound rhythmic, harmonic and melodic foundation (while for Repečkaitė, subsequent studies in France led her closer to the idea that timbre is inseparable from 'fundamental' parameters like harmony<sup>10</sup>).

Previous Chapters gave a brief overview of some key names in modernist-leaning music in twentieth-century Estonia and Latvia. Šarunas Nakas (in what Pakarklytė describes as an 'invariably caustic manner') has argued that there have historically never been any 'major changes' in Lithuanian art music, and Vita Gruodytė asserts, perhaps somewhat rhetorically, that there has been 'no modernism, or progress (when the new replaces the old), in Lithuanian music at all'.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, compositional trends associated with European musical modernism, such as serialism, were openly experimented with in the twentieth century; renowned historical composers Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis (1875-1911, also a symbolist painter and hugely important national figure) and Julius Juzeliūnas (1916-2001) are associated with proto-modernism,<sup>12</sup> although the majority of their works are

---

<sup>7</sup> Vykintas Baltakas interview (conducted by Claire McGinn, Brussels, December 2017).

<sup>8</sup> Ben Lunn, 'Repečkaitė's profile', Repečkaitė website.

<sup>9</sup> Albertas Navickas interview (conducted by Claire McGinn, via phone, April 2020).

<sup>10</sup> Justina Repečkaitė interview (conducted by Claire McGinn, via email, February 2019).

<sup>11</sup> Šarunas Nakas, 'Nors klimatas šyla, natos rašomos toliau', 2001, and Vita Gruodytė, 'Nauja muzika, senos tradicijos', 2005, as quoted in Asta Pakarklytė, 'Black-and-white Post-minimalism', 30.

<sup>12</sup> Ben Lunn, 'Juzeliūnas, the seed of a modern Lithuanian music', Masters thesis, Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre (Vilnius, 2017); Daunoravičienė, 'Exiled Modernism', 118.

highly consonant and romantic- and/or folk-nationalist-leaning; and modernism was sufficiently established earlier in the twentieth century that Krzysztof Droba was able to speak of an emergent Lithuanian 'neomodernism' in the mid-1980s.<sup>13</sup> Lithuania saw a significant 'flowering' of experimentation with approaches such as microtonal writing in the interwar period.

### **3.1 Exiled and mediated modernisms**

There were many composers engaging with modernist work and ideas in Lithuania in the twentieth century. An important branch of innovative compositional explorations for the time is represented by two artists described by Daunoravičienė as progenitors of Lithuania's 'exiled modernism'. The interwar years in the Baltic States were doubly significant as they also represented a rare period of independence between centuries of Russian/Baltic German invasion and the later occupations by Nazi Germany and ultimate annexation by the USSR. Perhaps the most radical figure at this time, at least in terms of institutionally recognised techniques of canonical European modernism, was Jeronimas Kačinskas, a 'classic of Lithuanian modernism'<sup>14</sup> and one of the more progressive, experimental modernist composers whose legacy is visible in the country's art music canon today. Kačinskas (1907-2005), 'surprising in the scale of his avant-gardism during the 1930s',<sup>15</sup> was practicing a harder line in modernist composition (though he also made theoretical recourse to structural elements of folk music) until his long-term departure from Lithuania. His emigration is marked by Gražina Daunoravičienė as a key moment in the 'exile' of midcentury modernism from Lithuania. Kačinskas studied with Alois Hába in Prague, developing a strong interest in microtonal and athematic music, and was influenced by Wyschnegradsky's experiments in 'pansonority' (an approach to microtonal writing) and 'ultra-chromaticism'.<sup>16</sup> On his return to Lithuania, he composed pieces and taught classes on microtonality, but all his microtonal compositions were lost after World War II, and the classes did not prove particularly popular in what was at the time a 'fairly conservative milieu'.<sup>17</sup> Contrastingly, Kačinskas gained recognition from the International Society for Contemporary Music when they heard his *Nonet* (praised highly, and compared to Bartók) in 1938 in Paris. Reception of *Nonet* in Lithuania was mixed; in Panevėžys, critical opinion described the piece as 'cat music', the epitome of the 'misery of the spirit of modern music' and 'the delirium of a madman'.<sup>18</sup> *Nonet* is an atonal instrumental chamber piece in four

---

<sup>13</sup> Krzysztof Droba, 'The History and the Present Day of Lithuanian Music (from Čiurlionis to Landsbergis)', *Revista de Musicologia* 16/6 (1993), pp. 3684-3691: 3690.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> 'Jeronimas Kačinskas', Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/composers/kacinskas/#bio>, 28.12.20).

<sup>16</sup> Daunoravičienė, 'Exiled Modernism', 125.

<sup>17</sup> 'Kačinskas', LMIC.

<sup>18</sup> Daunoravičienė, 'Exiled Modernism', 127.

movements, displaying features comparable to the expressionist leanings of other European contemporaries. The presentation of material in the first movement is thematic, in the sense that an initial series is stated before another complex atonal 'countermelody' enters, suggesting construction in a serialist-inspired vein. Like Julius Juzeliūnas and other twentieth-century Lithuanian composers, as far as 'national' music was concerned, Kačinskas also aimed to 'expand the traditional concept of Lithuanian art based on recreating the folk models',<sup>19</sup> though his actual output tends more towards greater degrees of atonality than the majority of Lithuanian composers before the later decades of the twentieth century — most of whom, according to Gruodytė, were more invested in 'attempts to speak the new [musical] language on the basis of old syntax' than any designs to produce more structurally or holistically innovative works.<sup>20</sup> Unlike other, and perhaps more moderate, modernist-leaning composers, Kačinskas was not to remain in Lithuania. He was blacklisted and ultimately left in 1944 following unmet demands that he should write a hagiographical cantata in praise of Stalin; after 1991, he received official recognition in Lithuania for his contributions to culture.<sup>21</sup>

The other key 'exiled modernist' identified in Daunoravičienė's study is Vytautas Bacevičius. Bacevičius (1905-1970), 'one of the first' interwar avant-gardists, also produced work that has been called radical,<sup>22</sup> though with a somewhat stronger romantic and programmatic bent than appears in Kačinskas' output. Vytautas Bacevičius (Witold Bacewicz) was born to a binational Polish-Lithuanian family in Łódź (his sister, the highly successful composer Grażyna Bacewicz, chose to take Polish nationality<sup>23</sup>). Daunoravičienė posits Bacevičius as a revolutionary innovator, claiming that he 'destroyed the artistic conventions prevalent in Lithuania at the time and surprised his contemporaries with his radical symphonic sound'.<sup>24</sup> Citing his 'impulsive rhythmic vitality' and aggressively dissonant style', she writes that he 'reject[ed] all national aspirations and romantic sentimentalism' and promulgated 'an image of technological progress and mechanization'.<sup>25</sup> *Poème électrique* (1929), the composer's most famous symphonic piece, showed the influence of Scriabin's 'ecstatic' music and was allegedly met with 'wild public dissent' at a 1934 performance in Lithuania's second city, Kaunas.<sup>26</sup> In Daunoravičienė's view,

---

<sup>19</sup> Kačinskas biography, LMIC.

<sup>20</sup> Vita Gruodytė, 'Modernism and National Identity: The Peculiarities of Serialism in Lithuania', *Lithuanian Music in Context, vol 1: Lessons of the Avant-Garde* (Vilnius: Lithuanian Music Information Centre, 2011), 73.

<sup>21</sup> Kačinskas biography, LMIC.

<sup>22</sup> 'Vytautas Bacevičius', Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/composers/bacevicius/#bio>, 28.12.20)

<sup>23</sup> 'Grażyna Bacewicz', Polish Music Centre, University of Southern California (accessed online, <https://polishmusic.usc.edu/research/composers/grazyna-bacewicz/>, 28.12.20).

<sup>24</sup> Daunoravičienė, 'Exiled Modernism', 124.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*



With this work, the urban sounds of the “machine age” crashed down like an avalanche upon the moderate soundscape of Lithuanian music. Incorporating the sounds of twentieth-century industrialization, machinery, technology and the “victorious kingdom of Electricity” [...], *Poème électrique* seemed to sever, in one instant, all links with the romantic past of Lithuanian music.<sup>27</sup>

According to Donatas Katkus, however, the ‘industrial’ allusions of *Poème* were primarily textual or programmatic, rather than musical.<sup>28</sup> Katkus suggests that the work essentially took on associations with composers like Honegger, Martinů and Tcherepnin by virtue of the composer’s accompanying commentary, featuring such claims as that “the main feature of this work is [...] the impulse of life and machinism which characterise our electric age”.<sup>29</sup> Either way, *Poème* and Bacevičius were evidently seen to represent vividly modernist themes in the contemporary art music scene, whether or not the music ‘itself’ is believed to embody them.

High-profile artists like Kačinskas and Bacevičius openly represented modernist paradigms in Lithuanian art music. However, the emphasis on the ‘short-lived flowering’ and subsequent ‘exile’ of the interwar modernisms articulated by these composers could lead to the idea that there was otherwise an absence of visible modernist trends in the Lithuanian canon. Many artists who stayed in their home country were also exploring these frameworks, though often heavily mediated by ‘objective’ (and perhaps sometimes politically expedient) discussions of methods for repurposing ‘folk’ material. Although one of the most pathbreaking proponents of modernist composition at the time ended up having to leave the country, it is not the case that those who remained did not engage at all with modernist processes and techniques. Analysing folk music in an overtly ‘scientific’ way was another method by which Baltic composers and musicologists engaged with modernism during Soviet occupation.<sup>30</sup> Folk-inspired compositions often tended towards strong consonance and simplicity, though the dissonant Lithuanian *sutartinės* also provided inspiration for other kinds of sounds. However, the ‘folk’ angle was not the only one being adopted. Many composers incorporated elements of modernist styles into their work, though few are typically painted as such uncompromising figures as Kačinskas, hounded out of Lithuania after failing to offer the obligatory homages to Stalin, or Osvaldas Balakauskas, who remained and was a staunch advocate for a formalist, constructivist approach during the Brezhnev years and beyond.

---

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Donatas Katkus, ‘A Lonely & Ambitious Visionary’ (100 Years of Vytautas Bacevičius), *Lithuanian Music Link* no. 10 (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-10-april-september-2005/100-years-of-vytautas-bacevicius-a-lonely-ambitious-visionary/>, 30.12.20).

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> See Urve Lippus, ‘Modernist Trends in Estonian Musicology in the 1970s-80s and the Study of Folk Melodies’, in *Baltic Musics/Baltic Musicologies: The Landscape since 1991*, ed. Karnes and Braun (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 78-95.

Rūta Stanevičiūtė explains that ‘In the sixties, discussions among the Lithuanian music community’ centred around ‘new composing techniques’,<sup>31</sup> noting that ideologically-inflected lines were drawn locally between ‘Soviet and Western versions of modernisation’ and that these positions were typically ‘represented through the opposition of symbolic worlds of Arnold Schönberg and Dmitry Shostakovich.’<sup>32</sup> Stanevičiūtė describes these worlds as ‘antagonistic’, and suggests that the ‘early application of dodecaphony in the Lithuanian music of the time’ constituted a kind of bridge between.<sup>33</sup> Being one of the most widely-acknowledged new methods of twentieth-century musical modernism, serialism did not fail to permeate the porous boundaries separating mid-to-late-twentieth century Lithuanian composers from ‘western’ counterparts. However, Gruodytė frames many of these explorations as ‘politically correct’, novelty-seeking, but fundamentally moderate excursions.<sup>34</sup> According to Gruodytė’s overview of serialist trends in Lithuanian music — and borne out in works such as *Suite of Stories* (1968) by Feliksas Bajoras and *Gothic Poem* (1970) by Vytautas Montvila — one of the most notable and characteristic local features was that tonal implication and/or folkloric themes prevailed:

There was perhaps no Lithuanian composer at the time [of Feliksas Bajoras] who would ultimately relinquish diatonicism, precisely because it allowed to link, in an easy (technique-wise) and integral (acoustic-wise) way, the modal folklore and the twelve-tone series.<sup>35</sup>

Though Pakarklytė has described a straightforward acceptance of the narrative of the opaque Iron Curtain as excessively ‘credulous’ (and characteristically Anglo-American),<sup>36</sup> Gruodytė asserts that, although pitch organisation according to serialist principles was very much being exploited as a compositional approach, restrictions on cultural exchange *had* resulted in a reduced awareness in Lithuania of later developments extending serial organisation to other musical parameters in the work of ‘western’ composers like Boulez and Stockhausen.<sup>37</sup> In addition, Gruodytė explains, the incorporation of atonal music more generally tended to conform to a structural template that reduced it to a negative internal Other, ultimately subsumed into the rightness and security of diatonicism. She explains that the ‘principle of contrast’ saw atonal music introduced to a primarily tonal-leaning piece in a narrative fashion to represent disharmony, unrest, war, and other negative phenomena, and

---

<sup>31</sup> Rūta Stanevičiūtė, ‘The Lithuanian Path to Modernism in Music’, *Lithuanian Music In Context vol. 1: Lessons of the Avant-Garde*, 23.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> Vita Gruodytė, ‘Modernism and National Identity: The Peculiarities of Serialism in Lithuania’, 73-5.

<sup>35</sup> Gruodytė, ‘Modernism and National Identity’, 77.

<sup>36</sup> Pakarklytė, ‘Black-and-white Post-minimalism, or the Lithuanian Spleen’, *Lithuanian Music in Context, vol 2: Landscapes of Minimalism* (Vilnius: Lithuanian Music Information Centre, 2011), 31-2.

<sup>37</sup> Gruodytė, ‘Modernism and National Identity’, 72.

juxtaposed unfavourably with the consonant harmony of other sections.<sup>38</sup> Gruodytė asserts that this practice impeded the growth and success of serialism in Lithuanian art music:

...it was turned into a kind of ideological instrument and put in the context of extraneous sound material, where it could not secure its modernist position, but served as an offset to the positive side of the contrary material. In other words, instead of helping to undermine the prevalence of Neo-Romanticism and Expressionism in post-war years, dodecaphony gave them a boost in both above-mentioned instances.<sup>39</sup>

Beyond suggesting that modernist techniques were deployed in watered-down, safe or politically defensible ways (calling to mind Gerald Abraham's dismissive comments about the 'musical milk' produced by Soviet composers<sup>40</sup>), the author argues that, in being assigned a 'negative thematic role',<sup>41</sup> they were instrumentalised for the subjugation of modernism. Additionally, in Gruodytė's view, '[t]he treatment of the series solely as a principle of pitch organisation has in effect precluded Lithuanian music from entering into the phase of serialism.'<sup>42</sup> Arguing that a partial rather than a wholesale adoption of serialism could only have seen the technique reduced to a kind of fashionable window-dressing, she claims that serial organisation of pitch alone 'remains a mere accessory, which makes no essential difference in the context of some individual work, composer or epoch.'<sup>43</sup> Having established that — with the exception of Kačinskis, a notable innovator who left 1940s Lithuania for a more liberal political climate — the fundamental character of Lithuanian harmonic modernism for around the first two-thirds of the twentieth century was generally moderate; mediated by consonance, folk themes and nullifying structural trajectories; and even what Gruodytė has called 'politically correct', we can turn to a figure who is habitually characterised as breaking the mould: Osvaldas Balakauskas.

### **3.2 Osvaldas Balakauskas: 'Radical views' and a yellow jacket<sup>44</sup>**

Born in Lithuania in 1937, Balakauskas, who studied at the Vilnius Pedagogical Institute (1957-1961) and the Kiev Conservatoire (1964-1969),<sup>45</sup> has acquired something of a

---

<sup>38</sup> Gruodytė, 'Modernism and National Identity', 75-6.

<sup>39</sup> Gruodytė, 'Modernism and National Identity', 76.

<sup>40</sup> Abraham, *Eight Soviet Composers*, 12.

<sup>41</sup> Gruodytė, 'Modernism and National Identity', 76.

<sup>42</sup> Gruodytė, 'Modernism', 76.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> Gražina Daunoravičienė writes that Balakauskas, returning in 1972 from studying in Kiev, 'made a mark' in Vilnius 'with his radical views, his taciturnity, and his yellow jacket — a visual symbol of him transcending dreary Soviet reality'. Daunoravičienė, transl. Romas Kinka, 'Osvaldas Balakauskas – Lithuanian Music's Maverick and a Dissenting Voice in Kiev', *Lithuanian Music Link* no. 20 (2017) (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-20-january-december-2017/grazina-daunoraviciene-osvaldas-balakauskas-in-kiev/>, 30.12.20).

<sup>45</sup> 'Osvaldas Balakauskas', Lithuanian Music Information Centre website (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/composers/balakauskas/#bio>, 30.12.20).

personal mythology in narratives of Lithuanian art music. Donatus Katkus relays a typical impression:

From the very first day Balakauskas appeared odd and unfamiliar due to [the] stylistic integrity, originality, and incredible consistency of his musical structures [...]. He had no roots in post-war Lithuanian modernism, which followed Čiurlionis's and Gruodis's dictum that every composer must derive his or her modern art from the folk songs, and what's more, he dismissed the notion of modernism and style imported from the Warsaw Autumn festival by some of our composers, which predominantly featured sonorism, aleatoricism and hence the newly populated eclectic style. On the whole, the understanding of style in new music was rather vague and fairly amateurish before his arrival in Lithuania.<sup>46</sup>

A feature for LMIC by Linas Paulauskis describes Balakauskas in its title as 'an enthusiast[ic] modernist in times of postmodernism'.<sup>47</sup> Discussing the composer's education in Ukraine and the problems he had faced in Lithuania ('because of his "excessive" predilection for jazz and other non-existent sins'<sup>48</sup>) the article evokes familiar concepts of illicit aesthetic 'slippage' beneath the radar of Soviet censorship:

[T]he young artists expanded their horizon and quenched their hunger for innovation basically outside the walls of the Conservatoire, avidly hunting for the instances of the post-war west European musical avant-garde that were seeping through cracks of the iron curtain.<sup>49</sup>

Paulauskis goes on to illustrate Balakauskas' apparent difference in his immediate context, writing that his 'work was at first received with a certain distrust in Lithuania', that 'he appeared like an intruder in the panorama of Lithuanian music' and that 'his musical language and aesthetic principles were alien to the tenets of [the] traditional Lithuanian school...'.<sup>50</sup> Balakauskas's compositional system is presented in the treatise *Dodekatonika*, the main content of which is summarised later on in this Chapter, and which is described as 'a methodological instrument' based on 'theoretical ideas matured over ... long years of research'.<sup>51</sup> His emphasis on musical hermeticism also serves to situate him as a discursive ally of modernism, in contrast to the commonly-cited spiritual and inter-textual allusions (e.g.

---

<sup>46</sup> Donatas Katkus, 'Osvaldas Balakausko fenomenas' (in *Osvaldas Balakauskas. Muzika ir mintys*, ed. Rūta Gaidamavičiūtė [Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 2000], as cited in Gruodytė, 'Modernism and National Identity', 77-8.

<sup>47</sup> Linas Paulauskis, 'Osvaldas Balakauskas: an Enthusiast Modernist in the Times of Post-modernism', *Lithuanian Music Link No. 12* (2006), Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-12-april-september-2006/feature-osvaldas-balakauskas-an-enthusiast-modernist-in-the-times-of-post-modernism/>, 22.10.19).

<sup>48</sup> Paulauskis, 'Osvaldas Balakauskas'.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Donatas Katkus, 'The mesmerizing sound world of Osvaldas Balakauskas', *Lithuanian Music Link No. 2* (2001), Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-2-april-september-2001/the-mesmerizing-sound-world-of-osvaldas-balakauskas/>, 22.10.19).

plainchant references, religious texts, etc) of Pärt's aesthetic and the evocations of nature and autochthonous culture in discussions of and with Vasks and Tormis:

...in composing *Tetra* the composer remains an advocate for the purity of music, guided only by the objective criteria and retaining an unswerving conviction that music begins with the first sound of the piece, rather than the score's cover or title page, and ends with the last chord, not with commentaries or evaluations of any kind. "Should we tear off the covers from all scores and play them without knowing the title or the composer's name – this would not have the slightest effect upon music. It appears to be self-evident, and yet there is so much written about the "covers" – claimed Osvaldas Balakauskas more than 20 years ago.<sup>52</sup>

Paulauskis paints Balakauskas as a vocal and unapologetic modernist, referring to the composer's diplomatic skills to explain how his politically unfavourable aesthetic ideals were allowed to persist by authorities. Balakauskas also worked professionally in political capacities; according to LMIC, 'From 1988 to 1992 he was a member of the council of Sajūdis (the Lithuanian independence movement)' and '[f]rom 1992 to 1994 he served as Lithuania's ambassador to France, Spain, and Portugal (residing in Paris), the first after 50 years of occupation.'<sup>53</sup> This reputation of personal intellectual success in defending his positions in a logical register is one that comfortably aligns with a modernist-rationalist template, by contrast with the emphasis on listening, intuiting, and mediating in writing on major euphonic composers. Paulauskis explains:

Balakauskas' music was [...] accused of formalism, cosmopolitanism and emotional coldness. The ear of the authorities and conservative-minded colleagues was offended by a certain alienship and abrasiveness of his music — sometimes even by such details as the altered sound of prepared piano or amplified cello, or reversed tape with recorded instrumental parts. Yet for the composer's contemporaries, this music carried a special message of novelty and freedom, as if announcing a possibility of a different, independent attitude (though in fact it was pure music, free of any political declarations). The attempts at direct arguing with the composer were nonetheless scarce, and those who tried this were disappointed: possessed of an incisive mind, a highly intelligent person, Balakauskas always disarmed his opponents with his calm and well-grounded speech.<sup>54</sup>

As well as an affinity with formalist ideologies, Balakauskas has expressed a characteristically 'cosmopolitan' dislike of simple, binary (implicitly, natural or organic)

---

<sup>52</sup> Asta Pakarklytė, 'Osvaldas Balakauskas' Symphonic Tetra', *Lithuanian Music Link No. 15* (2007-8), Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-15-october-2007-march-2008/osvaldas-balakauskas-symphonic-tetra/>, 22.10.19).

<sup>53</sup> 'Osvaldas Balakauskas', Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/composers/balakauskas/#bio>, 22.10.19).

<sup>54</sup> Paulauskis, 'Osvaldas Balakauskas'.

rhythms. Balakauskas addresses the mechanics of rationalising rhythm (a step that Gruodytė saw as critically lacking in earlier Lithuanian modernism), evoking rationalist notions of mind-body dualism:

The problem of rhythm... for me is the matter of disassembling the binary system (one-two, one-two), that is a dancing of the feet [which is] the soil in which banality sprouts. But not only disassembling it, but creating an alternative structure that can be felt, for example, the system 1-2-3-5-7-5-3-2 or something similar. And this is then a “dancing” of the nerves.<sup>55</sup>

Urve Lippus describes the contemporary impression of “bourgeois formalist” music in Soviet states (particularly when contrasted unfavourably with ‘folk’ music) as being characterised in particular by a ‘modern, dissonant, and nervous language’.<sup>56</sup> Balakauskas’ statements, and the types of observations made by others both about his work and about him as an individual, serve to link him clearly to modernist rhetoric. The following section explores the *Dodekatonika* treatise, after which manifestations of related ideas will be addressed in a number of case studies from across Balakauskas’s career, selected to highlight changes and continuities in his style.

Balakauskas was taught by Boris Lyatoshinsky and Myroslav Skoryk at the Kiev Conservatory during the mid to late 1960s.<sup>57</sup> Lyatoshinsky, described as the “leader of Ukrainian formalism”, an “undesirable element” and a key target of criticism,<sup>58</sup> is held to have been particularly influential as a teacher. Lyatoshinsky was a moderate modernist: he favoured the tonal canon and sonata form, and leaned towards romanticism. However, Daunoravičienė identifies modernist-leaning aspects of his music that can be seen as significantly foreshadowing aspects of Balakauskas’ own style. Lyatoshinsky’s harmonic writing drew on the influence of Scriabin; ‘he often used a seventh chord instead of triads and changed, chromaticised the standard structure of chords’.<sup>59</sup> Here too, though, Daunoravičienė notes, ‘Even though the sound was sharp and dissonant, the atonality was somewhat compromising’.<sup>60</sup> Balakauskas’ own modernist-leaning harmonic writing can be, and frequently is, interpreted as uncompromising through its relative dissonance and constructivism and his own comments on his music. However, in his ‘mature’ works he also typically remains within a relatively short distance of consonant implications, and seemingly

---

<sup>55</sup> Bamberger, ‘Fate and Osvaldas Balakauskas’, 152.

<sup>56</sup> Urve Lippus, ‘Modernist Trends in Estonian Musicology in the 1970s—1980s and the Study of Folk Melodies’, in *Baltic Music/Baltic Musicologies*, pp. 78-95: 84; Urve Lippus, Mart Rimmel, Jaan Ross, Jaan Sarv and Jaan Semlek, *Towards a Monographical Analysis of Some Folk Song Arrangements*, abridged and revised by Lippus. (Tallinn: Academy of Sciences of the Estonian SSR, Department of Social Sciences: Preprint KKI-6, 1976).

<sup>57</sup> Gražina Daunoravičienė, *Exploration of the Modernistic Identity of Lithuanian Music* (Vilnius: Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, 2016), 642.

<sup>58</sup> Daunoravičienė, *Modernistic Identity of Lithuanian Music*, 643.

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*

took steps to ensure that his ideas were expressed in theoretically defensible — if also potentially politically dubious — ways.

Lyatoshinsky was an important influence for Balakauskas in Kiev, but perhaps even more significant was the younger composer's presence and participation in listening and discussion sessions with the tight-knit group of composition students around Valentin Silvestrov (also taught by Lyatoshinsky<sup>62</sup>) – of whom Balakauskas said, “no authority or even authoritarian would have managed to disperse them or turn them to some other direction”<sup>63</sup> Schmelz has also observed that, as nurturing as Lyatoshinsky's protective impulses were for his students in their experimental endeavours, he was not necessarily unequivocally progressive in this regard. The author cites Silvestrov's reminiscence of Lyatoshinsky's query 'regarding one of my radical works from the beginning of the 1960s: 'Do you like this?'" – a question that, although he could answer positively, “became ingrained in my soul.”<sup>64</sup> Schmelz notes that the conservatism underlying the older and much-respected Lyatoshinsky's openness to new styles 'exerted a strong influence on the young students, certainly a stronger influence than the generally reactionary opinions of official publications like *Sovetskaya muzika*', and suggests that the 'doubts sown' by such professors were ultimately a contributing factor to the adoption of more moderate modernist or mimetic styles among composers like Pärt, Schnittke and Silvestrov.<sup>65</sup> The same ideas might be brought to bear on the development of Balakauskas's 'tonal serialism' and his later advice to his own students that newer compositional techniques should be treated like wallpaper over a strong foundation of more 'traditional' melody, harmony and rhythm.<sup>66</sup> The *Dodekatonika* treatise<sup>67</sup> (published in 1997, though it was produced in parts during the 'stagnation' era) serves both to set Balakauskas apart in the Lithuanian context as a committed formalist and to highlight loopholes through which it might be argued that his work could be portrayed as simultaneously moderate and compatible with Soviet epistemological priorities.

### **3.3 'Tonal serialism'**

Balakauskas' harmonic system – referred to elsewhere as 'tonal serialism' – is set out in *Dodekatonika*, which acknowledges the influence of Howard Hanson's 1960 *Harmonic*

---

<sup>62</sup> Schmelz, 'Such Freedom, If Only Musical', 35.

<sup>63</sup> Gražina Daunoravičienė, 'The Lithuanian Path to Modernism in Music', 52.

<sup>64</sup> Schmelz, 'Such Freedom', 35.

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> Albertas Navickas interview (with Claire McGinn, conducted via phone), March 2020.

<sup>67</sup> Osvaldas Balakauskas, 'Dodekatonika', as republished in *Osvaldas Balakauskas. Muzika ir mintys*, ed. Rūta Gaidamavičiūtė (Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 2011).

*Materials of Modern Music* in its introduction.<sup>68</sup> *Dodekatonika* was written in parts and sketches around 1980, but was not formally published until a Polish-language version appeared, in large part owing to the advocacy of Balakauskas's peer Krzysztof Droba, in a 1997 anthology called 'Lithuanian Notebook' (*Zeszyt litewski*) released by the Krakow Music Academy.<sup>69</sup> An English-language translation of *Dodekatonika* was not available at the initial time of writing this Chapter, but I obtained a Lithuanian-language copy and have translated it sufficiently to paraphrase the essential concepts here. A subsequent (2018) English-language article by Daunoravičienė<sup>70</sup> containing a summary and description of the method supports the translated version here. The following passages provide an overview of the *Dodekatonika* method based directly on the translated treatise, with occasional interpretive commentary.

The central aim of the *Dodekatonika* treatise, as set out in its introduction, was to establish a universalisable, rational, ahistorical method for harmonic writing after serialism and sonorism. Balakauskas proposes establishing a pitch collection in the following manner (see figure 3.2) – arrange a projection of fifths in a circle (a 'quintile projection' or 'PQ'); draw a 'vector' line from the first ('generating') tone ('gt', in this instance a D) to the most distant ('opposition') tone ('ot', here an Ab); and then pair off the equidistant pitches on either side of this vector line, moving away from *gt* towards *ot*. This produces a set of 'inverse pairs' (A-G, E-C, B-F, and so on, as connected by the vertical dotted lines in figure 3.2, which are arranged in order of decreasing 'affinity' from the generative tone – a trajectory which may not be conceived exactly in terms of increasing dissonance, but can be read as a clear analogue to it based on the pitch material, as shown in the accompanying table of static intensity. A PQ can also have two generative tones and two

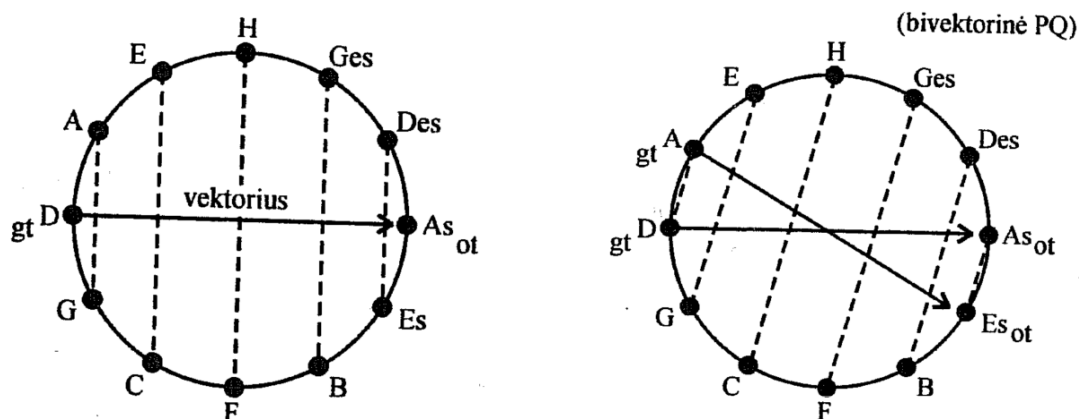


Figure 3.2 — 'monovector PQ' (*Dodekatonika*).; Figure 3.3. — 'bivector PQ' (*Dodekatonika*).

<sup>68</sup> Balakauskas, 'Dodekatonika'.

<sup>69</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> Gražina Daunoravičienė, 'Compositional System of Osvaldas Balakauskas: An Attempt to Restore the Theoretical Discourse', *Musicological Annual* 54/2 (2018), pp. 45-95.



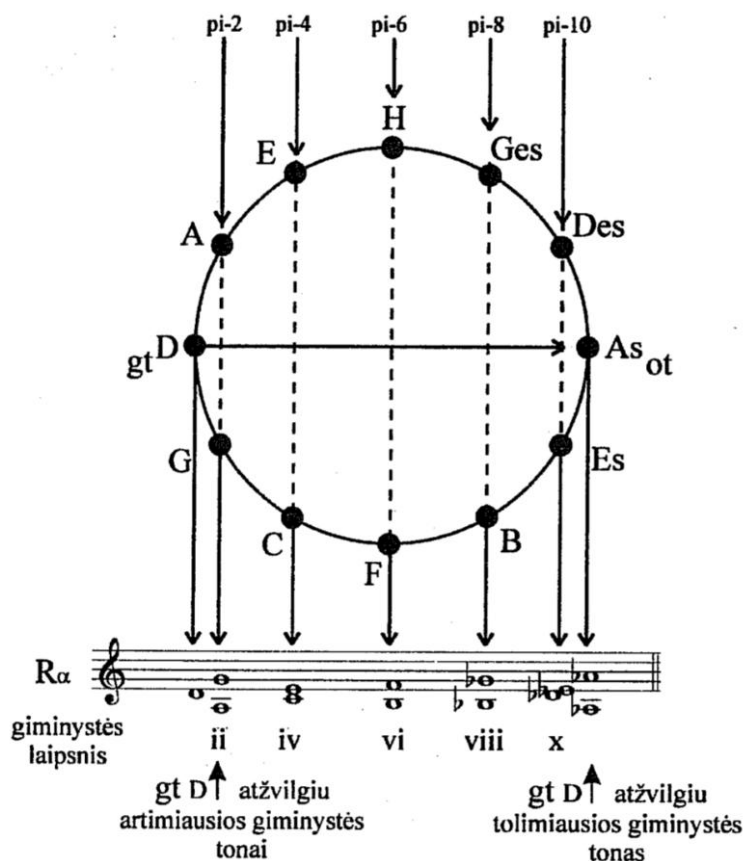


Figure 3.4 — 'Row Alpha', generated from a monovector PQ, showing harmonic objects increasing in relational distance from the generative tone D (*Dodekatonika*). Bottom text, left to right, reads 'Degree of kinship'; 'most closely related [to the generative tone]'; 'least closely related'.

vector lines (see figure 3.3). The inverse pairs extrapolated from a monovector PQ produce 'Row Alpha' (see figure 3.4); those from a bivector PQ produce 'Row Beta' (as in figure 3.5). Combining the mono- and bi-vector PQs, the resultant set of twelve note-pairs is described as 'Row Delta' (see figure 3.6). Expressed in a melodic sequence, the twelve tones from Row Delta are referred to as 'Row Gamma' (see figure 3.7). Each basic harmonic object (note-pair) is then associated with a Greek character symbol. In this context Balakauskas calls the pairs 'elementary harmonic structures' (abbreviated to 'SE'); the accompanying table shows the Greek symbol, the corresponding interval, and the elementary structure's degree of 'static intensity'. The intensity index is measured in numbers (0T-6T), and the corresponding diatonic intervals for each SE symbol are listed in Balakauskas' treatise.

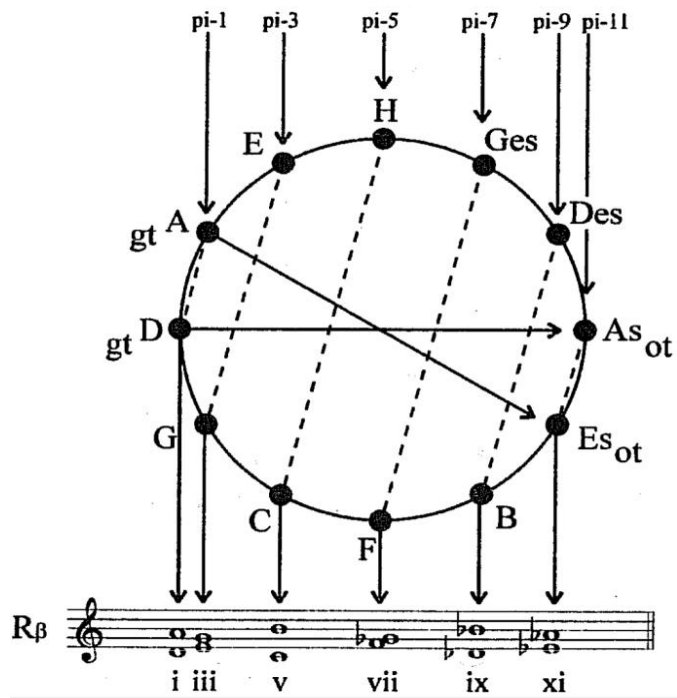


Figure 3.5 — 'Row Beta', generated from a bivector PQ (*Dodekatonika*).

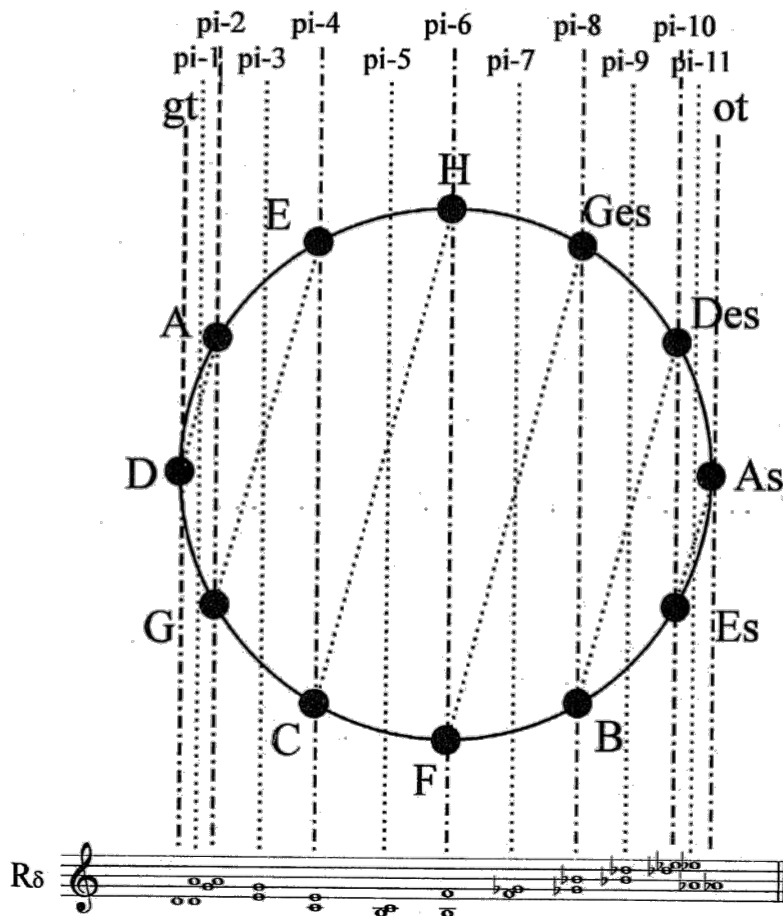


Figure 3.6 — 'Row Delta', produced by combining the rows from a monovector and bivector PQ (*Dodekatonika*).

Symbol	Interval(s)	Intensity
$\Sigma$	Octave (and compounds)	0T
T	Perfect 5 <sup>th</sup> / 4 <sup>th</sup> / 11 <sup>th</sup> / 12 <sup>th</sup>	1T
$\Phi$	Major 2 <sup>nd</sup> / minor 7 <sup>th</sup> / major 9 <sup>th</sup>	2T
X	Minor 3 <sup>rd</sup> / major 6 <sup>th</sup> / minor 10 <sup>th</sup>	3T
Y	Major 3 <sup>rd</sup> / minor 6 <sup>th</sup> / major 10 <sup>th</sup>	4T
$\Psi$	Minor 2 <sup>nd</sup> major 7 <sup>th</sup> / minor 9 <sup>th</sup>	5T
$\Omega$	Augmented 4 <sup>th</sup> (and compounds)	6T

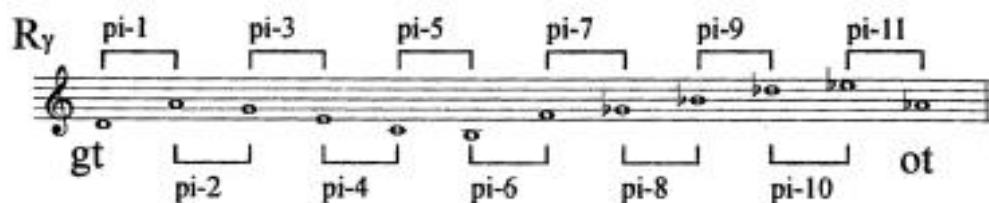


Figure 3.7 — ‘Row Gamma’: a linear melodic expression of Row Delta (*Dodekatonika*).

These static harmonic structures are assigned logical identities that relate to measures of rising and falling harmonic tension in a linear trajectory, based on their dynamic intensity index ratings and immanent functional roles (For example, a harmonic object containing a pitch which is a major second away from the generative tone – which is not necessarily a tonic but which is associated with a comparable sense of resting or of return to a neutral base – has a high intensity and would suggest a kind of resolution towards towards a lower-intensity structure. This is another way in which Balakauskas can be seen to go to considerable lengths to justify his own versions of long-standing practices that may be treated by other composers as more intuitive or conventional – and for which other kinds of theoretical models, frameworks and explanations already exist – in a bid to establish a universal and ahistorical template for the organisation of harmonic structures into logical or natural progressions. Balakauskas tends to denigrate the ‘natural’, yet at the same time, his insistence on the immanence or predetermined identity of these abstract structures and their relationships is in some ways reminiscent of Tormis’ rhetoric of mediation.) Based on the interaction of different indexical properties relating to intensity (in relation to the most stable point of the given gt), Balakauskas conceives of an ‘intensity curve’, mapped onto the

abstract series, within which we can determine functional zones. This allows us to effectively plot trajectories of rising and falling intensity in the manner of ‘natural’ ebbs and flows. The zones are populated by elementary harmonic structures, as indicated by the same Greek characters, and fall into a familiar arc-shape (see figure 3.8) based on their relative degrees of ‘stability’, ‘opposition’ or ‘mobility’.

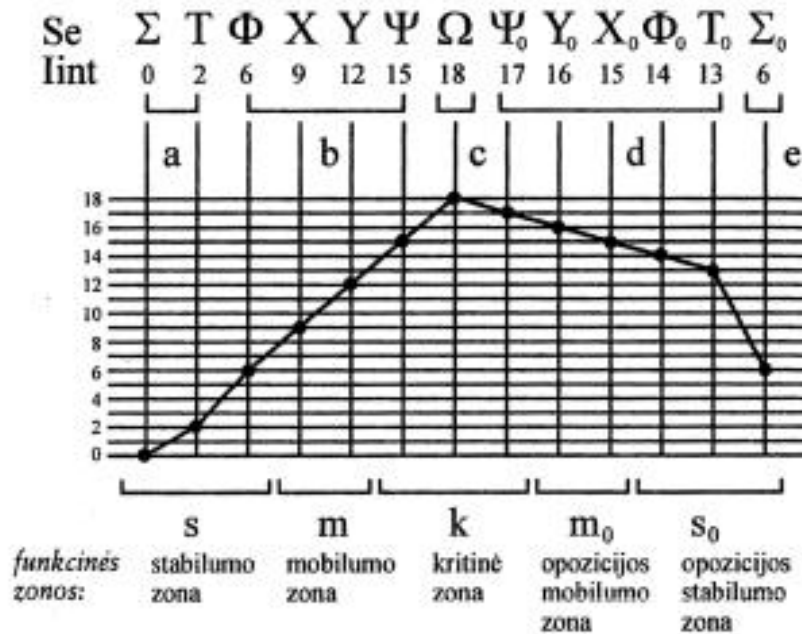


Figure 3.8 — Functional harmonic ‘zones’ based on degrees of intensity (*Dodekatonika*). Bottom text, left to right, reads ‘functional zones: stability zone; mobility zone; critical zone; opposite/opposing mobility zone; opposite/opposing stability zone’.

The function labels to the right of the central ‘Ω’ across the top of the graph are symmetric equivalents of those to the left; they represent their ‘oppositions’ or opposites. Crucially, Balakauskas says, we consider the described functions as *immanent* because they are not due to aesthetic, stylistic or other subjective motives, but derive from the logic of the dodecatonic formation (in his view, the most ‘natural’). If some of the steps of the method seem quite, even over-, complicated, this is probably symptomatic of the fact that its underpinning ethos is geared towards the creation of a set of instructions that supposedly leave nothing to either intuition or current fashion; the density of each stage seems to be designed unequivocally to fill the kind of space that might in other cases be occupied with notions of instinct, tacit knowledge, cultural precedents, or taste.

### **3.4 Immanent dominant and tonic**

Balakauskas turns here to a broadened conception of the dominant-tonic relation, viewed as the essential harmonic attraction that manifests itself at a moment of harmonic tension (alternately conceptualised in his treatise as ‘intensity’). Natural musical flow is a constant process, he writes, of storing and disseminating harmonic tension; he observes that the metaphor of breathing is a suitable one. However, he reinforces that the word ‘natural,’ used here and elsewhere, has little value (possibly inferring a distance from the widespread late-twentieth-century enthusiasm for folklore and ecological themes in Lithuanian classical composition; ‘natural’ as ‘the soil in which banality sprouts’), but simply describes the immanence of the phenomenon in question — the fact that it comes from the logic of the organisation of the sound itself. The phenomenon is, he claims, decoupled from the empiricism of one or another era, and from the development of stylistic principles (though he acknowledges on the other hand that the latter tend to reflect the aforementioned logic). Balakauskas goes on to give examples of logically-deduced progressions of harmonic structures that may have a particular ‘archaic colour’ or resemble the typical formations of a particular age of European art music. Examples of dodecatonically-deduced formations that resemble various harmonic and cadential movements (for example, a typical Renaissance cadential figure) are provided. He also gives special mention to octatonicism as a mode with a characteristic sonority (it is also one that recurs often in his own works, for example *Rex Re* [2000] and *Dal Vento* [1999]).

This exercise of mapping SE motions onto well-known historical trends is intended to divorce the fundamental methodological tool of fifth-projection from any given historical or aesthetic moment (though it should be noted that the only real music and musical contexts discussed here pertain to global-Northern, mostly European, work-based, formalist art-music compositions – the supposedly ‘universal’ concept, therefore, is demonstrated only in relation to European classical music). In this way Balakauskas’s method seeks to emulate some putative epistemological qualities of mathematics or of a science, through its implicit claims to unveil or illuminate certain absolute, ahistorical truths or laws that have always been, and will continually remain, legitimate regardless of their contexts. This is interesting in two ways. Firstly, and more obviously, it strikingly differs from the mainstream image of Baltic composition discussed in Chapter 2 through its classically modernist emphasis on cultivating objective knowledge of ‘natural’ phenomena and how most effectively to exploit them. On the other hand, there are also echoes of Tormis’s famous claim that he was ‘more a mediator than a creator’ in Balakauskas’ strong and consistent appeals to the logic of immanence and references (however pragmatic and qualified) to the natural. It is also possible that the proposition that Dodekatonika’s structural logic constituted a timeless, naturally occurring phenomenon, just waiting to be uncovered through rational, scientific investigation, may actually have served as something of a Soviet-friendly idea. In all of

Balakauskas' formalist, constructivist rhetoric, there is a notable absence of what might in some spheres have been called 'bourgeois expressionism'. Although it is a truism that many trappings of musical modernism were frowned upon by authorities, it is also the case that empirical methodologies enjoyed a preferential position in musicology at this time, including an interest in scientifically-framed studies constituting structural analyses of music. It is possible that, by framing his work as objective and scientific, rather than aesthetically-modernist and/or individually-expressionist, the composer was able to align his compositional theories with epistemologies that were more ideologically favourable at this time. The act of setting out a complex, densely theoretical and nominally non-tonal harmonic system outside of diatonicism to create highly constructivist works might have been seen as bourgeois decadence. However, illustrating (or claiming to illustrate) that this method constituted the extrapolation of a set of natural laws – a system that really owed nothing to individual modern genius, but had in fact been underpinning all art music for centuries – may have tempered the work's tendencies toward striking degrees of complexity and abstract formalism (and it may also have helped that there was a strong emphasis on a putatively natural hierarchy of fifth-based affinities which just happened to favour tonal implications and a relatively high degree of consonance).

### **3.5 Soviet-era works**

Balakauskas's output could be divided up in a number of ways, with the simplest, broadest division comprising just two periods: the years before Lithuania gained independence from the USSR, and the years after. This is not to suggest that there must be particular musical differences between a work from 1988 and one from 1992 (on the contrary, Balakauskas is often upheld as a figure whose artistic endeavours have been unusually impervious to the political demands of his context), but is more a matter of straightforwardness, since the end of the Soviet Union fell roughly halfway through the approximately five decades during which he has been active as a composer (the earliest dated work of Balakauskas's listed on his LMIC page is from 1960, the most recent from 2016). The 'Soviet-era' period as designated here reaches from Balakauskas's student years in the 1960s to his involvement with the Lithuanian resistance movement (Sajūdis) in the late 1980s.<sup>71</sup> This section and the one that follows will move chronologically, focusing on case studies from the broad period and discussing other works in less detail for context.

Balakauskas's engagement with more 'traditional' atonality was most pronounced during his student years. *Cascades*, a work for solo piano from 1967 — at which point

---

<sup>71</sup> 'Balakauskas', LMIC.

Balakauskas had already been studying in Kiev for a few years — opens with atonal twelve-note phrases, with little approaching the ‘immanent dominant’ implications described in *Dodekatonika*. While the piece is more ‘serial-sounding’ than many of Balakauskas’ later works, it is not serial in a strict sense, as some notes are repeated. Still, the work’s opening is completely atonal, with short, clearly delineated phrases containing all twelve pitches, separated by rests. Due in part to the rate of harmonic motion and distribution of repeated pitches, *Cascades*, unlike much of Balakauskas’s later work, effectively avoids emphasising any one pitch centre over others and does not tend towards consonance. Much of the material within phrases is sequential in nature, with gestural repetition of descending melodic shapes, and demonstrating an interest in symmetry and numerical patterns (for example, right hand phrases based around rhythmic patterns like 4-3-2-1-2-3-4). Though his approach to harmony would become much more individual, this ‘rational’, numerical approach to rhythm was to be an enduring trait, and one which sees his work set apart from earlier Lithuanian modernists.

Roughly five years later, in 1972, Balakauskas is leaning closer to ‘tonal serialism’ and alternative approaches to familiar waves of harmonic tension and resolution. Next to *Cascades*, the later orchestral work *Ludus Modorum* is more in the mould of moderate modernism. The harmonic content of the piece is rooted in fifths-projections with a quite traditionally-distributed texture in the first movement: larger and more consonant intervals in the bass instruments, and additive-type extensions and more condensed chromatic material higher up. Some of the more dissonant or less tonally coherent material in *Ludus Modorum*’s first movement – cluster chords in the violin and piano for example – is presented in a gestural, rather than a harmonic, fashion (a descending sweep with a sharp *decrescendo* or a single attack left to fade) which may serve to diminish its potential for tonal disruption. The ‘tonal series’ as it appears here is stated at the outset of the first movement in the upper parts (woodwind). The dynamic motion of the phrase is one factor in its limited atonal effect, in addition to its underpinning by a foundation of consonant fifth-based constructions. Another aspect of the relative consonance of the series can be approached in two ways. It is possible to say that the first four notes, for example, could be read as spelling part of a B $\flat$  minor seventh figure. But Balakauskas’s treatise is designed to give technical validation to intervals traditionally (in common-practice discourse) heard as consonant or otherwise without explicit recourse to the language of diatonicism. In order to avoid this, Balakauskas’s own measures of what he described as ‘intensity’ (which could also be interpreted as ‘tension’ or ‘dissonance’) can be used in order to analyse the melodic opening of the series and situate it in the context of other melodies, both tonal and atonal.

Using this measure of intervallic intensity, and following Balakauskas’s practise in *Dodekatonika* of adding up these figures to arrive at a total score, the cumulative ‘intensity’

of tonal and atonal melodies can be calculated; being based on his own compositional theory, the resulting figures can act as supporting evidence for Balakauskas's presumably very conscious position as a moderate modernist. These score numbers demonstrate that, in relation to the possible higher and lower extremes, Balakauskas's music is relatively low-scoring in terms of intensity or dissonance according to criteria drawn from his own theorisations. Although *Ludus Modorum's* theme is atonal and Balakauskas's own explications of his methods are highly, even obfuscatingly, constructivist in nature, the fairly low intensity score of his opening melody correlates with a fairly low level of overall dissonance. As such, the melodic intensity score can act as one quantifiable metric for the relatively moderate, consonant and accessible nature of Balakauskas's music after his early experimentation with more 'classical' atonal styles, as in *Cascades-1*. Scores are consistent with the fact that 'common practice' classical conventions of musical motion in general have typically been based on rising and falling tension; however, there is a clear trend towards a greater density of higher scores (5-6) in non-tonal or atonal melodies and a greater density of lower scores (0-1) towards the tonal group. Moreover, while scores of 0 and 1 do appear in the non-tonal melodies analysed, they occur much less frequently, and scores as high as 6 do not occur in the tonal sample.

Drawing on Balakauskas's formulation of degrees of intensity, melodies from tonal music will tend towards a lower intensity based on the first eight pitches because of the much higher likelihood of one or more of those pitches being the tonic or dominant scale degree, with a score of 0 or 1 (though the diatonic leading note, with an intensity measure of 5 when calculated from the tonic, may contribute to higher scores). Even a particularly dissonant tonal melody like the theme from Handel's 'And with his stripes' fugue, while scoring high in relation to other tonal pieces, does not reach the same scores as atonal pieces, since the high-scoring intervals created by pitches like the major seventh and augmented fourth are usually balanced out by the conventional necessity of 'resolving' to the low-scoring tonic or dominant following these pitches. The tonal melodies analysed had scores ranging from a low end of 12 (Mozart's highly consonant melody from 'Das Veilchen') to a high end of 19 (the angular and dissonant opening of the fugue subject from Handel's 'And With His Stripes'). Melodies written by Second Viennese School composers or exemplars of atonal/serial music (although their outputs of course also included tonal, extended-tonal and 'traditional' consonant harmony, and although some of the numbers may seem surprisingly low, with three of these melodies scoring the same as the Handel fugue opening) tended towards higher scores, ranging from 19 to 26. Balakauskas's serial student work *Cascades-1* sits close to the top of this range with a score of 25 (only one point below the second of Webern's *Variations*; Daunoravičienė writes that the 'laconic pointillism' of works like



*Cascades-1* was inspired by Webern<sup>72</sup>), while the melodic opening of *Ludus Modorum* scores lower than Handel, with an intensity rating of 17.

By the composer's own metrics, the theme of *Ludus Modorum*, as expressed at the opening of its first movement, quantitatively embodies low-intensity, consonant-leaning qualities that are readily associated with the idea of 'tonal serialism'. In several iterations of the ostensibly non-tonal pitch set (a series or invariant sample that Daunoravičienė identifies as a quotation from Balakauskas's own 1964 *Twelve Pieces for Piano*<sup>73</sup>) in the first movement, the more chromatic pitches take on a role not unlike that of passing notes in diatonic music. In the cello melody of bars 27-39 (see figure 3.9), pitches that would strongly correlate with the accompanying harmony in a tonal context (G, A, B, C#, D# as the third through seventh scale degrees of

The image shows a musical score for five instruments: flute (fl), oboe (ob), cello (cl), cornet (corn), and fagotto (fg). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 140. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of five measures. The first measure is marked with a forte (f) dynamic and a fermata. The second measure is marked with a piano (p) dynamic. The third measure is marked with a forte (f) dynamic and a fermata. The fourth measure is marked with a piano (p) dynamic. The fifth measure is marked with a forte (f) dynamic and a fermata. The score shows a cadential figure across five measures, with various dynamics and articulations.

Figure 3.9 — Cadential figure at opening of third movement of *Ludus Modorum*.

E melodic minor ascending) occur on strong beats of the compound bar, while 'passing notes', such as D, G#, and C natural, fall just before or after. The shifting between allusions of E minor and E major contributes to a familiar colour, redolent of a penchant for octatonic harmony across Balakauskas's output. Though it is not octatonic, the pitch content of the distinctive main melodic opening here (E, F#, G, G#, A, B, C, C#, D#) takes the form of a nine-note mode with another kind of intervallic symmetry.

The longer second movement of *Ludus Modorum* steps further away from the consonant-leaning language of the first. The accompanying table, figure 3.10, illustrates a harmonic trajectory that reflects or evokes contemporary 'dramaturgical' structural conventions, in spite of a lack of explicit narrative content, due to the bookending of a longer, slower, quieter, less rhythmically dynamic, and more harmonically ambiguous second

<sup>72</sup> Rūta Stanevičiūtė, 'Modernisation of Lithuanian Music during Cold War Era: Early Trajectories and Their Reception', *Lithuanian Music In Context, vol. I: Lessons of the Avant-Garde* (Lithuanian Music Information Centre: Vilnius, 2011): 25.

<sup>73</sup> Daunoravičienė, 'Compositional System of Osvaldas Balakauskas: An Attempt to Restore the Theoretical Discourse', 83.

section with strongly consonant and tonally-centred outer sections more balanced in length and with a greater sense of consistent rhythmic, harmonic and melodic direction. The series reappears but receives a more harmonic treatment. Where the first movement sees the pitch collection unfurl melodically over consonant fifths, the second opens with denser chromatic string clusters formed from notes of the series. These notes then move through a ponderous, dissonant glissando to arrive at open fifths-based constructions, continuing Balakauskas’s recourse to these structures to somewhat mediate the work’s serial content. However, the greater intensity of the simultaneous sounding of the serial pitches, combined with the far less active texture, extended techniques, quiet dynamic, metric ambiguity, and appearance of the series, augmented, as a bass line, result in a less consonant, comparatively more experimental sound by comparison with the previous movement.

<b>Movement</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>II</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>Harmonic content</b>	Sense of harmonic motion, though less implication of pitch centre/resolution than in III. Higher degree of consonance/tonal implication than II, lower than III.	More dissonance; statements of series in harmonic clusters, slow glissandi, less pitch centricity, less cadential implication, except for conspicuous emergence of common-practice fragments.	Strong, insistent sense of relatively directed harmonic motion; implications of cadential resolution; fifths-based, consonant, and diatonic-leaning harmony.
<b>Material</b>	Melodies frequently played unison/at the octave (low harmonic intensity score). Frequent use of block chords to accompany. Somewhat looser/sparser (also rhythmically) than III.	Less unison, more ‘textural’ elements such as string clusters, glissandi. Fragmentary, relatively static material except for conspicuous emergence of common-practice fragments.	Melodies frequently played unison/at the octave (low harmonic intensity score). Frequent use of block chords to accompany

Figure 3.10 – Table showing harmonic features of movements in *Ludus Modorum*.

While in many ways the second movement seems more modernist (if taken to be pertain to qualities like ‘less consonant, more a-metric, less melodic’), in a number of places Balakauskas incorporates unmistakable references to tonal music in a Baroque style, primarily in the harpsichord and cello parts. Daunoravičienė describes the different treatments across *Ludus Modorum* of Balakauskas’s invariant sample or ‘tonal series’, which is restated in an eclectic variety of contexts:

‘a whole-tone system, a chromatic system of “narrowed intervals”, the system of “diatonic, or a white note” scale [...] by means of quasi-pointillism, [...] [evoking an]

association with quasi-Baroque music, [...] in the style of quasi-Classicism (in traditional harmony), [...] with a melody-swing of jazz improvisation [...] a pentatonic scale, quasi-dodecaphony, jazz, (Georgian) quasi-folklore, the quasi-Shostakovich style, etc.’<sup>74</sup>

These referential moments, likened by one reviewer to Schnittke’s polystylism,<sup>75</sup> might be read in multiple ways. Although *Dodekatonika* had not yet been published when *Ludus Modorum* appeared, the treatise represented the crystallisation of ideas that had been maturing in his work for a long time. As such, it is possible to see these passages as strengthening his claim, as expressed at length in *Dodekatonika*, that European classical music from diverse historical canonical periods can be interpreted as conforming to his logical system based on twelve equal tempered pitches and the primacy of cycles of fifths. By constructing archetypal common-practice phrases from fifths-based, dodecatonic pitch material within a non-tonal piece, Balakauskas may be demonstrating this (arguably somewhat tautological) formalist position.

The other possible interpretation of *Ludus Modorum*’s tonal references is as an attempt at making the non-tonal whole of the piece (and particularly the central movement) more palatable for audiences and critics. These two interpretations are by no means mutually exclusive and are both connected to the wider project of mediating modernism for the context in which the composer was working. Using a variety of strategies to make atonal material more acceptable is presented as a fairly typical practice, discussed by Gruodytė in her overview of approaches to serialism in Soviet Lithuania. It is also a practice in which Balakauskas is often portrayed as having declined to participate, since he openly espoused formalism and expressed disinterest in using archived ‘folk’ materials in composition. I would suggest, however, that mediation of modernist impulses is something that Balakauskas necessarily did undertake — both in his own individual ways, such as through *Dodekatonika*’s abstruse rationalisations, and also in ways that were very conventional at the time.

Following the increased harmonic polarisation of the second movement, where a general turn to more a-metric and dissonant atonal material is accompanied by the inclusion of a handful of overtly tonal, common-practice-style phrases, the third movement provides the most rhythmic, lively, regular and consonant material yet. The opening pitch set is presented melodically again but this time the melody is accompanied by a clear sense of harmonic resolution. The third movement moves through many pitch centres but is far more

---

<sup>74</sup> Daunoravičienė, ‘Compositional System of Osvaldas Balakauskas: An Attempt to Restore the Theoretical Discourse’, 83.

<sup>75</sup> Christopher Thomas, ‘Review: Osvaldas Balakauskas: concertos for violin, cello, piano, oboe & harpsichord’, *Musicweb International* (accessed online, <http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2001/apr01/Balakauskas.htm>, 30.12.20).

tonal-leaning than the second, and notably more so than the first, movement, ending on what is essentially a G major chord with a few added notes in the piano part. In the opening bars of the third movement, Balakauskas writes a melodically symmetrical bass line which also evokes a fairly traditional perfect/plagal cadential outline, matched by cadential harmony in the upper parts (shown in figure 3.9). This emphatic cadential resolution of the original thematic material is prefigured in the first movement — for example, in bars 27-39, when an E minor version of the main theme appears in the cello part and follows a tonally suggestive path all the way up to D# without quite resolving melodically, and subsequently does come to rest on a somewhat uneasy octave-doubled G# — a resolution further destabilised by the accompanying harmony, which immediately begins to move again (see figure 3.11).

The image displays three systems of musical notation for the first movement of Ludus Modorum. Each system includes staves for Vc solo, Vn I, Vn II, VI, Vc, and Cb. The first system is marked with a 'C' time signature and shows the cello solo part with a cadential figure. The second system shows the cello solo part with a cadential figure. The third system is marked with a 'D' time signature and shows the cello solo part with a cadential figure. The score includes various dynamics such as *pp*, *p*, *mf*, *f*, and *ff*, and articulation marks like *pizz.* and *sul pont.*

Figure 3.11 — Cadential figure prefigured in resolving cello melody in *Ludus Modorum* mvt 1.

The significance of *Ludus Modorum's* aforementioned structure (bookending a murkier, more tonally ambiguous movement with more consonant ones and ending with repeated, very decisive major cadential figures) pertains to my suggestion that Balakauskas mediated his modernist leanings in multiple ways, some of which — despite his notable avoidance of the hugely popular folk-theme routes — were very common at the time. Although its individual movements have no titles, though there are no expression markings or particularly evocative performance directions, and though its overall title seems to refer to the fairly abstract concept of playing with modes, *Ludus Modorum* follows what can contextually be understood as a narrative structure, conforming to the ‘principle of contrast’ described by Gruodytė as a cornerstone of the ideologically softened manifestations of atonality in Soviet Lithuania. As suggested above, some of the ways in which Balakauskas made atonal music more palatable were notably individual in his context (his constructivist theorising and refusal to follow folk-inspired trends), while still others were quite conventional — for example, use of a narrative or ‘dramatic’ shape to subsume the most dissonant material into a more safely consonant resolution. Gruodytė discusses this phenomenon in relation to some pieces that followed explicit narratives,<sup>76</sup> and in which atonal material was linked to negatively-framed themes such as violence. But Schmelz also notes that some of Pärt’s experimental atonal works were given the benefit of the doubt by critics due to the fact that they were perceived to display a favourable ‘dramatic’ quality. This includes his 1963 *Perpetuum Mobile*, which was an abstract work but seemingly allowed reviewers to interpret a narrative shape — and therefore to show leniency with its formalist, serial leanings, as the work could be interpreted as positively aligned with the Socialist Realist demand for dramatic sensibilities.<sup>77</sup> It seems that the convention for explicit narrative or dramaturgy in music was so embedded at the time that it was possible to write abstract constructivist works with a suggestive use of contrast and trajectory that reviewers might subsequently interpret through the lens of narrative convention.

Ivana Medić suggests that (at least in Russia), after a brief explosion of interest in the 1960s, most young Soviet composers effectively grew bored of serialism and strict constructivism, instead exploring juxtapositions of different styles — ‘often superimposing them in a deliberately crude manner’ and layering the whole with multiple meanings in a pronounced turn away from abstraction.<sup>78</sup> This correlates with Schmelz’s description of a shift from an abstract engagement with modern techniques to a more postmodern, tonal-

---

<sup>76</sup> Gruodytė, ‘Modernism and National Identity’, 74-5.

<sup>77</sup> Schmelz, *Such Freedom, If Only Musical*, 222-224.

<sup>78</sup> Ivana Medić, ‘Moderated Modernism in Russian Music After 1953’, ‘Rethinking Musical Modernism — Proceedings of the international conference held from October 11 to 13, 2007’ (Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2008), 202.

oriented (in his words, 'mimetic') one in the mid-60s — and a subsequent combination of these approaches from the mid-70s.<sup>79</sup> Here Balakauskas continued down what has been presented as an individual path: maintaining his interest in abstraction and constructivism, professing an indifference towards the outward appearance or 'covers' of a piece of music, and declining to engage with folk music or with explicit narrative programs for his compositions. Although *Ludus Modorum* in some ways follows a wider turn towards a more accessible language, its 'polystylistic' moments are isolated and few and its narrative programme/political statement effectively non-existent, while the emphasis on abstraction and serial impulses remain essentially as strong as the obvious preference for tonally suggestive, consonant, fifths-based harmony. Perhaps most importantly, Balakauskas *rhetorically* rejected the postmodern, intertextual, dramaturgical elements associated with Schmelz's second 'mimetic' phase, maintaining a consistent commitment to his approach that contrasted with a wider turn towards eclecticism.

Despite this consistency, Balakauskas at one time claimed to have 'tried out various techniques during his long creative career, of which minimalism was his most short-lived fascination'.<sup>80</sup> In fact, as Gaidamavičiūtė acknowledges, something approaching a minimalist impulse can be seen in many of the composer's works, at least to the extent that extensive cellular repetition, pitch centrality and non-linear orientation are associated with the style. Indeed, the term 'tonal serialism' was sometimes interchanged with the term 'serial minimalism' in descriptions of Balakauskas's music.<sup>81</sup> However, there are a smaller number of works more widely taken to clearly demonstrate a minimalist orientation, among which is his 1984 piece *Spengla-Ūla*, for string orchestra. This piece is also highly repetitive, rhythmic, and tonal-leaning. In Gaidamavičiūtė's words, the work, 'quite apart from the rest of his music, is one of his most important contributions to the history of minimalist music in Lithuania.'<sup>82</sup> The author explains that (beyond commonly-occurring features of melodic and harmonic repetition or non-change) *Spengla-Ūla* embodies minimalist ideas on a more structural level, observing,

This through-composed one-movement piece resembles the unfolding of a single bowing gesture in time and space. The texture of a 16-piece string orchestra is divided into four independent layers – four quartets, which relate to each other in heterophonic counterpoint as four dynamic curves. [...] The principal idea behind the work's construction is the acceleration and deceleration in motion, the reversible process or decomposition.<sup>83</sup>

---

<sup>79</sup> Schmelz, *Such Freedom*, 12.

<sup>80</sup> Rūta Gaidamavičiūtė, 'Spengla-Ūla', LMIC (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/find-works/1195/#audio-library>, 30.12.20).

<sup>81</sup> Daunoravičienė, 'Compositional System of Osvaldas Balakauskas', 70.

<sup>82</sup> Gaidamavičiūtė, 'Spengla-Ūla'.

<sup>83</sup> Gaidamavičiūtė, 'Spengla-Ūla'.

The surface level of the piece is very 'busy', as is often the case in Balakauskas's works. The fragmentary gestures at the surface level have something more of a binary character than other examples of his melodic writing (such as in *Ludus Modorum* where the series frequently unfolds in a consecutive sequence like a 'traditional' melody). In *Spengla-Ūla*, the frequent, riff-like and often textural alternation between two consecutive pitches (often a tone or semitone apart) can give more of an 'on/off' quality to the dissonance, or what the composer might have described as 'intensity', in context. This feature, in combination with the much slower rate of change in terms of overall pitch centre, harmony, or directed (rather than 'switching') motion in the lowest parts, leads to a greater overall feeling of stasis as well as to a lower-impact dissonance or 'intensity'. The work intensifies cumulatively and arrives at some sharply dissonant additive harmonic structures, but the binary-switching movement at the surface level and the slower rate of perceptible harmonic (fundamental root) motion lead to a more minimalist-like effect.

By the mid 1980s Balakauskas had approached modernism or composition in general from a number of different angles: a harder, more 'classical' modernist approach in *Cascades* (1967); what came to be a characteristic moderate modernist approach, at least in terms of the tonal-leaning fifths-based harmonic palette and softening of the serial impulse, in *Ludus Modorum* (1972); and a deeper exploration of minimalism than necessarily characterised his frequent recourse to cellular and pitch-centre repetition elsewhere, in *Spengla-Ūla* (1984). *Cascades* is perhaps unsurprising as one of the clearest examples of a more traditional atonal idiom among the pieces discussed here, since it was composed during Balakauskas's student years. Though different in many ways, *Ludus Modorum* and *Spengla-Ūla* share the broad feature — which also characterises much of the composer's later work — of combining an obvious penchant for dissonance, constructivism and audible complexity with a softening impulse, as achieved through means such as those explored above.

### **3.6 Post-Soviet-era works**

When Soviet control of the Baltic States ended, according to Gruodytė, the effect was not so much one of 'rupture'.<sup>84</sup> As such it might be expected that there would not necessarily be any obvious changes in Balakauskas's works around this time. It is worth noting that, although there may be no significant change to a composer's music across the Soviet/ post-Soviet divide, the associations of a term like 'moderate modernism' are inevitably different

---

<sup>84</sup> Vita Gruodytė, 'Happening Instead of Rupture, or Rupture as Happening', transl. Tomas Čiučelis, *Lithuanian Music Link* no. 18 (2015) (accessed online, [https://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-18-january-december-2015/happening/#\\_ftn5](https://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-18-january-december-2015/happening/#_ftn5), 16.12.20).

in the 1960s or '70s and the 1990s or 2000s, regardless of a loosening of official restrictions on cultural products. However, at risk of overextending the relevance of a term which has perhaps more obvious connotations in a Soviet context, this section will continue to use the concept of moderate modernism to explore Balakauskas's post-Soviet works — in part because the composer himself expressed a loss of interest in the avant-garde in later years. But although there is a clearly significant political shift in the last decade of the twentieth century in particular with the regaining of Baltic independence, there is a certain continuity in Balakauskas's output that sees the idea of a moderate modernist stance retaining relevance in this new context.

Published in 1991, *Rain for Cracow* sits at the imaginary boundary separating the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. *Rain for Cracow* is another work displaying modernist (or 'difficult') proclivities, tempered by characteristics that lend it a certain degree of accessibility. The ways in which this piece demonstrates a moderate modernist language have parallels in previously discussed examples. Of the works already mentioned, the overall sound-world, with its brief, fragmentary utterances and uncluttered harmonic palette is perhaps closest to *Spengla-Ūla*; however, the harmonic language of *Rain for Cracow* is much more sparse. While it may not be extremely dissonant, its consonant (or 'low intensity') moments lack the comparative additive richness that produce a more euphonic sonority in the earlier work. The surface level is characterised by cellular repetition, while the twelve-note harmonic material is organised in a restricted fashion that simultaneously limits the extent, in the distinctive opening section, of dissonance and diatonic suggestiveness alike.

The opening section — consisting of three notes (G, A and B $\flat$ , which could be interpreted as tonally suggestive) — is structured with the repetitive use of short, lively, anchoring gestures in the solo violin that come to rest on one of these three pitches in turn. In some ways this can be seen as a similar approach to *Ludus Modorum*, in which an overall dodecaphonic piece emphasises a tonal-leaning segment at the outset. The surface level repetitiveness of *Rain for Cracow* serves as a further link to *Spengla-Ūla*, though the textural use of ostinato-like repetition in the latter to create dynamic motion, and the aforementioned bareness and sparseness of the former, result in distinctly different listening experiences. For approximately 40 bars this jittery, monodic, would-be-monotonous material is the only activity, but in subsequent sections the music expands with the entry of the piano (or harpsichord) and a larger collection of pitches. This wider cumulative quality, in addition to the immediately obvious surface-level repetition, lends a minimalist sensibility to the work.

In terms of Whittall's hallmarks of moderate modernism, *Rain for Cracow* displays a definite use of 'motivic or thematic statement' and 'rhythmic, metric regularity'.<sup>85</sup> The

---

<sup>85</sup> Arnold Whittall, 'Individualism and accessibility: the moderate mainstream, 1945–75', *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Anthony Pople (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 370.



question of a conscious distinction between consonance and dissonance<sup>86</sup> is slightly less straightforward. The first place the music settles (for two bars) is on a G. The first section subsequently exclusively comprises alternation between the motive and a two-bar statement of one of its constituent pitches, G, A or B $\flat$ . G is both the first sustained pitch in the piece and the first after the entry of the piano at bar 43. This could be debated as evidence of (moderated) tonal thinking, but inasmuch as Balakauskas elsewhere declared the intensity of intervals to increase in line with well-established diatonic measures of dissonance, it is very likely that G would have been conceived as a point of lower intensity in this context. Although for Balakauskas — at least, as far as he expresses his ideas in *Dodekatonika* — compound and inverted intervals (e.g. a minor third and a major sixth, or a major third and a major tenth) have the exact same intensity score, a sense of disjuncture is achieved here by means of frequent octave displacements. Without these, the first 40 or so bars would cycle still more claustrophobically through just three notes within the narrow — and quite tonally suggestive — range of a minor third. While formulations like Whittall's may not be wholly appropriate for a piece that was written in 1991 (the work does meet all of his criteria for 'moderate modernism',<sup>87</sup> but the criteria in question are defined in relation to mid-century repertoire), the idea of a contemporary idiom that leans into conspicuously traditional parameters in some ways while consciously pursuing audible complexity or 'difficulty' in others is still relevant for a cultural climate leaving behind residual stigma (not to mention external assumptions) attached to the 'defensive integrationism' seen as characteristic of Soviet musical culture.<sup>88</sup> *Rain for Cracow* is further suggestion that this combination of impulses was an ongoing preoccupation for Balakauskas decades after his early expressions of 'tonal serialism' in works like *Ludus Modorum*.

Commentators have often suggested that Balakauskas's distinctive rhythmic and harmonic idioms somehow draw on jazz.<sup>89</sup> The composer has tended to refute this idea, at one point explaining "I like rhythmic progressions that derive from the ideas characteristic of academic music, but musicologists immediately identify this as jazz. Surely, such progressions do trigger strong associations with this music, but there is no direct connection."<sup>90</sup> However, *Bop Art* (1995), for cello or trombone and piano, clearly refers to jazz on some conscious level, in its title as well as its musical content, while retaining a modernist-like commitment to notated complexity and the ultimate control of the author over

---

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> Medić, 'Moderated Modernism', 197.

<sup>89</sup> See references to jazz in Paulauskis, 'Balakauskas', and Katkus, 'Mesmerizing sound world'; Beata Baublinskienė, 'Balakauskas' Requiem released by Naxos', *Lithuanian Music Link No. 10*, 2005 (accessed online, <http://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-10-april-september-2005/balakauskas-requiem-released-by-naxos/>, 23.08.18); and the NAXOS website's biography for Balakauskas (accessed online, [https://www.naxos.com/person/Osvaldas\\_Balakauskas/27302.htm](https://www.naxos.com/person/Osvaldas_Balakauskas/27302.htm), 23.08.18).

<sup>90</sup> 'Pakarklytė', 'Symphonic Tetra'.

the music performed. This piece is ‘difficult’ in ways redolent of composer and jazz pianist Tomas Kutavičius’s descriptions of Balakauskas’s often formidable music (at least from the perspective of a player). While acknowledging that Balakauskas is ‘one of the greatest Lithuanian composers’ and suggesting that there are fingerprints of jazz in his work, Kutavičius emphasises the significant differences in conception and execution of these very distinct forms of music. In relation to Balakauskas’s highly precise and perhaps somewhat unintuitive methods of expressing music in notated form in general — and to *Bop Art* in particular — Kutavičius explained,

In jazz, it’s not possible, this very exact approach... daaa-da, da-dah di-di-da [mimes anxiously reading a complex and obsessively precise rhythm]. [...] And Balakauskas... thinks about it very, very precisely... [CM: Like in *Bop Art*?] ... Yes, like *Bop Art* – this... [mimics struggling to read complex notation, then tearing out own hair]. Argh!<sup>91</sup>

*Bop Art* may be a complex and ‘difficult’ piece, but its potential difficulty for a performer does not necessarily translate into a comparable difficulty for a listener. With its quite explicit references to existing musics and cultural forms, it could be seen to inhabit a kind of rhetorical in-between space regarding the influence of other styles. The score asks for swing articulation, the instinctive treatment of notated music by jazz musicians that, in Kutavičius’s view, represents in its absence a particular shortcoming in works like this one.<sup>92</sup> Though it may not quite reach the loose, swung style described by Kutavičius, the rhythmic shape of the left-hand piano part in *Bop Art* – which, on paper, resembles a characteristic numerically derived syncopation – becomes more recognisable on listening as approximating a swung, walking bass pattern.

The right-hand part at the opening of the work is mostly stacked fourths (similar to the kind of quartal harmony common in some jazz<sup>93</sup>), and within three bars Balakauskas has used all twelve pitches. Although jazz styles are of course also often highly chromatic, this is perhaps another example of the flexibility this composer’s methods and rhetoric have afforded him. Twelve-tone pitch collections can obviously be organised into shapes that emphasise familiar harmonic allusions; textural, decorative, passing, rhythmic or other less disruptive roles can similarly be assigned at tactical moments to groups of notes that would undermine these allusions too much. Although the composer has at times rebutted claims that his music is inspired by jazz, his own notes to the score of the 1998 String Quartet No. 3 make explicit reference to this putative relationship. While asserting that the work’s pitch content ‘derives from the eleven – tone scale conceived as “diatonic” (hendekatonika)’, he

---

<sup>91</sup> Tomas Kutavičius interview (conducted by Claire McGinn, Vilnius, 2018).

<sup>92</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> ‘Quartal Harmony’, in *Continuum Encyclopedia of Popular Music of the World Vol. II*, ed. John Shepherd, David Horn, Dave Laing, Paul Oliver and Peter Wicke (London and New York: Continuum, 2003), 545.

acknowledges that ‘the character of its harmony and “melodies” reveal affinity to some properties of jazz.’<sup>94</sup> In the opening bars of the quartet, the harmony at points of repose resembles a sequence of dominant ninth chords. At the same time as it effectively mirrors some idiomatic fingerprints of some jazz styles (while presumably retaining a plausible justification of harmonic constructivism), *Bop Art* appears to leave little room for performer contributions to the musical result. This patent recourse to the work concept, in the form of a complex and completed score with no instructions or invitations to ad lib, contrasts with the centrality of improvisation to the evoked genre. *Bop Art* combines referentiality with the kinds of preoccupations with complexity, control over details, and the fixedness of the work that tend to characterise modernist art music. This repetitive, dissonant, rhythmic, piece again meets key criteria for ‘moderate modernism’. Its rhythmic shapes and gestural contours recur; despite the internal complexity of phrases, the notated meter is a consistent 4/8 throughout and the relative regularity of the patterns lends the piece an accessible sense of pulse and motion.

It could be argued that a term like ‘moderate modernism’ has limited relevance as a description of art music written as late as the mid-1990s. However, to some extent, this can be seen as an issue of language. Although the context in which his music is produced has changed significantly, Balakauskas was still operating in the 1990s in a discursive space where there were well-established (if not necessarily well-defined) concepts of distinct accessible/popular/‘easy’ and inaccessible/elitist/‘difficult’ musics. It was in a 2003 interview that the composer claimed it was his ‘fate’ to write ‘difficult’ music,<sup>95</sup> demonstrating that these concepts still meant something to the composer outside of the Soviet context. If it is no longer a question of ‘moderating’ modernist impulses for a restrictive political climate, perhaps a similar artwork can latterly be understood as the result of bringing to bear an almost ‘old school’ inclination towards complexity and modernist-like models of authorship on a postmodern scene, supporting the idea of a consistency of artistic convictions crossing the boundary of the end of the USSR. Drawing on popular musics and jazz may have been considered a hallmark of modernist art music composition earlier in the twentieth century,<sup>96</sup> but in this later, post-Schnittke, context is perhaps more likely to be associated with postmodernism. From this perspective Balakauskas can be seen to bring modernist constructivist impulses to the postmodern incorporation of different genre signifiers. Paulauskis called Balakauskas an ‘enthusiast[ic] modernist in times of postmodernism’<sup>97</sup> —

---

<sup>94</sup> Osvaldas Balakauskas, String Quartet No. 3 (1998), 4. Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, [https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/static.mic.lt/media/filer\\_public/f0/0f/f00f411b-3238-4f82-b685-298f724eb473/balakauskaskvartetasn3.pdf](https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/static.mic.lt/media/filer_public/f0/0f/f00f411b-3238-4f82-b685-298f724eb473/balakauskaskvartetasn3.pdf), 22.10.19).

<sup>95</sup> Bamberger, ‘Fate and Osvaldas Balakauskas’, 143

<sup>96</sup> Jānis Kudiņš, ‘Latvian Music History in the Context of 20th-century Modernism and Postmodernism. Some Specific Issues of Local Historiography’, *Musicological Annual* 54/2 (2018), pp. 97-139: 106-7.

<sup>97</sup> Paulauskis, ‘Osvaldas Balakauskas’.

around a similar time to when Daunoravičienė suggests that Balakauskas had already left modernism behind. Perhaps what is more significant than which particular impulse (either towards ‘difficulty’ or towards its mediation or moderation) predominates at a given time is the fact that the rhetoric or imagery of inbetweenness has prevailed, alongside the image of Balakauskas as an outsider, well into a period when this can no longer be explained by pointing to Soviet restrictions.

By 1998, Daunoravičienė writes, Balakauskas ‘bade farewell’ to twentieth-century modernism with his Fourth Symphony, adding that his loss of interest in ‘the procedures of the compositional manipulations of the avant-garde was confirmed’<sup>98</sup> in 2001 with his Fifth Symphony. This work, the author asserts, demonstrated that ‘the conceptually constructed series and the structural “alchemy” of formation were losing relevance’<sup>99</sup> for Balakauskas. These two works arguably display a less hard-edged inclination than the rhetoric surrounding Balakauskas’s output overall might suggest. While the Fourth Symphony retains a characteristic extended sonority with a familiar prevalence of dominant sevenths and disjunct melodic contours, it also demonstrates a far greater tendency towards long, *legato* lines rather than edgy rhythmic accentuation; sustained chords and less jagged textures; more straightforwardly consonant harmony, and even a somewhat more neo-romantic, elegiac leaning. Meanwhile the comparatively more dynamic, angular and rhythmic Fifth Symphony is emphatically centred in D minor and is highly consonant. In a 2007 article Balakauskas is quoted as saying “I do not reject melody, rhythm or harmony, which the avant-garde insistently destroys. I no longer want to be an avantgardist, it does not interest me anymore”.<sup>100</sup> However, it may also be fruitful to explore the idea that there is something narratively convenient, or at least which makes a satisfying narrative sense, about the idea that Balakauskas should abandon modernist constructivism or formalism not long after the advent of a postmodern, post-Soviet era. The idea of Balakauskas as a bold, uncompromising outsider, refusing to take the path of least resistance, would be consistent with the idea of his losing interest in a style which is no longer either new or prohibited.

While, on the one hand, an old-school formalist approach was perhaps no longer on the rise in the 1990s with the growing prominence of postmodern aesthetics, this does not really hold up as an explanation since 1) composers like Boulez were able to enjoy enormous success and attention at this time despite writing ‘difficult’ music and/or upholding staunch modernist views to the point of courting controversy, and 2) Balakauskas never previously tended to lean much towards what was most fashionable (actively eschewing the folk craze and demonstrating a preoccupation, however cloaked or mediated, with individuality in the

---

<sup>98</sup> Daunoravičienė, ‘Compositional System of Osvaldas Balakauskas’, 66.

<sup>99</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> Pakarklytė, ‘Symphonic Tetra’.

creation of his *Dodekatonika* treatise). Indeed, once his characteristic style has become established, it is difficult to find much in Balakauskas's output that approaches a perceptible 'rejection' of melody, harmony or rhythm. Works described as challenging by Kutavičius and others, such as *Bop Art*, retain a clear inclination towards fourth- and fifth-based consonance, a strong (if complex) rhythmic drive, and distinct melodic features. The same article in which Balakauskas is quoted as denouncing the avant-garde also makes reference to 'tonal serialism'. In some ways the term itself is a microcosm of the extent of Balakauskas's modernist inclinations — while he took less-trodden paths in his methods for mediating modernism and declined to engage with some of the more fashionable or 'politically correct' styles, he nonetheless continually maintained a certain 'traditional' approach to many common-practice European classical parameters.

What was considered radical or provocative in composition in the 1960s and '70s is different to what would have been considered radical or provocative in the late 1990s, and for much of Balakauskas's roughly half-century long compositional career there is a consistency of style that suggests that he was rarely particularly interested in being 'an avantgardist' for its own sake. Perhaps, as Daunoravičienė suggests, there is some kind of 'break' in the late nineties in terms of Balakauskas's thinking around innovation, newness, and what he described as an avant-garde orientation. However, there is also a notable continuity across much of his output, which can in large part be attributed to his commitment to establishing a fixed and replicable schema for approaching harmonic writing. I would argue that the sense of a continuity of language and conceptual priorities is perceptible in his output since the 1980s, in spite of the diversity of areas in which Balakauskas has experimented. His earlier works, particularly those written during and shortly after the commencement of his studies in Kiev, are comparatively more edgy, nervous, atonal,



Figure 3.12 — Basis of recurrent ostinato pattern in *Rex Re*.

dissonant, disrupted, and irregular, but in those pieces where a really distinctive sound has been reached, Balakauskas returns frequently to a harmonic palette redolent of extended tonal harmony, a tendency towards immediate and insistent repetition of referential pitches,

and a rhythmic drive which, though distortingly syncopated on a micro-level, insistently conforms to larger, regular and frequently symmetrical units. This tendency towards regularity in terms of 'periodicity', to use Christopher Hasty's term,<sup>101</sup> might also be interpreted as a hallmark of a moderate modernist approach. *Dal Vento* (1999) for cello and piano, creates a similar sound world, evoking dominant seventh harmony and relying on rhythmic repetition to create dynamism, to the 1981 works *Ornaments* and *Concerto* for oboe, the 2012 *String Quartet no. 5*, and the 2015 *Dialogues*.

Balakauskas' work is frequently characterised by a combination of dissonance and tonal implication. This effect is often achieved through some combination of pitch centre assertion by pedal/ostinato, other insistent repetition of referential pitches, and tonally suggestive use of octatonic modes. *Rex Re* (2000) is emblematic of these techniques. The title's 'royal *Re*'<sup>102</sup> is a D natural that repeats throughout the 11-minute piece, with the exception of a handful of bars where the rhythmic ostinato figure shifts to consecutive pitches. Continuous motor rhythms enforce *Re* as a pitch centre, with as much urgency when it is entirely unchallenged as when it is juxtaposed with varied harmonic implications. There are only twenty-two bars out of *Rex Re*'s 304 which do not feature a repeated D natural in the motor rhythm pattern shown in Figure 3.12 or a near variant (fifteen of these do not include the rhythmic pattern at all, while seven bars feature it on E $\flat$ , F, or B). The recurring ostinato cells express rhythmic symmetries; it has been suggested that Balakauskas, 'as rarely a Lithuanian composer does, pay[s] particular attention to rhythm'.<sup>103</sup> This assertion may belie a picture of Lithuanian art music that is somewhat coloured by euphonic minimalist or neo-romantic dominance, since several of the composers discussed in subsequent Chapters — notably Tomas Kutavičius, Remigijus Merkelys and Vykintas Baltakas — have written highly rhythmic and rhythmically-complex music. However, it also evokes Gruodyté's claim that a specific lack of systematic attention to rhythm was a contributing factor to the, in her view, underwhelming showing of serialist music in Lithuania; Balakauskas's consistent attention to rationalised rhythmic writing, through his self-professed use of symmetrical numeric patterns as a basis to avoid simpler, more 'somatic' or more 'natural' rhythms, is another element of his profile as a composer that seems to have situated him discursively somewhat outside what was seen as the norm. The constant rhythmic assertion in *Rex Re* of the pitch D results in an increased sense of tonal reference in spite of the non-diatonic and dissonant nature of the piece. This effect is furthered by the frequent organisation of the octatonic pitch material into fifth-based figures reminiscent of dominant sevenths and other additive tonal harmonic constructions. Minor seventh harmonic intervals and tertiary motion

---

<sup>101</sup> Christopher Hasty, *Meter as Rhythm — 20th Anniversary Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 7-8.

<sup>102</sup> Bamberger, 'Fate and Osvaldas Balakauskas', 151.

<sup>103</sup> Bamberger, 'Fate and Osvaldas Balakauskas', 152.

in the bass provide a strongly suggestive undercurrent for more diminished intervals in the flute and violin — echoing the practice in *Ludus Modorum* of typically restricting the most chromatic and disjunct (or ‘intense’) intervals to the upper parts and ensuring a consonant, fifth-based foundation for more dissonant harmonic extensions.

Balakauskas often turns to symmetry as an acceptably rational alternative to more intuitive structuring impulses, particularly in the pursuit of less predictable or somatic rhythmic patterns. In terms of pitch, the composer makes use of palindromic figures and symmetrical octatonic sets for melodic and harmonic writing respectively. *Rex Re* is completely octatonic and uses only one symmetrical eight-note mode; D, E $\flat$ , F, G $\flat$ , A $\flat$ , A, B, and C are the only pitches to occur in the piece. This necessitates a degree of repetitiveness, tempered by the complexity and seeming irregularity of the (actually equally repetitive) rhythmic material. The octatonic scale which comprises the pitch content of this piece presents a challenge to Re’s claims to supremacy: if every pitch in this mode is equally weighted, with no particular grounds for hierarchical organisation implicit in its abstract form, alternate measures must be taken to secure dominance (as outlined above). Further to the inherent symmetry of the octatonic scale, the pitches of the ‘diminished’ construction on which the majority of the harmonic motion is based are also symmetrically organised. The considerable number of palindromes and retrogrades in *Rex Re* is testament to the composer’s penchant for numerical symmetry to disrupt metric regularity. Examples include bar 8 and bars 27-9, in which misaligned symmetries are layered over the top of the constant, regularly recurring bass ostinato (which itself is symmetrical in both its 2- and 3-bar patterns). The rhythmically symmetrical bass ostinato follows a 2- and 3-bar pattern of recurrence; registral alternation is asymmetric but recurs with varying degrees of regularity at different points. Prominent registral alternation patterns between D4, D3 and D2 start to recur after eight bars in the first appearance (bars 1-12), with a two-bar rhythmic alternation pattern. In the closing section (bars 272-302), the rhythmic and registral alternations are generally arranged in a recurring three-bar pattern, though there are a number of irregular repetitions. Some of the rhythmic cells recur regularly in an augmented form, often in combination with the original figures at different textural strata; figure 3.13 shows layers of rhythmic symmetries from a two-bar excerpt (one square represents one semiquaver beat, and colours are used to differentiate between different note values, which are arranged symmetrically in various layers; one red square represents a semiquaver, two blue squares represent a quaver, and three green squares represent a dotted quaver). Symmetries also appear in melodic writing in *Rex Re* – see, for instance, a recurring theme, as it appears in the flute part from bar 108, shown in figure 3.14. The rhythm in this instance is palindromic, a common feature of Balakauskas’s work. Hinging on an axial minor third (an interval fundamental to the harmonic content of the piece as a whole) and with another minor third

between the outer pitches, the second half of the melody is a retrograde inversion of the first (see figure 3.15). These serial-like techniques of symmetry are combined with minimalist-like approaches to continuity and recurrence on a larger scale.

Repetition (immediate, cellular, accentuated, ostinato-based and obvious) is one of the central recurring characteristics of Balakauskas's works. Balakauskas has written many pieces which combine a minimalist-like degree of repetitiveness and pitch centricity with a modernist-like taste for dissonance, rhythmic complexity and rationalised forms of organisation; *Rex Re* is another notable example. Alongside the constant insistence on the supremacy of D, its limited octatonic pitch set already makes for fairly repetitive listening. Adding to that the near-ubiquitous assertion of the rhythmic motor ostinato, it is clear that repetition is a defining feature of *Rex Re*. Still, it is not without contrasts and structural definition (albeit appearing somewhat as a complement to the *perpetuum mobile* elements). Figure 3.16 shows overall proportions in terms of parts of the piece dominated by the ostinato pedal and those with more harmonic motion (tertiary cycling through octatonic pitches that evoke a dominant-like pull back to D natural). That the piece is bookended by an emphatically asserted pitch centre while the central sections suggest 'immanent' dominant harmonic relationships is another example of Balakauskas's characteristic retention of certain fundamentally traditional elements.

*Rex Re* demonstrates Balakauskas's enduring modernist-leaning tendencies while also embodying a moderate inclination concerned with the retention of certain common-practice/orientating parameters as building blocks: referential pitch centricity; cellular repetitiveness; dissonance underpinned with dominant seventh foundations and other extended-tonal-leaning harmonies built from octatonic sets; and an immediate, 'nervous' rhythmic irregularity tempered by an overarching periodicity. Balakauskas's music shares with euphonic styles a certain repetitive, non-linear inclination (Vykintas Baltakas likens it

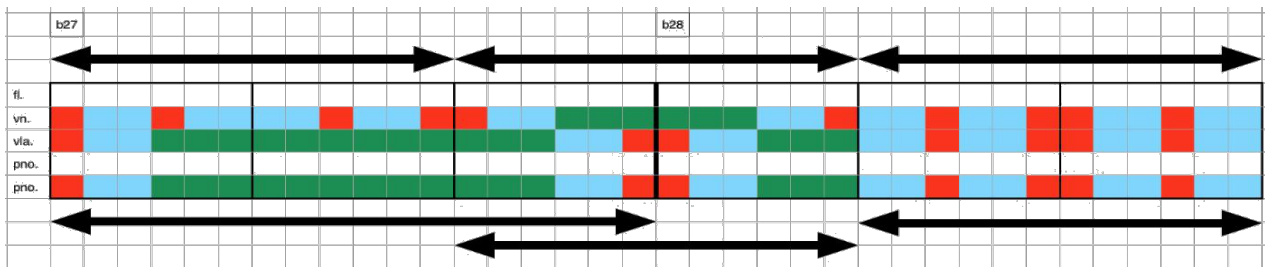


Figure 3.13 — Example of layers of rhythmic symmetries in bars 27-8 of *Rex Re*. (One square = one semiquaver beat; one red square = one semiquaver; two blue squares = one quaver; and three green squares = one dotted quaver.)





Figure 3.14 — Octatonic flute melody with rhythmic and intervallic symmetry, *Rex Re*.

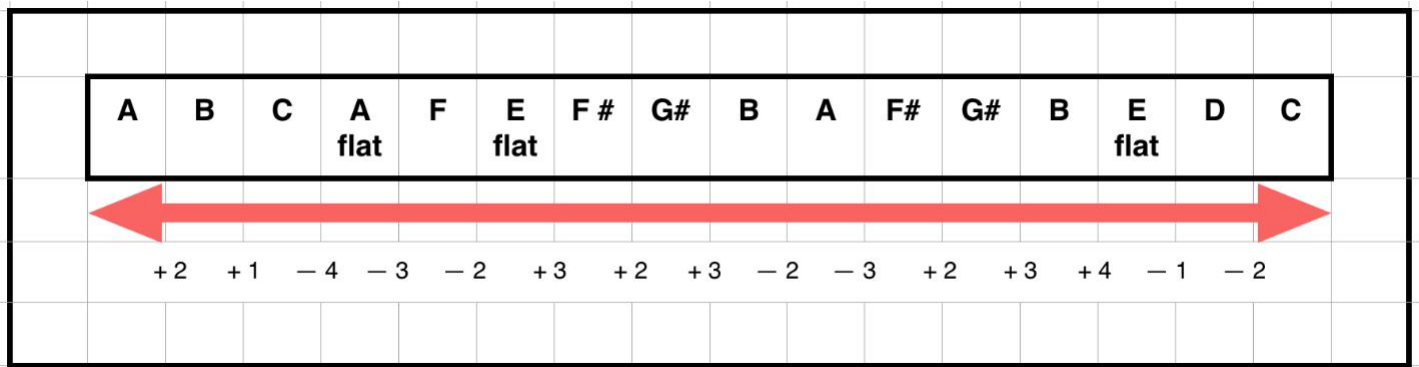


Figure 3.15 — Intervallic symmetry in flute melody (*Rex Re*).

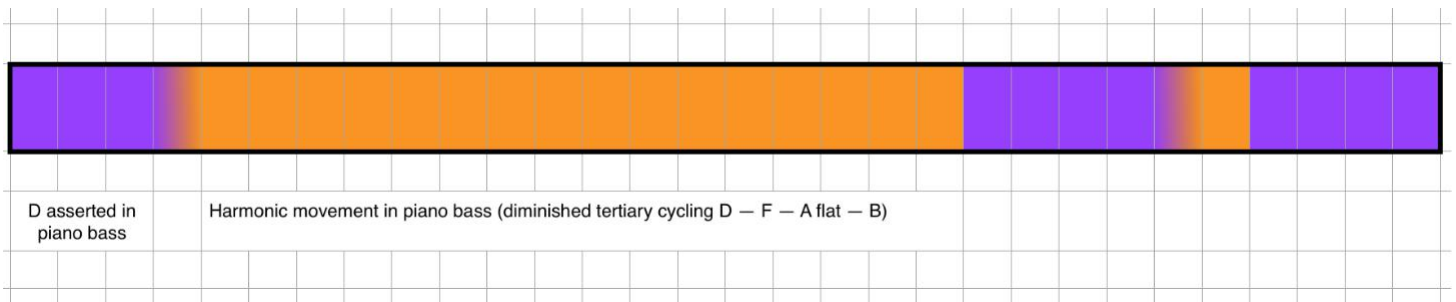


Figure 3.16 — Sections of *Rex Re* with D asserted in piano bass through ostinato and sections with tertiary cycling harmony.

to jazz, saying that it ‘doesn’t want to go anywhere’<sup>104</sup>); however, unlike euphonic minimalisms that have been described as ‘non-conflicting’<sup>105</sup> and ‘non-dialectical’,<sup>106</sup> the

<sup>104</sup> Vyintas Baltakas interview with Claire McGinn, Brussels, December 2017.

<sup>105</sup> Nakas, ‘What is the Lithuanian Brand of Minimalism?’

<sup>106</sup> Erik Heine, ‘Games, Simplicity and Trees: an analysis of Arvo Pärt’s *Arbos*’, *Analysing the Music of Living Composers (and Others)*, ed. Jack Boss, Brad Osborn, Tim S. Pack and Stephen Rodgers (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 54-55.

immanent dominant philosophy underpinning Balakauskas's sound world is inherently dialectical, conflict-based, and centred around peaks and troughs of tension.

On the whole, musical modernism in mid-twentieth-century Lithuania was moderate, and was characterised by modes of engagement with serialism mediated by ideological obligations. Emerging from such a context, Osvaldas Balakauskas is frequently painted as a notably radical, unusually uncompromising figure, primarily due to his 'difficult', dissonant, angular music; his preference for modernist rhetoric, outspoken avowals of formalism and rejection of folk inspirations, simplicity and programmatic associations; and his having, uniquely among Lithuanian composers at the time, produced a (perhaps somewhat purposefully) dense theoretical work on his compositional method, in the tradition of modernist-leaning predecessors and peers. However, Balakauskas was in other ways also a rather moderate modernist, and even some of his most formalist pronouncements can be read as conforming to certain Soviet ideals. Most immediately apparent is the relative consonance of his fifths-based harmonic writing and the familiar shape of the immanent dominant relation. In *Dodekatonika*, Balakauskas implies that his harmonic system is an observation, not an invention — that it is a scientific reality present in western art music of all canonic periods, not a suspiciously fashionable intellectual novelty. While Paulauskis has described Balakauskas as an 'enthusiastic modernist in times of postmodernism', Daunoravičienė asserts elsewhere that he 'bade farewell to modernism' in a piece from 1998. Observers have repeatedly expressed surprise and admiration at Balakauskas's ability to be an advocate for modernism in a Soviet artistic climate — but perhaps it is equally notable that he was able not only to justify but to establish and maintain a reputation as a staunch modernist while writing fifths-based tonal-leaning works, describing serialism in the mould of Schoenberg as 'chaos' and arguing, in 2008, that 'tonality is what separates *music* from *sounds*'.<sup>107</sup>

Daunoravičienė's suggestion that the 'laconic pointillism' of *Cascades-1* was inspired by Webern can be contrasted with the common reactions to Webern described in Schmelz's study of 'unofficial' Soviet composers like Silvestrov — who, Schmelz asserts, initially essentially shared Heinrich Neuhaus's opinion that Webern, though strangely compelling and intriguing, was "absolute shit"<sup>108</sup> and frustratingly incomprehensible. Schmelz notes that

Neuhaus's response to Webern was typical of both Soviet audiences and Soviet composers during the Thaw. His curiosity for this music was strong, and although

---

<sup>107</sup> Daunoravičienė, 'Compositional System of Osvaldas Balakauskas', 69-70.

<sup>108</sup> Schmelz, 'Such Freedom', 129.

his initial reaction was one of disgust, he felt compelled to try again and again to understand the music.<sup>109</sup>

Meanwhile, although he would later disparage the perceived 'chaotic' quality of Schoenbergian atonality,<sup>110</sup> Balakauskas had 'arrived in Kiev already having a vision of a 'creative system [...] derived from Schönberg's dodecaphony, with which he had got acquainted in Vilnius already before his studies in Kiev, from Schaeffer's book *Klasycy dodekafonii* (1961-1964) sent to him by a Polish friend.'<sup>111</sup> In contrast to later claims that Balakauskas had moved on from modernism, Daunoravičienė recounts that in the mid 1980s the composer had professed to view 'the word "modern" as the most desirable epithet for a composer' and viewed 'modernity as the ability "to be at the cusp of time".'<sup>112</sup> Though his dislike of eclecticism filtered through to some of his own students, Balakauskas's music indeed sailed close to many different styles, often refracted or justified through the prism of his fifths-based dodecaphonic method. *Spengla-Ūla* is redolent of American post-minimalists like John Adams; comparisons with Hindemith, Stravinsky, Ligeti or Bartók might also be drawn in works like *Rex Re*, *Dal Vento* and *Orgjia*, and Balakauskas explicitly discussed the harmonic influence of Debussy, explaining that he approached a comparable sonic palette in some works through rational compositional means.<sup>113</sup> The tension between a quite insistent rhetoric of radical consistency and evidence of a markedly eclectic, at times overtly polystylistic, inclination is one of several interesting points of apparent contradiction in Balakauskas's output, serving to highlight the heuristic role of *Dodekatonika* as well as possibly having roots in ideological uncertainties of the period.

As well as being a highly influential teacher and theorist, Balakauskas's compositional back catalogue offers many examples of repetitive, motor-rhythmic, dissonantly paratonal and decisively lattice-based musics that can be seen to some extent as an archetypal strand of Lithuanian contemporary composition, beyond the somewhat narrower remit of strictly (post-)minimalist works. From here, this thesis will trace connections with and departures from this loose collection of musical characteristics which, while by no means instituted solely by Balakauskas, are vividly present in his output. In conclusion, while Balakauskas indubitably pushed certain limits – perhaps including having an earlier enthusiasm for serialism than some of his peers in Kiev – he seemingly accommodated others. He is typically framed as an outstanding, isolated figure in modern Lithuanian music history. Admittedly, it does not appear that he has obvious discursive counterparts in Latvian or Estonian music historiography. Balakauskas was also a hugely influential educator who

---

<sup>109</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> Daunoravičienė, 'Compositional System of Osvaldas Balakauskas', 69-70.

<sup>111</sup> Daunoravičienė, 'The Lithuanian Path to Modernism in Music', 52.

<sup>112</sup> *ibid.*, 53-54.

<sup>113</sup> Stanevičiūtė, 'Modernisation of Lithuanian Music during Cold War Era', 25.

taught many of the composers discussed in this thesis. Though necessarily mediated, his voice has been a significant modernist contribution to twentieth-century Baltic art music, and seemingly one quite unique to Lithuania.

#### **4. Vanilla and chilli:**

##### **Machinist minimalists Nomeda Valančiūtė and Rytis Mažulis**

Balakauskas's career and span of influence has stretched over many decades. This is also true of Rytis Mažulis, who is described as 'one of the most distinctive figures in contemporary Lithuanian music'.<sup>1</sup> However, Mažulis was also part of a group of composers, including Nomeda Valančiūtė, associated with a particular moment. The 'machinist' composers rose to prominence in the mid 1980s; their appearance coincided with the Gorbachev administration, and has been understood as a rebellion against prevailing euphonic norms. In the context of what Albertas Navickas describes as a 'cult of beautiful music', these composers, whose machine-like music represents a strand of Lithuanian post-minimalism, apparently displayed a 'certain immunity towards neoromantic ideas'.<sup>2</sup>

The preceding Chapters have explored the dominance and political implications of the broad euphonic aesthetic and asserted that, both prior to and concurrent with the late-twentieth century explosion of popularity of these styles, Lithuanian composers were also negotiating modernist paradigms locally, inevitably with relation to the particular limits and opportunities of their sociopolitical landscape. The present Chapter will discuss a group of composers whose work has been specifically narrativised as a critical response to the accessible consonant palettes that loomed large in Lithuanian art music in the second half of the twentieth century, both in the form of conservative romanticism and radical ecological/spiritual minimalisms. Pakarklytė deconstructs the Lithuanian classical canon, arguing that historiographic categories like *neo-romantic* and *machinist* are not simply arbitrary labels for 'distinct generations of composers', but that they crucially 'represent myths of the national culture and also pragmatic ideological constructs'.<sup>3</sup> She also asserts that the historically specific dialectical pairing of neo-romantic and machinist represents the 'last boundary of the national history of Lithuanian music' — the end of the 'meta-narrative', beyond which no particular stories of conflict or meaning are constructed around subsequent composers, all of whom are either discussed as individuals or simply categorised as 'younger' (seemingly almost irrespective of how old they now are).<sup>4</sup> This Chapter will investigate how this music might be understood as a rejection of euphonicism, in light of the broader meanings of the latter, asking: How is it like, or not like, 'mainstream' American or

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Rytis Mažulis', Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/composers/mazulis/#bio>, 15.12.20).

<sup>2</sup> Albertas Navickas, 'Retro-Listening', *Lithuanian Music in Context, vol II: Landscapes of Minimalism* (Vilnius: Lithuanian Music Information Centre, 2011), 47.

<sup>3</sup> Asta Pakarklytė, 'Black-and-white Post-minimalism, or the Lithuanian Spleen', *Lithuanian Music in Context*, 29.

<sup>4</sup> Pakarklytė, 'Black-and-white Post-minimalism', 29.

'spiritual' post-minimalisms? And, what themes and issues emerge from these pieces, and how do these relate to the issues raised in the preceding Chapters? The Chapter discusses two machinist composers — Nomeda Valančiūtė and Rytis Mažulis, both born in 1961 — and their work, addressing the above questions with a focus on the following features: repetition and/or process; harmony and timbre; and rhetoric of reception and associated imagery.

Sovietism in mid-1980s Lithuania, according to Nakas, was 'one huge, shabby bag with countless holes from which absolutely everything was leaking'.<sup>5</sup> Resistance groups pushed the boundaries of acceptable political discourse as a 'litmus test' of *glasnost* and *perestroika* policy.<sup>6</sup> Gruodytė observes that the 1980s as a temporal space in Lithuanian creative art had a peculiar quality of freedom and inward-looking artistic independence, representing a transitional period from stricter state control to a free market economy 'where an artwork became a commodity'<sup>7</sup>; Nakas is quoted as claiming that '[n]o contemporary canons or standards can do justice in describing [this moment] because it was an era of non-economic relations.'<sup>8</sup> Autochthonous folk revivalism had long been associated in the Baltic States with subversive, anti-regime activity<sup>9</sup>; the Lithuanian resistance party Sajūdis would be formed in 1988 to challenge the previously ruling Communist Party of Lithuania<sup>10</sup>; rock music — which was considered by the authorities to be pro-western-capitalist and, therefore, anti-Soviet — had been enjoying a huge and decidedly politicised surge in popularity, and the 1989 events subsequently narrativised as the 'Singing Revolution' were on the horizon.<sup>11</sup> Euphonic, folk-based, mystical minimalist and ecologically-inspired musics like Bronius Kutavičius's 1978 *Last Pagan Rites* were, and still are, considered radical and highly political by many — not at all the toothless 'bathos' or bland 'slush' that some critics associated with the genre.<sup>12</sup> Krzysztof Droba writes that environmentalist or nature-centric artworks (like the music and poetry of Tormis and Kaplinski) were highly subversive because ecology was 'taboo' in the

---

<sup>5</sup> Kęstutis Šapoka, interview with Šarūnas Nakas, 2011, as quoted in Vita Gruodytė, 'Happening Instead of Rupture, or Rupture as Happening', transl. Tomas Čiučelis, *Lithuanian Music Link* no. 18 (2015) (accessed online, [https://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-18-january-december-2015/happening/#\\_ftn5](https://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-18-january-december-2015/happening/#_ftn5), 16.12.20).

<sup>6</sup> Leonidas Donskis, *Identity and Freedom: Mapping Nationalism and Social Criticism in Twentieth-Century Lithuania*, 2002, as quoted in Dario Martinelli, 'Communicating and Playing Independence: The role of Antis in the Lithuanian Singing Revolution', *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, 50(1/2), 2019, pp. 297-318: 308.

<sup>7</sup> Vita Gruodytė, 'Happening Instead of Rupture, or Rupture as Happening', *Lithuanian Music Link* no. 18 (2015) (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-18-january-december-2015/happening/>, 23.12.20).

<sup>8</sup> Šapoka, interview with Nakas, as quoted in Gruodytė, 'Happening Instead of Rupture'.

<sup>9</sup> See Milda Bakšys Richardson, 'Reverence and Resistance in Lithuanian Wayside Shrines', *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* vol. 10 (2005), pp. 249-267; Mimi Daitz, *Ancient Song Recovered*; Thomas Salumets, *Unforced Flourishing*.

<sup>10</sup> Ainė Ramonaitė and Jūratė Kavaliauskaitė, 'Who led the "Singing Revolution" across Lithuania? A typology of the pioneers of the Sajūdis movement', transl. Isabelle Chandavoine-Urbaitis and John Angell, *Ethnologie Française*, 170/2 (2018), pp. 305-318: 305.

<sup>11</sup> Martinelli, 'Communicating and Playing Independence: The role of Antis in the Lithuanian Singing Revolution', 297-8; 301-2.

<sup>12</sup> See David Fanning, 'Review: Baltic Voices 2' (accessed online, <https://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/baltic-voices-2>, 16.12.20); Andrew Clements, 'Tickmayer: Eight Hymns; Franck: Piano Quintet; Kancheli: Silent Prayer – review', *Guardian*, 4 Nov 2010 (accessed online, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2010/nov/04/tickmayer-eight-hymns-franck-piano-quintet-kancheli-silent-prayer-review>, 16.12.20).

Soviet Union,<sup>13</sup> and Baltakas has likened the fervent admiration of Bronius Kutavičius in 1980s Lithuania to the status of Verdi in the Italian Revolution. But members of a younger generation are often underwhelmed by the ways in which radicalism was defined by the generation before them. While it might be inaccurate to suggest that composers ‘transgressed’ against a rigid official norm at this point, compared to earlier times when there was a stronger impression of approved and less-approved styles, this younger generation of composers in the mid-80s are seen to have adopted a striking aesthetic stance against the dominant popular palette in the local art music context, such that their emergence is frequently narrativised as a form of rebellion.

This trend subverts expectations of a pervasive tendency towards consonance in Baltic art music (particularly Baltic post-minimalism), while simultaneously retaining other defining characteristics of popular minimalist styles. This Chapter will address figures frequently affiliated with the ‘machinist’ movement, a term ‘used more by critics than [...] the composers themselves’,<sup>14</sup> but which nonetheless is presented as a significant phenomenon in Lithuanian art music. While composing in comparably repetitive, process-oriented modes, machinist composers were perceived as overturning a prevailing aesthetic of ‘euphonic’ consonance and folk influence, epitomised by the work of Bronius Kutavičius and broadly characterised by Šarunas Nakas as ‘vanilla’ (as opposed to the machinists’ ‘chilli’).<sup>15</sup> Although his output included broader stylistic exploration, Bronius Kutavičius is generally taken to be synonymous with these styles, which were hugely popular from the 1970s. Conversely, while sharing fingerprints of minimalism, the machinist composers’ works lean towards dissonance, angularity, harsher timbres, driving ‘mechanical’ rhythms, irregularity and a higher degree of complexity than euphonic counterparts. Tautvydas Bajarkevičius explains that the “‘machinist generation’” expressed themselves in ‘alternative and experimental ways’ and ‘forc[ed] their way into the Lithuanian academic music environment’, exploring avenues that ‘had, up until that point, been rather foreign to the current dominant aesthetic tastes.’<sup>16</sup> Bajarkevičius asserts that ‘the strategies’ these composers ‘used to create their identities and their ties with the traditions of the 1980s clearly set them apart from the overall panorama of Lithuanian academic music’.<sup>17</sup> The Lithuanian Music Information Centre elaborates, noting a definitive rejection of ‘the romantic lyricism, rather spontaneous way of composing, and allusions to literature and nature which dominated their predecessors’ work’ which, alongside an emergence of stronger allegiances with “‘pure”

---

<sup>13</sup> Krzysztof Droba, ‘The History and the Present Day of Lithuanian Music (from Čiurlionis to Landsbergis)’, *Revista de Musicologia*, 16/6 (1993), pp. 3684-3691: 3690.

<sup>14</sup> Tautvydas Bajarkevičius, ‘Contemporary Music, Sound Art and Media in Lithuania: From a historical perspective to the present’. Sound Exchange (accessed online, [http://www.soundexchange.eu/#lithuania\\_en?id=40](http://www.soundexchange.eu/#lithuania_en?id=40), 23.09.19).

<sup>15</sup> Šarunas Nakas, ‘Minimalism in Lithuanian Music’, transl. Vida Urbonavičius, Veronika Janatjeva. *Lithuanian Music in Context*, vol. 2: *Landscapes of Minimalism* (Vilnius: Lithuanian Music Information and Publishing Centre, 2011), 20.

<sup>16</sup> Tautvydas Bajarkevičius, ‘Contemporary Music, Sound Art and Media in Lithuania’.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

music' ideals,<sup>18</sup> resulted in the machinists' 'far more severe, and highly formalised' music.<sup>19</sup> In terms of comparisons with international styles, although much has been made of the locally-specific colour afforded by drawing on *sutartinės*, Pakarklytė argues that 'one could hardly deny the influence of New York downtown experiments'.<sup>20</sup> Šarūnas Nakas – who was himself part of the 'machinist' movement – has asserted rather more directly that '[m]achinism was the Lithuanian equivalent of American totalism and thus had much in common with the music of Michael Gordon (b. 1956), David Lang (b. 1957), and Julia Wolf (b. 1958).'<sup>21</sup>

As the evocative name suggests, the 'persistent, minimalistic repetition of short patterns' imbues these works with a 'mechanical, "machinist" character, and edgy, sometimes even aggressive sound'.<sup>22</sup> Bajarkevičius notes the 'aura of creative breakthrough'<sup>23</sup> surrounding composers associated with the machinist style, among whom are variously numbered Nomeda Valančiūtė, Šarūnas Nakas, Rytis Mažulis, Tomas Juzeliūnas, Gintaras Sodeika<sup>24</sup> and Ričardas Kabelis<sup>25</sup> and who all, '[i]n one way or another[,] clearly displayed or partially reflected "machinism" – the cult of technology, mathematical precision, pure logic [...] and [...] a Modernist flair or neo-Dadaist irony'.<sup>26</sup> As mentioned, this Chapter will focus on Mažulis and Valančiūtė in particular, introducing two case study pieces by each composer. Mažulis has been and still is very influential, particularly in terms of a new lease of life for post-minimalist styles, hypercomplexity, a discursive juxtaposition of 'the intersecting highways of modernism and postmodernism'<sup>27</sup>, and a constructivist approach that explores digital paradigms and automation. Valančiūtė's work, while sharing some traits, is illuminatingly different from Mažulis's; her output tends more towards melody, linearity, and an element of drama, in comparison to Mažulis's vertical, minutely process-based, slow-moving textural approach. In Mažulis's pieces, though Daunoravičienė has identified a certain affinity with early music,<sup>28</sup> the 'machine' can typically be construed in futuristic terms — there is a frictionless, digital perfection to many of his works, in particular the computerised piano pieces. Conversely, in Valančiūtė's compositions the machine may be construed as something imperfect, old, fallible, industrial, and malfunctioning; her 1986 keyboard duet *Narcissus* evokes a creaking, wheezing

<sup>18</sup> 'The Modern Music of Lithuania: Past & Present', Lithuanian Music Information Centre. LMIC website (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/history/>, 23.09.19).

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Asta Pakarklytė, 'Black-and-White Post-Minimalism, or the Lithuanian Spleen', *Landscapes of Minimalism*, 32.

<sup>21</sup> Šarūnas Nakas, 'Minimalism in Lithuanian Music', *Landscapes of Minimalism*, 20

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Tautvydas Bajarkevičius. 'Contemporary Music, Sound Art and Media in Lithuania'.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Nakas, 'Minimalism in Lithuanian Music', 20.

<sup>26</sup> Bajarkevičius. 'Contemporary Music, Sound Art and Media in Lithuania'.

<sup>27</sup> Gražina Daunoravičienė, 'Rytis Mažulis', Gaida Festival 2005 programme (accessed online, <https://doczz.net/doc/1307x643/gaidaaktualios-muzikos-festivalis-vilnius>, 16.12.20).

<sup>28</sup> Gražina Daunoravičienė, 'Sound architecture of Rytis Mažulis' microstructural canons (from 100 to the 3,448275862 cents)', *Menotyra* 1/30 (2003), pp. 57-68: 59.



mechanism that is audibly breaking down, unable to reproduce perfect copies of itself. Whatever image of the machine is presented, they are united in their emphatic outsidership to the natural, folk-inspired, euphonic aesthetic palette.

While Mažulis has become a towering figure on the Lithuanian art music scene, Valančiūtė was very much a key and critical voice in the genesis of this particular trend. Her output shows that artists, though perhaps sharing common motivations, produced different responses to euphonicism, and that the machinist movement was not only restricted to the 'Mažulis-like minimalism' that, in 2017, Vykintas Baltakas implied had perhaps become something of a hegemonic institution in its own right.<sup>29</sup> According to Nakas, minimalist art-music styles had originally

emerged in Lithuania not as a result of the unrestrained inner liberty and outward freedom of the hippies [...]. It was neither a phenomenon that originated in the clubs and garages, and even less so in the recording studios [...]. The Lithuanian brand of minimalism of the late 1970s was conceived by the academic composers who chose it as a sort of legitimized (albeit not locally) refined aesthetic and technology.<sup>30</sup>

Nakas's article points out that this new 'muscle-bound and sarcastic mechanical music' was named after two pieces from the mid-1980s: 'Rytis Mažulis's (b.1961) *Čiauškanti mašina* (*Twittering Machine*) for four pianos, and Šarunas Nakas's (b. 1962) *Merz-machine* for thirty-three-piece virtual orchestra'<sup>31</sup> (also in a multi-piano version). The author provides a tour of key moments in minimalist music in Lithuania, highlighting 'primary styles', where 'the intuitive has obviously prevailed over the rational',<sup>32</sup> and 'the rites of Kutavičius' — whose 1978 *Last Pagan Rites* 'may be considered the manifesto of Lithuanian minimalism and an example of its sacred or ritualistic trend' and which 'essentially, [...] represents nothing but reconstruction of the *sutartinės* [folk songs]'<sup>33</sup>). Nakas also describes the popular styles of 'post-minimalism and neo-romanticism' ('repetitive structures and diatonic harmonies [...] sentimentally meditative [...] uncomplicated folk-like rhythms and rock-like timbres [...] ecological, cultural, and existential topics'<sup>34</sup>). Having laid the groundwork, he introduces the machinist intervention:

Vanilla was replaced with chilli; complexity ousted simplicity; grating dissonances and noises [replaced] tender consonances and diatonic harmonies; irony and even aggression [replaced] friendliness towards the listener. Young composers drew inspiration from a variety of sources and, especially, from the avant-garde rather than from the folk or classical music. They were often accused of 'having no sense of

---

<sup>29</sup> Vykintas Baltakas interview, 2017.

<sup>30</sup> Nakas, 'Minimalism in Lithuanian Music', 16.

<sup>31</sup> Nakas, 'Minimalism', 20.

<sup>32</sup> Nakas, 'Minimalism', 17.

<sup>33</sup> Nakas, 'Minimalism', 17.

<sup>34</sup> Nakas, 'Minimalism in Lithuanian Music', 18-19.

history'; instead of mythology and pagan utopias, they were concerned primarily with the virtual reality and dystopias.<sup>35</sup>

This Chapter will focus on the following case studies: two pieces from 1986, the 'genesis' point of the machinist movement — Valančiūtė's *Narcissus* for two keyboard instruments and Mažulis's *Twittering Machine* for four pianists — and, from the early years after independence, Valančiūtė's *Fragment from the Hospital's Park* (1998), for singing string quartet, and Mažulis's *Canon Mensurabilis* (2000), for ensemble.

Mažulis's relationship with Lithuanian modernisms is (as in every case) complex: his work has been enormously influential and is often confronted discursively as somehow liminal or hybrid: being hyper-complex and self-consciously 'rational' in construction, but not forsaking the perceptible associations with minimalism that seem to provide a real anchor for engagement. Mažulis's work is often paratonal; although he frequently writes microtonal music, *Canon Mensurabilis* is organised around equal-tempered and implicitly consonant anchor constructions. Meanwhile *Twittering Machine* 'phases' in and out of harmonic comprehensibility but is constructed from many conventional consonant/diatonic chords. More so, the lattice seems fundamental for Mažulis, whose 'digital' inclinations often see the grid axiom taking an explicitly central role whether or not the music in question is composed for computerised performance.

Similarly Valančiūtė, in her earlier career, openly avoided the 'warmth' and 'beauty' that characterised the ubiquitous (neo-)romantic idioms that the machinist generation sought to reject – but nevertheless wrote tonally-suggestive, melody-dominated music, at times in a neo-classical vein. Her output is heavily weighted towards the paratonal and lattice-based. Referential pitch centres lend tonal implications to otherwise non-functional, dissonant or serially-organised harmonic material; although timbre is important for the instrumentation of *Narcissus* and though some extended techniques are used in *Fragment*, the way that both pieces are constructed – around recurring pitch sequences – is clearly conceived of in terms of a grid axiom. The dry, detached quality of her work, in conjunction with her stated dread of banality at this point in her career, mirrors both Balakauskas's (Chapter 3) ambivalence about 'the 1-2-1-2 dancing of the feet' ('the soil in which banality sprouts') and Vykintas Baltakas's (Chapter 6) dread of overly-sincere, 'mystical' arrangements of archival folk material. In combination, these qualities might perhaps reflect the comparatively strong influence on late-twentieth-century Lithuanian art music of Prokofiev, Shostakovich and Stravinsky, as opposed to an experimental tradition more rooted in lyrical German expressionism. Valančiūtė and Mažulis are associated with a movement or moment that can

---

<sup>35</sup> Nakas, 'Minimalism', 20.

be viewed both as a point of disruption in Lithuanian art music history, and as a influential crystallisation of existing tendencies.

#### **4.1 Rytis Mažulis (b. 1961): Mensurations and machines**

A former student of Julius Juzeliūnas at what is now the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre,<sup>36</sup> Mažulis's influence on contemporary Lithuanian art music as a composer and teacher has been considerable. LMIC describes Mažulis's work as 'marked by a particular stylistic purity, integrity and symmetry', explaining that '[t]he structural isomerism and homogeneity of his music is determined by the composer's attempts to discover the mathematical and physical relations between time, space and sound.'<sup>37</sup> Nakas explains that, in Mažulis's music, 'repetitive principles are enriched by various ideas close to avant-gardism'<sup>38</sup> and Daunoravičienė perceives in his output a 'worship of the microscopy of sounds'.<sup>39</sup> Although, like many of his contemporaries, he has written some 'ethereal vocal compositions', he has also produced, and is arguably better known for, 'monstrous hyper-cansons for computer-piano'<sup>40</sup> like *Clavier of Pure Reason* (1993) and the seminal 1986 *Twittering Machine*.

While Daunoravičienė explores Mažulis' apparent appropriation of fifteenth-century structural ideas, Lunn suggests conversely that his work is characterised not only by an 'intense intellectual drive' but also 'a complete rejection of the past'.<sup>41</sup> Lunn further posits that Mažulis' more consciously intellectualist orientation is another quality that separates him from other prominent trends that, the author proposes, perhaps 'saw minimalism as an opportunity to renounce intellect.'<sup>42</sup> These contrasts highlight the conceptual dissonance between work like Mažulis' and the earlier-discussed euphonic paradigms. Daunoravičienė's biographical note in the LMIC *Twittering Machine* score explicitly claims that 'The composer's musical philosophy, and the consequent technologies and aspirations lie between the intersecting trends of neomodernism and postmodernism'.<sup>43</sup> According to his LMIC page, while 'Mažulis' works are like hypnotic sound rituals, in which it is easy to lose one's sense of time and space',<sup>44</sup> they simultaneously bear 'the quite distinctive stamp of

---

<sup>36</sup> 'Rytis Mažulis', Lithuanian Music Information Centre website (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/composers/mazulis/#bio>, 14.12.20).

<sup>37</sup> LMIC, 'The Modern Music of Lithuania: Past & Present'.

<sup>38</sup> Šarunas Nakas, 'Rytis Mažulis', LMIC website (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/composers/mazulis/>, 23.09.19).

<sup>39</sup> Daunoravičienė, 'Sound architecture', 57.

<sup>40</sup> LMIC, 'The Modern Music of Lithuania: Past & Present'.

<sup>41</sup> Ben Lunn, 'Blog post of pure reason', *Baltic Musical Gems*, July 2016 (accessed online, <http://balticgems.blogspot.com/2016/07/blog-post-of-pure-reason.html>, 23.09.19).

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Gražina Daunoravičienė, notes to *Twittering Machine* score, (Vilnius: Lithuanian Music Information and Publishing Centre, 2007 [1986]).

<sup>44</sup> Rytis Mažulis, LMIC website biography.

laboratory-like creation' and 'retain a balanced academic correctness'.<sup>45</sup> Daunoravičienė writes that Mažulis' 'wildly complicated', 'exceptionally clear constructions', with their 'highly rigoristic procedures', are 'brimming with strong emotion' and 'composed with the utmost emotionality'.<sup>46</sup> The collision of notionally or stereotypically opposing ideas is a feature of meaning-making around the machinists. The discursive meanings of pitting concepts of modernism and postmodernism, rationality and emotionality, or mysticism and science against each other, remain significant in spite of the fact that reality does not conform to binary distinctions or necessarily reproduce these hypothetical antagonisms.

Discussing trends that followed on from the 'craze' for Kutavičius, 'ethno' music, 'silence', and what he referred to as 'soup', composer Vykintas Baltakas explained,

But you see, now we are like 25 years later, and it's not so much Kutavičius and this folkish thing, it's now this Mažulis-like minimalism — in different forms. And that starts to become annoying too, because...I mean, it's much more interesting, and it's very kind of rational too, but at the same time it's sometimes like — okay, we cannot reduce music only to that, no? [laughs]. [...] I think it's very much to do with [public] expectations, and with dependency on a taste, at least in Lithuania — because, maybe it's existential, maybe it's something about making money, about making careers... so that's why the step away from Mažulis is always very small [laughs].<sup>47</sup>

Mažulis's influence has been considerable, but despite this his approach to machine-like repetitive music was not the only one being explored in the mid '80s. Like Mažulis's, Nomeda Valančiūtė's 'minimalist idiom is connected as much with ancient isorhythmic techniques [...] as it is with the principles of 20th-century repetitive music',<sup>48</sup> and this composer's output has been characterised with a similar rhetoric of liminality or hybridity. However, in terms of technical priorities, timbral interests, conceptualisations of history and time, and aesthetic preoccupations, Valančiūtė's work offers another alternative perspective to euphonic post-minimalism.

#### **4.2 Nomeda Valančiūtė (b. 1961): 'Strong, sharp, and not devoid of glitter'**

In a 2004 interview for *Literatūra ir menas*, Nomeda Valančiūtė asserted that she was 'no longer afraid to be banal'.<sup>49</sup> The composer's responses to questions about if and how her

---

<sup>45</sup> Mažulis biography, LMIC.

<sup>46</sup> Daunoravičienė, 'Sound architecture', 65-66.

<sup>47</sup> Interview with Vykintas Baltakas, conducted by Claire McGinn (Brussels, 2017).

<sup>48</sup> 'Nomeda Valančiūtė', Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/composers/valanciute/>, 21.10.19).

<sup>49</sup> Asta Pakarklytė, 'Nomeda Valančiūtė: "Nebebijau būti banali" — Kompozitoriai prieš 20 metų ir dabar', *Literatūra ir menas*, January 30 2004 (accessed online, [http://eia.libis.lt:8080/archyvas/viesas/20111128031607/http://www.culture.lt/lmenas/?leid\\_id=2986&kas=straipsnis&st\\_id=4031](http://eia.libis.lt:8080/archyvas/viesas/20111128031607/http://www.culture.lt/lmenas/?leid_id=2986&kas=straipsnis&st_id=4031), 21.10.19).

style had changed in the decades since she was last interviewed by the publication included the following:

Now I want something more beautiful, warmer. I am not afraid to be banal. I start to regulate emotions differently, not calculations, but hearing. In the past, everything had to be [mannered/moody {*manieringa*}], nervous, sharp, my music had to be non-feminine, radical, and now I want something human-like, I want to communicate.<sup>50</sup>

Associating warmth, communication, and beauty in this way with a perceived risk of banality (not to mention the implicitly negative association with femininity) is one example among others of a conceptual distinction drawn between, and a juxtaposition of, ostensibly (neo)modernist-leaning (or 'machinist') and postmodern-leaning (or 'euphonic') ideas in writing about Valančiūtė's music. This is relevant for the way in which it ties into and (re)produces the national myths and ideological constructs identified by Pakarklytė as a key product of this last stage of the 'grand narrative' of Lithuanian classical music history. The concepts evoked in biographical excerpts from the composer's LMIC page, explored below, demonstrate this tendency further. Valančiūtė's music is described as 'strictly calculated' but 'not technological by nature';<sup>51</sup> while it originates from an elusive 'intuitive impulse,' it is developed by 'methodical work' before taking 'a precisely polished form.'<sup>52</sup> The composer has expressed satisfaction at being "a master, not only a presenter of emotions."<sup>53</sup> In general, the idea that intuitive impulses are combined with methodical work in the process of composition sounds so normal as to appear almost a superfluous observation, but the juxtaposition of feeling/calculating, feminine/masculine, expressive/ instrumental discursive markers — explicitly framed as oppositional — continues throughout the article:

A closer look at the composer's works and their conceptual stimuli reveals interesting internal opposites: frank emotion — and its 'suppression' via uncompromisingly austere structures; a crystal clarity throughout — and the conscious avoidance of 'beauty' (utilization of sharply 'upsetting' dissonance, and frequent application of the 'out of tune' sound of a prepared piano, etc); the stance of a 'pure music' adept - and the multidimensional picturesqueness of this music, its oddly 'theatrical' manner of speaking, and a certain 'bittersweet' glamour which applies only to this composer. [...] The expression of Valančiūtė's music is strong, sometimes pretty sharp, although not void of a certain glitter. The composer states that she finds a rather ascetic style close to her and doesn't like anything overburdened. Therefore, her music is not

---

<sup>50</sup> Translated using Google Translate; original Lithuanian text reads: 'Šiuo metu norisi ko nors gražesnio, šiltesnio. Nebebijau būti banali. Pradedu kitaip reguliuoti emocijas, nebe skaičiavimais, o klausu. Anksčiau viskas turėjo būti manieringa, nervinga, aštru, mano muzika turėjo būti nemoteriška, radikali, o dabar norisi ko nors bendražmogiško, norisi komunikuoti.' Pakarklytė, 'Nomeda Valančiūtė: "Nebebijau būti banali"'.  
<sup>51</sup> 'Nomeda Valančiūtė', Lithuanian Music Information Centre.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*  
<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*

"decorative" even in the works with some distinct programmatic background, a priority is given to the strength of expression, selecting only what is essential.<sup>54</sup>

The strong emphasis on neo-romantic and modernist tropes in discourse around Valančiūtė's work can be related to the particular historiographical priority of narrativising 'machinist' compositions as a neo-modernist rejection of the 'cult of beautiful music' around Lithuanian music's own 'end of history'.<sup>55</sup> The following discussion of works by Mažulis and Valančiūtė considers where these pieces might be seen to intersect with the ideas evoked above.

### **4.3 Twittering Machine (Mažulis, 1986)**

Differences between Mažulis's post-minimalism and the euphonic paradigm explored in Chapter 2 include the latter's tendency towards a greater organicism (in various senses), but also the meanings made of its stylistic fingerprints in verbal discourse. Joshua Meggitt asserts that the *Twittering Machine* record 'is what being clubbed to death by 88 small, padded hammers must feel like — some of the most powerful music I've heard in years.'<sup>56</sup> Observing the parallels between Mažulis' techniques of repetition and those of the most prominent mainstream American minimalists, Meggitt points out that the former composer 'doesn't share their interest in melodic simplicity', but instead 'constructs wildly chaotic cells that only become more complex with each passing cycle.'<sup>57</sup> Characterising Mažulis' work as a more 'visceral', 'jagged' analogue to Nancarrow's player piano works, Meggitt describes *Twittering Machine*'s 'gripping riff' — 'an almost hummable tune of dissonant zig-zagging notes that, after numerous cycles, sticks in the brain like a fishhook'.<sup>58</sup> In the first movement, each pianist plays only one or two semiquaver chords in close succession; the alignment of these cells creates a cumulative rhythmic 'riff'. Looking back in the early 2000s, the composer noted '[i]t used to be said that Mažulis creates one melody, endlessly reproduces it, and thereby composes a large-scale work.'<sup>59</sup> In this sense the composer is framed in a popular discourse of minimalism as 'endlessly' reproducing the same material. In terms of melodic writing, the above quotation is interesting because elsewhere Mažulis has discussed his work in terms of an approach or phenomenon he, following Steve Reich, calls 'resulting patterns', i.e., not composing discrete melodies but producing textures from which

---

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> Pakarklytė, 'Black-and-white minimalism', 30-31.

<sup>56</sup> LMIC, 'Final Chapter of Rytis Mažulis at the Megadisc Classics Catalogues'.

<sup>57</sup> As cited in LMIC, 'Final Chapter of Rytis Mažulis at the Megadisc Classics Catalogues', LMIC website, August 2007 (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/news/2007/08/20/final-chapter-of-rytis-mazulis-at-the-megadisc-cla/>, 23.09.19).

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Veronika Janatjeva, 'Rytis Mažulis: Can Music Work Without Music?', *Lithuanian Music Link No. 5*, 2002-2003, Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-5-october-2002-march-2003/rytis-mazulis-can-music-work-without-music/>, 23.09.19).

they will emerge. We can consider these comments about endlessly repeating one tune in relation to *Twittering Machine*, where individual lines to be played by each individual performer are fragmentary, cellular, and not at all melodic. Described by a reviewer in the online Lithuanian newspaper *Bernardinai* as reminiscent of a precise and noisy mechanism,<sup>60</sup> *Twittering Machine* is a process-based work. Performance instructions, as published in the score, are as follows:

In the first movement, all four performers play from the same graphic score. Here they start simultaneously from the marks 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively, and move in the circle A clockwise. Then they pass to the circle B one after another (I-II-III-IV) and move there counterclockwise, then proceed to the circle A again in the same way, then pass to the circle C (moving counterclockwise in this circle), return to the circle A again, etc. Before playing, all performers decide how many times they would repeat each circle (e.g. 3 times). The end of the first movement — all performers stop simultaneously somewhere in the circle A. The tempo is 60-70, dynamics *ad libitum*, but identical for all four performers.<sup>61</sup>

Each performer's part in the first movement of *Twittering Machine*, which lasts around 4-5 minutes, essentially consists of a collection of statements of one or two diatonic triads. There are no metronome markings, tempo instructions, expression markings, dynamic markings and the only articulation information provided is that every note/chord in the score is marked *staccato*. The score displays the full collection of cells arranged as a series of circles, as described in the notes above; figure 4.1 shows six example cells.

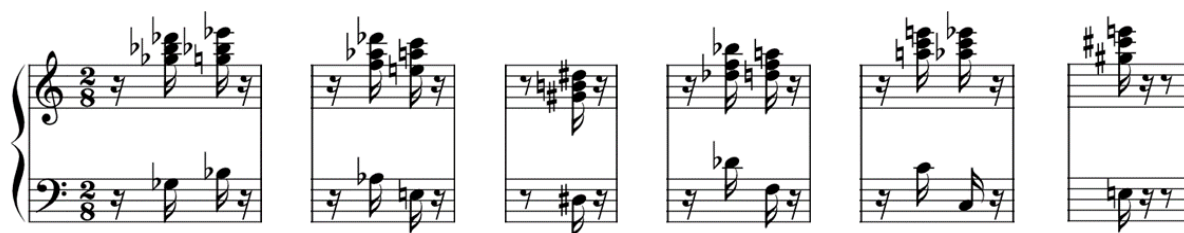


Figure 4.1 — Example motivic cells from *Twittering Machine*, mvt. 1.

Figure 4.2 shows the main three-bar rhythmic patterns for all four piano parts in three different stages of the first movement of *Twittering Machine*, with one square representing one semiquaver beat, to show how the parts align to produce the cumulative riffs notated beneath (the top line, read horizontally, is piano I, second line down is piano II, etc). Movement 2, which initially sounds more chaotic than the first due to its busier texture, more

<sup>60</sup> Rytis Mažulis. "Twittering Machine", *Bernardinai*, November 28, 2005 (accessed online, <http://www.bernardinai.lt/straipsnis/2005-11-28-rytis-mazulis-twittering-machine/12508>, 23.09.19).

<sup>61</sup> Rytis Mažulis, *Twittering Machine*, (Vilnius: Lithuanian Music Information and Publishing Centre, 2007 [1986]).

angular contours and comparatively more frantic pace, is equally regimented and uniform. The tempo may be faster than the first movement, but it remains absolutely consistent throughout, and the performers are provided with a strict order in which to play the fragments given in their respective parts. Like the first movement, it contains no metronome markings, tempo instructions, dynamic markings or articulation, though there are some performance directions at the top of each part: the left hand parts are to be played very lightly and very *staccato*, while the right hand should be *marcato* and a little heavier, and overall the piece should be played very rhythmically and as fast as possible.

An interest in digital paradigms is characteristic of Mažulis's work, and goes beyond the pieces he has explicitly written for digital performance. W. Daniel Hillis describes the distinction between analog and digital by describing an analog signal as being like a kitchen tap — it can be many different degrees of 'on' — while a digital signal is like a light switch — it can only be on or off.<sup>62</sup> Digital and analog signals can be understood as having absolute or more relative relationships to the states of *on* and *off*; they respectively erase or preserve signal irregularities. The piano can be understood in both analogue and digital terms; it has what could be called an 'indexical' quality, as there is a one-for-one relationship between a piano key, a hammer, a string, and a sounding note, and in this sense it also has a certain 'digital' ('on/off') quality.<sup>63</sup> Unlike a violin or a voice, once a note has been switched 'on' there is not as much that can be done to alter the subsequent sounding and decay (a pedal can be applied, but the player cannot bend the pitch or make the note gradually louder rather than gradually quieter). However, particularly through its development as a central instrument in Romantic art music, and with the subtleties of articulation, dynamics, pedalling and other sonic nuances that modern pianos are capable of producing, it also has very strong analog properties. But Mažulis is using the piano here in a profoundly, or even exclusively, 'digital' fashion. Performers are instructed to play almost as though they were a MIDI sequencer manipulating a basic sine wave — producing unsubtle, equally weighted, equally articulated notes with no variations in tempo, expression or volume. Trevor Wishart has described certain limitations of contemporary western classical music in terms of its 'lattice-based' nature.<sup>64</sup> While the radical 'sonic art' Wishart has produced pushes far outside these boundaries, for the sake of comparison here it is worth noting that much canonical, common-practice European classical music, while written and recorded within the restrictions of the lattice of a five-line staff and regular measures, is constituted in its widely accepted identity through features of performance convention that are *not* recorded in the

---

<sup>62</sup> W. Daniel Hillis, *The Pattern on the Stone: The Simple Ideas That Make Computers Work* (New York: Basic Books, 1998), 14-15.

<sup>63</sup> For a discussion of the piano keyboard interface in relation to digital, indexical and ludic paradigms, see Roger Moseley, *Keys to Play: Music as a Ludic Medium from Apollo to Nintendo* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016).

<sup>64</sup> Trevor Wishart, *On Sonic Art* (Amsterdam: Harwood, 1996).



score and/or do not comprise 'lattice-based' information. For example, Schubert lieder are frequently performed with stylistic choices in vocal articulation and nuances of delivery that could not be precisely or straightforwardly notated on a standard staff.

The figure displays three examples of rhythmic riffs, each consisting of a 3x8 grid of colored squares above a musical staff in 3/8 time. The green grid shows a sequence of notes and rests. The orange grid shows a sequence of notes and rests. The blue grid shows a sequence of notes and rests.

Figure 4.2 — Resulting rhythmic riffs from Movement 1 of *Twittering Machine*.

Mažulis, on the other hand, whole-heartedly embraces the restrictions of the lattice in *Twittering Machine* and other works. There is no gradation or blurring between tones, no nuance or variety, and this is a very deliberate choice.

In addition to the digital-mimicking *Twittering Machine*, Mažulis has produced many works for literally digital computer-piano, and is also among the composers who have written a piece in MIDI format for the Man and Machine Robot Orchestra, a Ghent-based

mechanical automaton ensemble.<sup>65</sup> His *Clavier of Pure Reason* (1993) at first sounds quite similar to *Twittering Machine*, but quickly phases into another level of complexity in this 'monstrous hypercanon' for (usually) computerized piano. Lunn describes the piece:

A humble work for 24 pianos or one pianist and electronics, the work layers many canonic adaptations of an original idea and slowly introduces into a violent haze before slowly fading them out. The result is a wacky, almost hyperactive work full of an oddly sadistic sense of humour. The complexity of the layering and the use of the piano has many similarities to Conlon Nancarrow, but to suggest this is pastiche of him would be shortsighted. Ultimately the *Clavier of Pure-Reason* is like Conlon Nancarrow on a cocktail of speed and red bull, or alternatively like listening to J.S. Bach while overdosing on acid. It is oddly familiar but oddly terrifying.<sup>66</sup>

Mažulis's *Clavier of Pure Reason*, like *Twittering Machine*, could be seen to reject euphonicism through its dynamic surface-level energy, dissonant harmonic palette, mechanical timbre and the digital, futuristic nature of its non-expressive, indexical, 'inhuman' perfection. It shares with broad understandings of minimalist music a strong cellular-repetitive and process-based bent, and, like Balakauskas's tonal serialism, simultaneously occupies a liminal, moderate modernist space and evinces an urbane, knowing cosmopolitanism that may be obscured in export by the dominance of tropes of naïve mysticism.

Navickas has argued that in the history of minimalism there has been an 'ideological divide between acoustic and electronic practice'<sup>67</sup>; between music that used computer automation and that which didn't. While Mažulis has written for computerised and mechanical piano, Valančiūtė, who is still very much counted as a key 'machinist' composer, has been comparatively less interested in this approach. The two works in her LMIC catalogue that could be described as 'electronic' are a tape piece (*Illness*) from 1987 and a piece for voice and synth (*Songs of the Fool*) from 1986.<sup>68</sup> Meanwhile, Mažulis has 26 compositions for or including tape and/or computer listed in his LMIC works catalogue. This difference will come to light further as a contrasting perspective on the aesthetic meanings attributable to 'machine' paradigms.

#### **4.4 Narcissus (Valančiūtė, 1986)**

---

<sup>65</sup> Laura Maes, Godfried-Willem Raes, Troy Rogers, 'The Man and Machine Robot Orchestra at Logos', *Computer Music Journal*, 35/4 (2011), pp. 28-48: 44.

<sup>66</sup> Lunn, 'Blog post of pure reason'. Šarunas Nakas corroborates elsewhere that Mažulis was strongly conceptually influenced by Nancarrow as well as Giacinto Scelsi (Nakas, 'Minimalism in Lithuanian Music', 20).

<sup>67</sup> Navickas, 'Retro-Listening', 48.

<sup>68</sup> Valančiūtė, LMIC page.

They may have been linked by a unity of opposition to the ‘cult of beautiful music’ and through their belonging to a group of friends and colleagues<sup>69</sup> that came to be referred to with the ‘machinist’ label, but while Mažulis’s work corresponds to the picture of machinist minimalism as futuristic, Valančiūtė’s compositions typically create a quite different effect. In the 1980s Mažulis in many ways was looking forward, depicting ‘superhuman, utopian’<sup>70</sup> visions of machine/computer perfection and hyper-complexity in Lithuanian post-minimalist music. Valančiūtė, in *Narcissus*, appears to be looking back and conversely exploring fallibility and breakdown. The machinists were allegedly accused of having ‘no sense of history’,<sup>71</sup> which could have meant any number of things in their context — but *Narcissus* has a strong neoclassical bent. Although neoclassicists might have had critics of their own, they could not be charged with having no interest in history. Also somewhat contrastingly with Mažulis’s most-noted conceptual preoccupations, Valančiūtė seems to have been more interested from the outset in recreating or evoking a machine-like sound using live acoustic instruments rather than exploring the compositional and performance possibilities of newer machines and technologies (computers, tape studios or decks) themselves. *Narcissus* is a clear example of this, as the notes to the score explain that the choice of two mismatched keyboard instruments which are difficult to play in perfect unison is intended to evoke a failing mechanism as well as the disturbed nature of Narcissus’s relationship with his own reflection:

The piece is written for two (different) keyboard instruments playing the same part in unison. They may include prepared piano, normal piano, organ, harpsichord. The composer prefers the combination of prepared piano and harpsichord. It is difficult to play in unison on these instruments, because the feeling of keyboard is very different. But this is what she intended: some awkwardness, uncomfotability, or the sound of an old, somewhat broken machine. Finally — the composer prefers [...] that both performers would be male, and they would play sitting opposite each other. Because this is Narcissus looking at his own reflection.<sup>72</sup>

The initial *moderato* and *legato* instructions at the start of the score to *Narcissus* are the only ones throughout; the only dynamic variations are two sectional transitions (from *mf* to *f* to *ff*), and there are no expression markings. Along with an absence of tempo fluctuation, the flatness of dynamic and articulation produces a ‘machine-like’ consistency; the irregularity of bar lengths and staggering compound metres contribute to the impression of an old, creaky, malfunctioning machine, an effect heightened by the rasping, detuned sound and

---



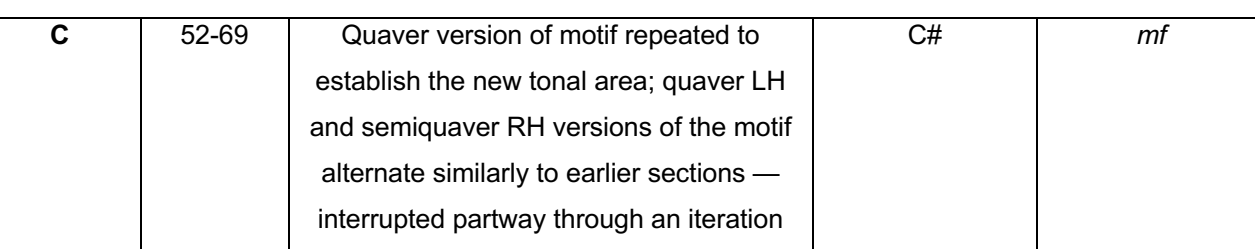
<sup>69</sup> Droba, ‘The History and The Present Day of Lithuanian Music’, 88.

<sup>70</sup> Navickas, ‘Retro-Listening’, 48.

<sup>71</sup> Nakas, ‘Minimalism in Lithuanian Music’, 20.

<sup>72</sup> Notes to *Narcissus* (1986), as provided by Linas Paulauskis on behalf of LMIC with a digital copy of the score (no hard copies available) by email, December 2020.

antique allusions of harpsichord plus prepared piano. A digitally-relentless consistency of tempo is also a feature of a great deal of Mažulis's work (particularly those pieces that are actually automated). In the case of *Narcissus*, the absence of a Romantic-style plethora of tempo fluctuations, articulation/dynamic markings, improvisatory sections and performance instructions could also be interpreted as a neoclassical feature. This impression is enhanced by the presence of other neoclassical signifiers, such as the topic of the ancient Greek myth of Narcissus (classical antiquity also being a popular theme for Baroque operas and neoclassical revivals), baroque-like passagework textures, the sonata-redolent structure of the piece, and of course the sound of the (preferred) harpsichord itself.

Section	Bars	Material	Pitch centre(s)	Dynamics
<b>A</b>	1-30	7-bar quaver-version of main motif (in bass); semiquaver version 3 bars (motif is used in upper parts); quaver version (back to lower parts); semiquaver upper-parts version returns	A	<i>mf</i> (bar 1)
				
<b>B</b>	31-51	Very similar material to section A but with more pedal notes, some variations in rhythm, and centred in D	D	<i>mf</i>
				
<b>C</b>	52-69	Quaver version of motif repeated to establish the new tonal area; quaver LH and semiquaver RH versions of the motif alternate similarly to earlier sections — interrupted partway through an iteration by abrupt shift to a G minor tonal centre	C#	<i>mf</i>
				

5

D	70-84	Semiquaver (RH) and quaver (RH/LH) versions of the motif in G minor, interrupted by abrupt and shortlived transition to A (3 bars), immediately followed by E <sub>b</sub> -centred statements of the motif material	G – [A] – E <sub>b</sub>	<i>mf</i>
---	-------	--	--------------------------	-----------

E	85-104	Statements of motivic material as before	E <sub>b</sub>	<i>f</i> (bar 94)
---	--------	--	----------------	-------------------

E1	105-112	Statements of motivic material as before	B <sub>b</sub>	<i>f</i>
----	---------	--	----------------	----------



<b>E2</b>	113-145	Repetitive, gradually changing/cumulative block chords	B $\flat$ - E $\flat$ - A $\flat$ - G -C $\sharp$ -D-A	<i>f</i>
				
<b>Coda</b>	146-160	Initial theme returns	A	<i>ff</i> (bar 152)
				

Figure 4.3 – Outline of harmonic and motivic sections in *Narcissus*.

Structurally, *Narcissus* can be viewed both as being characterised by a strong sense of continuity – being predominantly based around a single distinctive riff – and as falling into broad sections based on implied tonal centre and a perceptible departure from and return to the main material (see accompanying table, Figure 4.3). In one sense *Narcissus* expresses an archetypal kind of minimalist construction (albeit with a somewhat more chromatic harmonic language), the arpeggio-based motif shown in almost all the examples in Figure 4.3 dominating the majority of the piece. In another sense, the form is reminiscent of classical models, with an exposition, a second sub-section in a closely related key, a ‘development’ section which travels through many different tonal areas, and final return to the original theme in



Figure 4.4 — Cumulative ‘reversing’ chords in ‘development’ section of *Narcissus*.

the original key. But beyond this loose architectural affinity with classical formal priorities, the structure also embodies more modernist-leaning ideas. After the initial 'subdominant' move from an A-minor-like tonality to a D-minor-like one, the tonal centres passed through do not have typical diatonically-coherent relationships. Moreover, beyond its appearance in different tonal areas, there is no significant change whatsoever to the melodic-thematic material in the course of this piece, making any reference to classical developmental forms clearly and deliberately inexact and indirectly highlighting the repetitiveness of the material. And in addition to the non-diatonic nature of the harmonic relationships in their first appearance, rather than resorting to diatonic logic to produce a trajectory that would take the music 'home' to A minor, the last, pre-coda section simply ploughs backwards through the same tonal centres that the first part moved through more thematically — producing a lopsided symmetry and one of several 'distorting mirror' effects in this meditation on Narcissus's eventually self-destructive infatuation with his own reflected image. The only section that does not feature the obsessively recurring motif, this chordal passage of around 30 bars adopts a more process-like approach. Settling into a distinctively and contrastingly regular metric pattern of alternating bars of 9/8 and 7/8, repeated quaver block chords (see example in figure 4.4) are built up from an initial B $\flat$  ostinato pedal in the bass; each bar consists of a different repeated chord, as one note (or occasionally two) changes with every new bar, shifting through all of the already-stated tonal centres. Other examples of lopsided symmetry in *Narcissus* include the alternation of the motif between the lower register right hand, where it usually appears in quavers, and the upper register left hand, where it usually appears in semiquavers, and of course the stipulation that, whichever two keyboard instruments are chosen for performance, they must not be the same. Additionally, there is some emphasis on tritonal relationships (the abrupt transition in section C from a C $\sharp$  minor centre to a G minor one and in section D from A minor to E $\flat$  minor; the central 'axis' of E $\flat$  minor as the most distant harmonic destination). An augmented fourth creates symmetry in an equal-tempered octave but is also understood as dissonant in common practice harmony; this is another instance of symmetry or mirroring framed as a disrupted or dissonant phenomenon.

*Narcissus* is very repetitive, but perhaps not best described as 'minimalist': its recurring phrases are long, melodic and evoke classical conventions, while its harmonic trajectory and form are not static or process-oriented enough to be redolent of mainstream American minimalism. However, post-minimalism is a broad church, and Pakarklytė has argued in relation to the Lithuanian art music context that

[m]usic can be UFO-like, sentimental, nauseating and ecstatic; old-fashionedly (para)tonal or blatantly dissonant; using beat-up or extra fresh timbres; turning on a feverish drive or resting pulseless; moulding a marzipan-like melody or viciously bursting into pieces; switching you off with hypnotic microtonal drones or unnerving with spasmodic bursts; open to diverse ethno and pop influences or absorbed in asocial mode, devotedly fiddling with abstract structures; made in a lab or in nature, and so forth; in any case the reduction and repetitiveness of musical material must stay in order to call it post-minimal.<sup>73</sup>

*Narcissus* can be seen to push back against the mid-1980s' hegemonic norms of 'beautiful music' through its rougher, harsher, inorganic timbres — more (creakingly) mechanical than the flat, clean, digital tone of the (computer-)piano works described above — and dissonant paratonal harmonic language, evoking a distorted version of common-practice harmonic structure rather than sidestepping it altogether in favour of non-directional euphonic stasis; and through its urbane neoclassical style — not the ahistorical approach of which the machinists were accused, but a historicism which did not particularly valorise, or even necessarily acknowledge, the national folk archives or autochthonous pagan past that have played such a crucial role in the overlapping nationalist, neo-romantic, minimalist and moderate modernist styles of Lithuanian art music elsewhere.

#### **4.5 Fragment from the Hospital's Park (Valančiūtė, 1998)**

Written 12 years later, Valančiūtė's string quartet *Fragment from the Hospital's Park* demonstrates an ongoing preoccupation with repetition and cumulative change, but may already show some of the altered priorities described by Valančiūtė in 2004. The piece includes text from the 1955 poem *lignoninės parke*<sup>74</sup> ('In the Hospital Park') by Henrikas Radauskas, sung by the players. The 12-minute piece has a similar recursive form to *Narcissus*, but stays around the same tonal area (E major-minor) for a much greater proportion of the piece. It is somewhat more static, in that there is less directed, bass-led harmonic motion, and in some ways more organic, through the use of strings and voices (string instruments are also technologies, but they are more analog-leaning than keyboard instruments and, at least in the twentieth century, often associated with organicism) and the comparatively greater (though still abrupt rather than gradual) fluctuation in tempo and dynamics, as shown in the accompanying table.

In the first section, a short, tonal-leaning bass ostinato (E-B-G#-B-E...) recurs constantly while a longer melodic ostinato (separated, like the bass one, with rests after

---

<sup>73</sup> Pakarklytė, 'Black-and-white Post-minimalism', 31.

<sup>74</sup> Henrikas Radauskas, *Žiemos daina: Eilėraščiai* (Chicago: Saulius, 1955). As reproduced on *Tekstai* website (accessed online, <http://www.tekstai.lt/buvo/tekstai/radausk/eilerasc.htm#lignonines>, 21.12.20).



every note, somewhat concealing its melodic character at this stage) repeats over the top; both melodic rows are shown in figure 4.5. The resulting music in the context of the opening comprises harmonic dyads in a repeated rhythmic pattern, where one note changes (each part respectively progressing in the order of one of the sequences shown in figure 4.5) with each recurrence of the rhythmic pattern. A notable difference between Valančiūtė's *Narcissus* and some of Mažulis's most iconic machinist works, like *Twittering Machine*, concerns the comparatively much more melodic inclinations of the former. Mažulis has described some of his own approaches to microtonal writing in terms of 'resulting patterns', where textures tend strongly towards block-like verticality, but melodic contours can be extrapolated from the voice-leading. At the outset, *Fragment* (broad structure shown in table below) displays a similar tendency towards discrete, separated sounding blocks from which melodic contours can be extrapolated — contrasting with the more obviously thematic, melody-dominated texture of *Narcissus*. However, later contrapuntal textures in subsequent sections of *Fragment* are constructed by overlaying the same melodic material expressed across this sequence of chopped-up chords, but now articulated in a more joined-up, linear, melodic way.



Figure 4.5 — Melodic ostinati (used as textural and harmonic building blocks) from *Fragment*.

Section	Bars	Material	Pitch centre/ harmony	Tempo	Time sig	Dynamics
<b>A</b>	1-174	Syncopated, repetitive, broken-up dyads/chords (one chord per bar); bass ostinato pattern E-B-G# and nine-note melodic ostinato; cumulative addition of one quaver to rhythmic pattern with	E major/ minor, (last part centred around A)	♩ = 72; ♩. = 76 (b. 63); ♩. = 78 (b. 107); ♩. = 92 (b. 143)	8/8 + 6/8	<i>mp</i> ; <i>f</i> (b.143)

		<p>every repeated subsection.</p> <p>Vertical/block-like orientation; string players also sing text in rhythmic unison with played parts.</p>				
--	--	---	--	--	--	--

<b>B</b>	175-259	<p>Overlapping repetitions of ostinati continue; more contrapuntal distribution, more linear, melodic expression of fragments of ostinati.</p> <p>No sung parts in this (contrapuntal) section.</p>	<p>More dynamic harmonic movement, momentarily passing through other centres e.g. Am, Cm, Fm, Gm, as well as passages of ambiguous/ no clear centre.</p>	$J = 138$	6/4 (one bar only); 4/4	<i>mf</i> ; cresc to <i>fff</i> (b. 244)
----------	---------	---	--	-----------	-------------------------	--

<b>C</b>	260-331	<p>Return to homophony: repeated marcato block chords,</p>	<p>More harmonic movement cycling</p>	$J = 120$	4/4	<i>fff</i> - <i>ff</i> - <i>mf</i> - <i>f</i>
----------	---------	--	---------------------------------------	-----------	-----	---

		sustained chords and short melodic fragments — more legato than section A without distinctive intermittent rests. Return of vocal parts.	through and pausing in many different centres (Gm, Bm, C#m, E b m, Fm, Am...)			(alternates); <i>mf / p</i> (alternates)
--	--	---	---	--	--	--

16

<b>D</b>	332-387	Outer parts play repeating ostinato and viola plays soloistic, angular, sul ponticelli melody.	G minor	minim = 92	2/2	<i>mf</i> (carried over); <i>fff</i> (viola melody)
----------	---------	--	---------	------------	-----	---

23

<b>E</b>	388-406	Codetta — semi-return to section A block-like/vertical	D major/ minor	$\text{♩} = 69$	6/8 + 8/8	<i>mp</i>
----------	---------	--	----------------	-----------------	-----------	-----------

		quaver material with 'lakštingala' refrain.				
--	--	--	--	--	--	--

26

*mp* And

la - kštin - ga - la ne - be - ga - li Count

I - Count

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

*Narcissus* is highly repetitive but, outside of the cumulative-chordal ‘reversing’ section towards the piece’s end, it doesn’t evoke minimalist tropes like immediate cellular repetition and gradual change to the extent that *Fragment* and, more so, lots of Mažulis’s most famous works do. This produces a difference in the trajectory of the early parts of the work: both Valančiūtė pieces have a second and third (sub)section which are extremely similar to the first, but while in the more compact *Narcissus* the original material is repeated almost exactly in new tonal areas, in *Fragment* the same material is repeated in the same tonal area with the addition of a new rhythmic unit (one quaver is added to the rhythmic pattern each time), creating a cumulative effect with a much broader reach across the work than the more traditionally harmonically-structured *Narcissus*, with its single isolated cumulative section. *Fragment* uses layers of melodic ostinati and their inverted forms as textural building blocks, again evincing a more ‘horizontal’ orientation and linear contrapuntal approach initially concealed by the vertical separation created by dividing up chords with intermittent rests. Across the three already-mentioned case studies, and also the forthcoming and final one (Mažulis’s 2000 ensemble piece *Canon Mensurabilis*), Mažulis’s more ‘vertical’ writing leans closer than Valančiūtė’s to mainstream or archetypal minimalism. However, the frequent harmonic stasis in *Fragment*, with its near omnipresent E-major bass ostinato, lends it a more minimalist quality.

In terms of the ways in which Valančiūtė’s later work might or might not still be understood as resisting or rebelling against euphonic styles, her 2004 comments suggest

that the urge to break from ‘the cult of beautiful music’ was at least much less intensely felt, if not altogether absent, a few decades into her career. Though the interview was published six years after *Fragment*, elements of the changes described by the composer can be read in this work. However, in keeping with the emphasis on a liminal, moderate modernism in this Chapter and the preceding one, there is also evidence of residual ‘neo-modernist’<sup>75</sup> tendencies. Features of the work that might be seen to represent styles (whether neo-romantic or euphonic minimalist) that the composer in her earlier career sought to eschew might include its strong tonal or consonant implications, such as the E major-minor implications of the bass ostinato and chords/dyads of the first section; though also dissonant and non-tonal, the initially stated material of *Fragment* is comparatively simpler and more consonant than that of *Narcissus*. *Fragment* is also characterised by the inclusion of a text and sung vocal parts, which may be considered more organic or euphonic than modernist or mechanical through reference to the body (voice) and to what Valančiūtė’s biography calls a ‘programmatic’ dimension. However, even in the earlier, perhaps more aggressively ‘machinist’ stages of their compositional careers, both Valančiūtė and Mažulis wrote pieces for unaccompanied choir — an ensemble heavily represented in the catalogues of euphonic-minimalist, national-folkloric styles. This again highlights the discursive significance of liminality in the reception of these composers, whose early pieces were seemingly interpreted as an almost violent rejection of prevailing consonant, repetitive, national-folkloric tastes, and yet who have still, perhaps more often than not, written repetitive post-minimalist music with strong degrees of pitch centricity, consonance and diatonic allusion. *Fragment* reflects minimalism through extensive local repetition, but also a larger-scale cumulative effect across repetitive/similar sections. The piece explores a programmatic dimension, mirroring aspects of the text in musical features. Most obviously, the following phrase from Radauaskas’ text –

*O lakštingala nebegali*

*Iki trijų suskaičiuoti*

– roughly translates as ‘the nightingale is no longer able to count to three’. This image is reflected in the cumulative quintuple groupings, which imply a stilted or failing triple pulse (bars with three syncopated crotchets are alternated with bars with two syncopated crotchets). Later, the text is sung in broken-up syllabic form, in time with the accented crotchets. A quintuple metre could be seen as inherent in the five syllable phrase ‘o lakštingala’, (‘oh nightingale’). Despite the fragmented distribution of the phrase and the somewhat atypical emphasis on the third, rather than second syllable of *lakštingala*, this relatively naturalistic treatment of text and rhythm further suggests a move away from

---

<sup>75</sup> Krzysztof Droba’s term for the machinist composers (Droba, ‘The History and the Present Day of Lithuanian Music’, 3690).

deliberately ‘radical’ or ‘calculating’ approaches described by the composer as characteristic of her earlier career.

The contrastingly more neo-modernist features of this work include the overall non-tonal, non-functional and frequently non-consonant nature of the harmonic content (such as a passage where the violins play a dissonant counterpoint in high harmonics with constant tone and semitone clashes) and a characteristic detuned sound — for example, in section D, where the prominent viola melody, marked *fff* against the softer rhythmic ostinato accompaniment, creates angular, disjunct lines, lunging toward registral extremes, and is marked *sul ponticello*, *non vibrato*, and *espressivo*, producing a rough, reedy sound with pitch fluctuation. A representative avoidance of ‘warmth’ or ‘beauty’ is epitomised by the blunt, abrupt sparseness of the work’s opening, and the lurching, slightly seasick irregularity of pulse might be likened to Balakauskas’s eschewal of ‘the 1-2-1-2 dancing of the feet’.

It is interesting that the intensity of the reaction to euphonicism seems to have at least somewhat diminished for Valančiūtė at a moment (the early 2000s) when fervent international admiration of Baltic spiritual minimalisms was very strong. However, this may be more comprehensible in relation to her own personal stage in her career and life. In 1998, while Valančiūtė was producing work that seems comparatively less anti-euphonic than her output of twelve years earlier, the younger Vykintas Baltakas was commencing his own personal battle against what he saw as the ‘soup’ of constant reiterations of folk-based, consonant minimalist styles in Lithuanian art music — motivated, as discussed in Chapter 6, to leave the country altogether and compose pieces intended as a ‘freedom scream’.<sup>76</sup> In terms of Pakarklytė’s claims that the stylistic and ideological frictions articulated in the emergence of the machinist group were the last of their kind, this apparent softening of anti-euphonicism is consistent with the idea of an ‘end of history’ in Lithuanian art music. In any case, machinist works of the 1980s have continued to be associated with a broadly recognisable style — an edgier, dissonant post-minimalism that might not any longer be (or indeed ever truly have been) consciously constructed in antagonistic *opposition* to romantic/spiritual/folk-nationalist minimalisms, but which still stands in marked relief against a backdrop of euphonicism in large part because of the phenomenal international success of, and pan-Baltic nationalist mythologies surrounding, the latter. Mažulis in particular has cultivated a distinctive idiom and set of priorities which can be seen as quite consistent across his career.

#### **4.6 Canon Mensurabilis (Mažulis, 2000)**

---

<sup>76</sup> Baltakas interview, 2017, (*Kairos* CD version, 2020).

Much like *Twittering Machine* and *Clavier of Pure Reason*, Mažulis's twelve-minute *Canon Mensurabilis*, for flute, clarinet, violin, viola, cello, and piano, is characterised by a uniformity of texture, dynamic and expression; completely homophonic throughout, the material comprises bar-length, microtonally-shifting block chords in the upper five parts, with repetitions of semiquaver chords in the pre-tuned microtonal piano. With an unchanging pulse of ♩. = 64, the frequently-changing time signatures (always in semiquavers) follow a process-like pattern. With bar lengths alternating between time signatures related by a factor of two (12 and 6, 10 and 5, 8 and 4, etc) and gradually (though not completely linearly) diminishing in length, the effect is a cumulative acceleration. Increasingly shorter bars are introduced as the work progresses, achieving intensification by speeding up the harmonic rhythm while other parameters remain stable (the opening performance instruction, *pp sempre, non legato – una corda* for the piano – is the only one given, and there are no other changes of dynamic, articulation, expression, or phrasing). Abstractly, a regular rhythmic ostinato and repetitive block chords may be redolent of a typical picture of post-tonal 'euphonic' minimalism. The machinist 'edge' in *Canon Mensurabilis* is most distinctive in the microtonal palette, which follows the 'resulting patterns' model of microtonal composition, according to the composer.<sup>77</sup> These patterns, the composer explains, 'occur in cases when the melodic pattern is not "composed" as a line, but results from the interaction of various structural parameters, such as pitches, rhythm, harmony, and texture.'<sup>78</sup> In this case the insistently repeated but constantly changing block chords in *Canon Mensurabilis* produce melodic contours which are not otherwise designed. Mažulis explains:

The application of quasi-serial technical means, together with the constant crossing of parts in the similar register results in an "artificial" linearity. There is a pseudo-melody, which was not created intentionally. It is a result of the whole complex of structural factors.<sup>79</sup>

The effect is similar to non-teleological aspects of euphonic repetitive styles, but is couched in comparatively technical terms and understood by the composer in different ways. Even the melodic lines which 'result' from the microtonal harmony do not come across as particularly melodic in this piece, because the sustained tones are so long that it is hard to receive their linear sequence as a joined-up melody rather than a more harmonic or textural phenomenon. In spite of its explicit title, the composer's canonic preoccupations ('almost all of my compositions are canons of various kinds'<sup>80</sup>) are much less apparent in this block-like homophonic work than in many of his other pieces, such as *De plus en plus* (2016) and

---

<sup>77</sup> Rytis Mažulis. 'Composing Microtonal Melody', *Muzikos komponavimo principai XV: melodijos fenomenas*, Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre Scientific Journals, 2015 (accessed online, <http://xn--urnalai-cxb.lmta.lt/wp-content/uploads/2015/Muzikos-komponavimo-principai-XV-Ma%C5%BEulis.pdf> 23.09.19), 162.

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> Mažulis, 'Composing Microtonal Melody', 162-3.

<sup>80</sup> Mažulis, 'Composing Microtonal Melody', 163.

*Canon perpetuus* (2001), where canonic imitation takes a more traditional, visible shape. In his 2002 piece *ajapajapam*, a tremendously virtuosic, endurance-testing composition for vocal ensemble comprising a downward glissando over a minor sixth stretched out for 35 minutes, a similar texture of static-looking block chords technically forms a canonic structure as some of the parts begin to descend by tiny increments at different points. However, as the composer points out, the motion is hardly detectable because of the glacial pace of the work.<sup>81</sup> A similarly intangible approach to imitation or canon is at play in *Canon Mensurabilis*, where each line follows an individual but not obviously systematic path in its departure from and arrival at a number of stable constructions, as shown in figures 4.6 to 4.8.

*Canon Mensurabilis* is harmonically structured around 15 stable (non-microtonal), relatively consonant, fourth-or-fifth-based constructions (chords or dyads). These constructions form anchoring points, between which the harmony shifts incrementally, mutating into the next stable chord over the course of between 24 and 30 intermediate constructions. The bars change length, following a general trend towards diminution, but there is always only one chord per bar, and so the harmonic distance travelled by means of

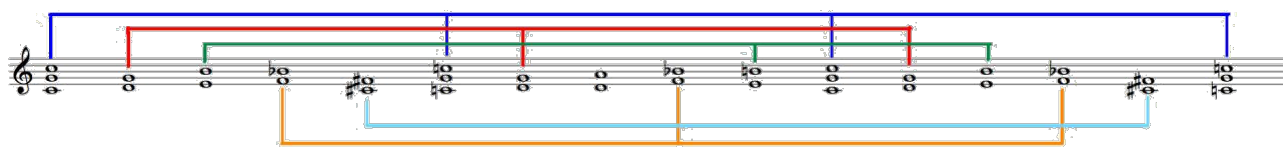


Figure 4.6 — Extrapolated linear sequence of consonant ‘anchor’ chords in *Canon Mensurabilis*.

incremental steps remains a stable unit while the length of time taken to arrive is reduced. The number of altered/new pitches per bar is also variable, as shown in figure 4.8. The form of the piece is both cumulative/process-based and ternary, as at the last bar of the score (263) the piece returns to the beginning and repeats the material up until bar 164, as indicated by the black outline around the repeated material in the accompanying table. Figure 4.6 shows an extrapolation of the linear sequence of stable, fourth-or-fifth-based constructions in *Canon Mensurabilis*; the open fifth on C is particularly structurally important, occurring regularly after every four other anchoring chords and bookending the sequence. All but one of the constructions also recur at intervals (for instance, the D-G dyad occurs three times, always following the open fifth on C); the D-A dyad forms an axis, being the only anchor chord which only appears once and falling in the centre of the extrapolated sequence of stable anchor chords. The accompanying table shows all of the stable, quartal or quintal, anchor chords that occur in the piece and the number of intervening bars until another anchor construction is reached. Figures 4.7 and 4.8 show a more detailed breakdown of the

<sup>81</sup> Mažulis, ‘Composing Microtonal Melody’, 162.



trajectory taken between the first anchor chord at bar 1 and the second at bar 26. Figure 4.7 shows every intervening chord, with quarter-tone inflections indicated by upwards- or downwards-pointing triangular note heads in place of arrows, and with notes that are new in a bar indicated with empty note heads. The numbers inside the staff indicate the length of the bar in semiquavers. Figure 4.8 shows, for every one of the 26 chords between and including the first and second anchor points, the number of notes in the chord; the number of notes which have changed from the previous chord; and the number of ‘unstable’ (i.e. microtonal) pitches in this chord (which correlates to the number of notes in the chord and the range of the chord).

An arbitrary identification of microtonal pitches as ‘unstable’ would certainly be disputable without context, but this piece clearly makes a structural point of distinguishing between non-microtonal constructions and microtonally-inflected ones — echoing Whittall’s observation that a moderate modernist inclination in music may be characterised by a perceptible differentiation between consonance and dissonance.<sup>82</sup> In this instance the pitches which are and are not microtonally-inflected are also fixed, matching the instructions given for preparation of the piano. All pitches within the range of C4 to C5 are tuned according to regular equal temperament; everything from C#5 to C#6 is tuned down a quarter-tone and everything from C3 to B3 is tuned up a quarter-tone. As such, a construction with a larger number of notes and/or a wider range is more likely to include microtonally-inflected pitches, and all the ‘anchor’ constructions are fairly small-range chords, within the compass of C4-C5. The upward-or-downward-pointing arrows in the instrumental parts indicate that a note should be played exactly a quarter-tone higher or lower, rather than any unspecific, colouristic, or more ‘analog’ modification.

Figure 4.7 — Full sequence of chords between first and second consonant chords, bars 1-26.

<sup>82</sup> Whittall, ‘Individualism and Accessibility’, 370.

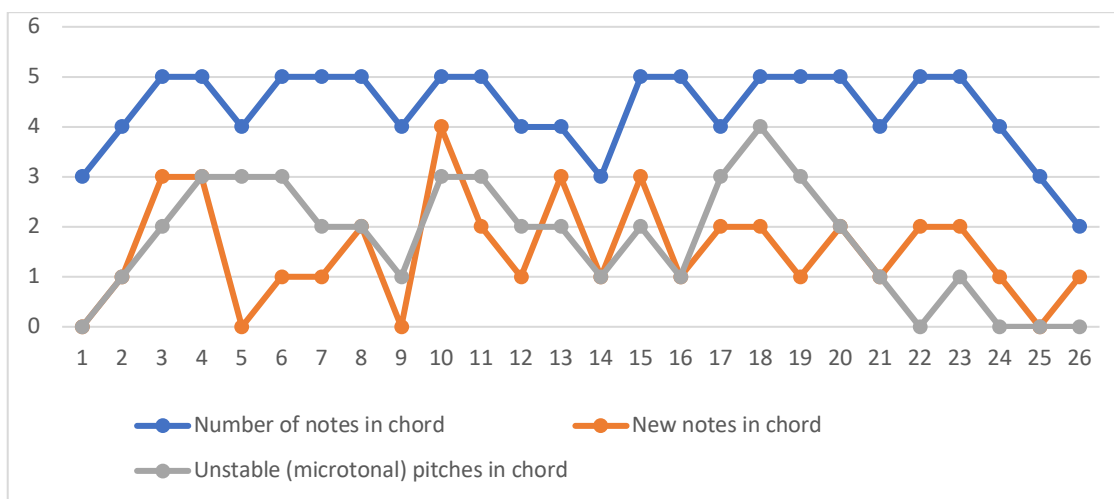


Figure 4.8 — Number of notes (total, new, and microtonal) per chord, bars 1-26.

Although this piece is virtually devoid of the aggressively futuristic, even obnoxiously digital energy of *Twittering Machine*, it retains elements of a ‘digital’ orientation: the tempo, articulation, and dynamics are set at constant values, and although the lattice has been altered to include some quarter-tone pitches, these are meant to be played as precisely as reasonably possible and to the exclusion of their equal-tempered counterparts. The set of playable pitches is different from the equal tempered collection used in *Twittering Machine*, but the underlying grid-like or orientation is still rigidly intact. Written for a mixed ensemble, *Canon Mensurabilis* also features longer sustained tones than the blocky, *staccato* earlier work for pianos — but even here the temporal ‘grid’ is made explicit throughout as the piano maintains an insistent semiquaver pulse.

Somewhat like Valančiūtė’s later work as embodied in *Fragment from the Hospital’s Park*, this piece also displays discursively contrasting features. *Canon Mensurabilis* is somewhat machine-line in some similar ways to other of Mažulis’s works, but also creates a ‘hypnotic’, drifting effect which the composer is also associated with due to his penchant for slow-moving structures based on tiny, incremental moves. Although the pitch palette of this piece is described as being essentially the same in its grid-like nature as other lattice-based Mažulis works, the composer acknowledges that it is not possible to expect a ‘total accuracy of microtones’ when working with ‘strings, woodwinds, or singers’, or any instrument with ‘natural tuning’;<sup>83</sup> in *Canon Mensurabilis* this unavoidable degree of ambiguity is ameliorated by the fixed nature of the pretuned piano, by the strict allocation of quarter-tone material to recognisably distinct registers, by the avoidance of any microtonal intervals smaller or larger

<sup>83</sup> Mažulis, ‘Composing Microtonal Melody’, 163.

than a quarter-tone, and by, as Mažulis suggests, focusing on ‘sound colours’.<sup>84</sup> The timbral effect of the woodwind and string parts — drifting, sustained, *pianissimo*, close-together, frequently crossing, microtonally-inflected — is distinctive and its vagueness creates a compelling contrast with the block-like non-variability of the piano ostinato.

The work is reminiscent of a later piece by another composer associated with the machinist movement — Šarunas Nakas’s slow-moving fourteen-minute piano work *Kitman* (2012). Nakas was central to the machinist school in its inception and, like Mažulis, composed seminal works in this mould such as *Merz-machine* (1985). *Kitman*, like *Canon Mensurabilis*, retains strong elements of a dissonant post-tonal minimalist orientation, but seems to have shed the urgency or rebelliousness that has been narratively pinned to key 1980s machine pieces. Much like *Kitman*, *Canon Mensurabilis* is not tonal and is dissonant more often than not — but it is not a hard-edged dissonance, and it repeatedly returns to the consonant (if somewhat stark and not exactly redolent of the post-tonal palette of euphonic styles) anchors of the harmonic interval of a fourth or fifth. The timbre of the instruments is also softer and more organic. The relentless semiquaver pulse remains a feature but the dynamic is *pianissimo* throughout and although the score is marked *non legato* so as to emphasise the different bar lengths, the piano is marked *una corda* — dampened and softened — and the piece has a tentative, muted feel at odds with the machine-like inexorability of the insistent semiquaver ostinato. *Canon Mensurabilis*, like *Kitman*, does not sound futuristic like *Twittering Machine*, but neither does it evoke the ‘bittersweet’ neoclassical nostalgia or distorted historicism of *Narcissus*. It remains in a minimalist vein through its repetitive, cumulative, slow-moving nature and avoidance of more ‘traditional’ notions of teleological or dramatic contours of tension and relaxation. In many ways it also evokes some of the ‘hypnotic’ rhetoric of euphonicism in spite of the already-mentioned ‘machine-like’ relentlessness of its pulse.

Like *Kitman*, *Canon Mensurabilis* sails close to the ‘timelessness’ so often touted in the reception of spiritual minimalism — but it eschews many of the discursive ingredients of dominant euphonic styles: folkloric themes, mystical allusions, and a self-conscious disavowal of formalism or constructivism in favour of metaphors of intuition, mediation, and listening. It is possible that, as suggested above in relation to Valančiūtė, any fervent desire that may have genuinely existed on the part of a younger Mažulis to resist a potentially oppressive-seeming stylistic status quo may have long since waned. However, his later work remains clearly apart from the euphonic domain through its modernist commitment to constructivism and rational complexities; to treating the structure of a work as inherently interesting and meaningful, and eschewing the use of such poetic justifications as are

---

<sup>84</sup> *ibid.*

typically attributed to composers like Pärt, Tormis, Vasks and Bronius Kutavičius (described variously as mediators, magicians, and other semi-mystical representations that belie hard-earned, practical compositional competencies and unavoidably intellectual engagements with existing creative discourses). Mažulis seemingly has no desire to conceal or downplay the complex calculations, intellectual labour, and cumulative years of creative research and thought that go into the production of his works in favour of magical or national-cultural explanations for his artistic success and significance, and as such he and the other machinist composers discussed here represent another strand of difference standing out against the potentially homogeneous aesthetic backdrop explored in Chapter 2.

The 'machinist' composers Valančiūtė and Mažulis combine tendencies towards writing paratonal, lattice-based music that, though by no means necessarily intrinsic to 'minimalism', are highly typical of its most mainstream (e.g., North American) forms. Though apparently accused of a disregard for history, the machinist works and composers discussed in this Chapter can be seen to take a keen interest in and construct distinct perspectives on the passage and narrativisation of time, looking both backwards to industrialism and antiquity and forwards to futuristic digital utopias. Pakarklytė associates the machinist school with a rhetorical 'end of history', as the last stage of canonical Lithuanian art music to be ascribed a distinct stylistic and ideological identity and slotted into a linear dialectical epic of art music as nation-building and cultural resistance. The national grand narrative as a coherent hegemonic force may indeed have dissolved by this point, but even at the end of history nothing is created or received in a vacuum. Fredric Jameson describes the persistence of dialectical thinking long after epistemologies of postmodernism declared this type of discourse to be redundant.<sup>85</sup> As such, the baggage of historiography and ideologically-valenced interpretive paths is also relevant for composers who are of effectively the same lived generation as the machinists but whose compositional work may be associated with different moments and is not typically interpreted as a movement. The next Chapter will discuss music by Tomas Kutavičius, jazz pianist and son of mystical minimalist icon Bronius Kutavičius, and Remigijus Merkelys, a committed constructivist operating at the heart of Lithuanian art music networks. Although these composers are not generally shoehorned into teleological tales of Lithuanian music history, their work is still inevitably subject to existing patterns and trends in discourse and reception.

---

<sup>85</sup> Fredric Jameson, *Valences of the Dialectic* (London: Verso Books, 2009).

## **5. Networks and individuals in contemporary art music: Tomas Kutavičius and Remigijus Merkelys**

Though individuals from the machinist group, like Rytis Mažulis and Šarunas Nakas, are still among some of Lithuanian contemporary art music's most prominent figures today, their rebellious rise to prominence is typically narrativised as a phenomenon of the 1980s. Two further composers, while almost the same age as the 'machinists' discussed previously, are not linked to this canonical narrative moment in the same way. Tomas Kutavičius came to the formal study of art music composition in his early forties, after a period in the Russian military and a decade-long career as an internationally touring jazz pianist.<sup>1</sup> Remigijus Merkelys, who is better known as an arts director, composed over fifty works between 1984 and 2011.<sup>2</sup>

These two composers are grouped together here for several reasons. They coincide generationally but neither are usually considered part of a particular movement; both have had careers in professional music outside composing, and both are embedded in networks of Lithuanian contemporary art music. There are a number of similarities in sound worlds between Merkelys's *MiKonst* and works by Kutavičius: the strong presence of cellular repetition; rhythmic drive and layering ostinati to create busy textures; and the tendency to retain an equal tempered scale, regular meter and paratonal harmonic palette. The balance of works discussed in this Chapter (one by Merkelys and three by Kutavičius) reflects the fact that Merkelys has for many years been primarily both working and primarily recognised as an important directorial figure in the contemporary music scene, rather than a composer, whereas Kutavičius conversely has turned more towards classical composition in recent years and away from a primarily performance-oriented career. While Kutavičius has written pieces for recent GAIDA festivals, Merkelys has been more focused on organising these events and commissioning works for them. Although Kutavičius says that he was not influenced by Balakauskas, filtering his experience as a jazz performer through classical compositional paradigms could have led in a roundabout way to similarities in rhythm and harmonic language; in addition, his work displays fifth-based and octatonic characteristics that are redolent of Balakauskas's harmonic writing. On the other hand, Kutavičius's rhythmic writing, while comparably complex, syncopated and energetic, seems to be construed more in the vein of 'feeling' and is typically more somatic in nature while Balakauskas's and Merkelys's rhythms are more counterintuitive and 'difficult', destabilising any dance-like impressions. While Kutavičius talks more about intuition and communication,

---

<sup>1</sup> Interview with Tomas Kutavičius, conducted by Claire McGinn, translation support provided by Vilma Kutavičiūtė. Vilnius, October 2018.

<sup>2</sup> 'Remigijus Merkelys', Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/composers/merkelys/#bio>, 14.09.20).

Merkelys — like Balakauskas — is preoccupied with numbers and construction. Both Merkelys and Kutavičius occupy a space that could be associated with a moderate modernist leaning, typically retaining traditional common-practice elements like perceptible metres, equal tempered scales and pitch centricity.

Kutavičius's music, frequently evincing harmonic and rhythmic idioms redolent of jazz, offers further representative examples of the recurring paratonal and lattice-based tendencies in contemporary Lithuanian art music discussed throughout this study. Often highly syncopated and based around octatonic constructions, Kutavičius's sharply-defined textures and evocative harmonic palettes rely on a familiar, common-practice European grammatisation of metre and pitch. Although coming from a different conceptual standpoint, Merkelys has also written works that strongly tend towards paratonicity and a grid-based orientation – this is the case in *Gemma* and *FlaVio* but perhaps most apparent in *MiKonst*, where tonal quotations are inserted amongst atonal material at times centred on a referential pitch, and where complex textures built from multiple driving, interlocking motor ostinati depend on a precise and consistent grammatisation of time into regular metric units.

While there are some notable commonalities in sound between works by Merkelys and Kutavičius, they occupy different positions in terms of compositional philosophies — though both, like most of the other composers discussed in this thesis, remain within the broad frame of score-based, composer-led, instrumental music with strong continuities from classical common practice styles. In many ways these individuals are both at or very close to the heart of the art music establishment in Lithuania, and also have careers that bridge late-Soviet and independent periods. While it differs from the works explored in the previous two Chapters, this music is also, again, markedly different from euphonic styles. However, it maintains a degree of repetitiveness and tonal implication that has led to the label '[post]-minimalist' being applied to the music of both composers<sup>3</sup>. This Chapter continues to highlight the diversity of approaches and attitudes that are behind various non-euphonic or 'modernist-leaning' musics from Lithuania.

This Chapter will first introduce Merkelys and themes emerging from his music before moving on to Kutavičius, who is currently more active as a composer. Subsequent discussions cover a number of pieces by Kutavičius and extracts from a 2018 interview with this composer, considering the contrasts and continuities between the work and ideas of these two figures and the wider background of a heterogeneous and often modernist-leaning Lithuanian art-musical landscape — the reception of which may be seen as coloured by the huge success of euphonic styles.

---

<sup>3</sup> 'Tomas Kutavičius', Lithuanian Music Information Centre website (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/composers/kutaviciustomas/>, 14.09.20).

## **5.1 Remigijus Merkelys (b. 1964): 'Sound anagrams'**

Artistic director of the Gaida festival since 1998, choral conductor and composer Remigijus Merkelys studied under Julius Juzeliūnas at the Lithuanian Academy of Music, and later with George Crumb in Salzburg.<sup>4</sup> He was the founder of both the new music festival 'Jauna Muzika' (1992) and the successful chamber choir of the same name (1989).<sup>5</sup> In his role as the head of the Music Department at Lithuanian Radio (1992-1998), he launched their Classical Music Channel in 1998, acting as its director until its closure in 2001.<sup>6</sup> Merkelys was chairperson of the Composers' Union between 2003 and 2009 and his last compositional output according to LMIC was *Genus*, for vocal quartet ('four folk singers') and woodwind septet (fl-ob-cl-2vn-va-vc), in 2011.<sup>7</sup> Since then he has continued to play a prominent organisational role in the contemporary music scene. Merkelys is strongly embedded in the professional and institutional networks of Lithuanian art music, and today is known more as an artistic director than a composer.

In an article on Merkelys subtitled 'Fiery music sparked by rational impulses', Ramunė Kazlauskaitė and Veronika Janatjeva have observed that 'critics often tag the composer as a constructivist, which bothers him not in the least', describing his rationally manipulated materials as 'sound anagrams'.<sup>8</sup> Mindaugas Urbaitis and Šarūnas Nakas included him in an overview of the varieties of Lithuanian postminimalism, suggesting that his work is distinct among Lithuanian minimalisms through a certain affinity with German expressionism.<sup>9</sup> Merkelys' music is often characterised by the presence of ostinati and motor repetitions; dense textures of overlaid recurring patterns; and a dissonant chromaticism accompanied by a strong sense of a referential pitch centre. Reception of Merkelys' work displays a preoccupation with rationality. The composer's LMIC biography explains that his output is notable for a 'constructive approach based on *numerus sonorus*<sup>[10]</sup> aesthetics', adding that 'rationally calculated structures serve as an initial impulse' for Merkelys.<sup>11</sup> Familiar ideas emerge in the aesthetic juxtapositions that surface around the critical interpretation of Merkelys' output.

---

<sup>4</sup> Remigijus Merkelys', Lithuanian Music Information Centre.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Ramunė Kazlauskaitė and Veronika Janatjeva, 'Remigijus Merkelys: Fiery music sparked by rational impulses', *Lithuanian Music Link No. 6*, 2003, Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <http://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-6-april-september-2003/remigijus-merkelys-fiery-music-sparked-by-rational-impulses/>, 26.10.19).

<sup>9</sup> Mindaugas Urbaitis and Šarūnas Nakas. 'THEME. New Postminimalist music in Lithuania'. *Lithuanian Music Link No. 12*, 2006, Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <http://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-12-april-september-2006/theme-new-postminimalist-music-in-lithuania/>, 26.10.19).

<sup>10</sup> Meaning 'sounding number'. See Heidi Eberhardt Bate, *The Measures of Men: Virtue and the Arts in the Civic Imagery of Sixteenth-century Nuremberg* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

<sup>11</sup> 'Remigijus Merkelys', LMIC.

*MiKonst*, a prize-winning piece submitted by Merkelys for a competition organized by the Lithuanian Composers' Union as part of the 125th anniversary celebrations for Mikalojus Konstantinos Čiurlionis, will be analysed to provide musical correlates for the discursive associations outlined above; aspects from Merkelys' *Gemma* and *FlaVio* are additionally discussed to provide greater comparative context.

### **5.1.1 *MiKonst* (Merkelys, 2000)**

A contribution for the 'M. Čiurlionis 125' project, this work celebrates the famous composer and painter. *MiKonst* is scored for piano quintet and has a duration of about 12 ½ (12.5) minutes, reflecting the 125 years since Čiurlionis' birth. The tables below show an outline of the structure of the piece, to be discussed in more detail in this section. This work has been selected as a case study as it is a prominent piece in Merkelys output and displays a range of features that illustratively correlate and contrast with other themes discussed in this thesis, such as minimalism, atonality, constructivism, and evocations of Lithuanian national music narratives. The first bars of the piece introduce a minimalist-like repetitive 'phasing' process in which one of the work's two main pitch collections (a five-note set comprising A $\flat$ , B $\flat$ , C, D $\flat$ , and D), arranged in a cluster, is juxtaposed in a shifting cycle with an E natural pedal, a process that lasts for 17 bars before new melodic material, with which it will subsequently alternate for the rest of the first section, is introduced. This work displays a general tendency towards a vertical layering of repetitive/cellular patterns and heavily features further repetitions of the referential E natural pedal (the 'Mi' of 'Mikalojus' and *MiKonst*,<sup>12</sup> perhaps reflecting the historical composer's own 'predilection for cryptography'<sup>13</sup>) and a quoted excerpt from a Čiurlionis Nocturne.

An example of both a tendency to repetition and a penchant for tonal implications within a non-tonal work can be seen in the insistently asserted referential pitch. The E natural is asserted in the opening phasing section, recurs later in prominent E-minor dyad pedals, and finally serves as the E minor tonic pedal underpinning a quotation from a tonal

---

<sup>12</sup> Kazlauskaitė and Janatjeva, 'Fiery Music'.

<sup>13</sup> Daunoravičienė, 'Exiled modernism', 118.





Figure 5.1 — Čiurlionis Nocturne quotation in *MiKonst*.

Section (Bars)	Pitch/harmony	Textural/thematic	Dynamics	Tempo	Time sig.
<b>A</b> (1-57)	12-tone; 'Set 1' in piano and accompanying solo melody sections; freer range of pitches in solo melody sections	Full strings phasing/shifting against piano; alternating with solo string melody or duo/trio string counterpoint against staccato string chords in A'	unison <i>pp cresc</i> to <i>ff</i> in phasing sections; <i>p</i> accomp chords and melody/counterpoint mostly <i>ff-fff</i> in melody sections.	$\text{♩} = 100-110$	4/4
<b>B</b> (68-185)	Set 1 and 2 respectively in cello and viola; E-G (with B and D) in accompanying pedal part; piano clusters with additional note set (F#,G#,G,A,B) [Subsequent transpositions and variations in pitch]	LH piano and violin 1 in homophonic pedal, alternating with tutti in complex contrapuntal texture of interlocking ostinati (also incorporating the pedal)	<i>p</i> or <i>mp</i> pedal; <i>pp</i> , <i>p</i> or <i>mp</i> <i>molto cresc</i> through contrapuntal sections	$\text{♩} = 100-110$	4/4
<b>C/C'</b> 186-278	Tonal harmony in piano quote; piano and violin motif openings coincide with Set 2; E-G pedal; small range atonal clusters, using notes from Set 2, in accomp	1st violin solo motif; piano fragmented Čiurlionis quotes; other string parts play E-G pedal and small range Set 2 clusters.	<i>pp-mf</i> ( <i>dim e morendo</i> at end)	" ( $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$ from time signature change at bar 218)	4/4; 12/8 (6/4) from bar 218

Section	i	ii	i	ii	i	ii	i	ii	i	ii	i
A	68	20	34	36	34	79					
B	28	43	25	63	25	249					
C	24	9	11	9	7	9	5	9	5	9	3
C'	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

piano work by Čiurlionis. Originally in C# minor, the source is his Nocturne VL 183, dated to 1901. The quotation (see figure 5.1) also serves to reinforce the impression of a more accessible, tonal language later in *MiKonst*, earlier parts of which are more complex and dissonant. Elsewhere, the pitch sets are atonal and the harmonies contrastingly dissonant. The overall pitch collection comprises twelve notes, with strong emphasis placed on particular sub-groups (notably the five-note set described above). Moreover, while there is decisive assertion of E from the outset and the second and third sections see a greater emphasis on G, B — which strengthens the tonic through dominant implications — is less significant for most of the first two-thirds or so, appearing much more prominently towards the late sections of the work where the Nocturne quotation will emerge, and contributing to the more decidedly tonal harmony at this stage. Merkelys creates dense walls of sound from layers of repetitive cells, building complexity from short, recurring numerical patterns.

Short, turn-like loops based around part of the first piano cluster pitch set from bars 1 to 17 (Ab, Bb, C, Db) subsequently occur in the cello (first heard from bars 18 to 22), with a complementary set (D#, E, F, F#) then arranged in the same undulating pattern in the viola (from bar 31). What would be a smooth, small range ostinato is broken up by regular series of rests as this material recurs: in semiquavers, the recurring numerical pattern 2-3-3-1, which is distributed canonically between the two parts at a distance of one crotchet beat. The pattern of number of notes between rests is 3-5-5-6 for the viola and its retrograde, 6-5-5-3, is the cello pattern. While this busy interplay is ongoing, the violins play an E-G pedal with occasional embellishments of small value notes B and D, and the piano plays motoric repeated semiquaver chords with the pitch set F#, G, G#, A, B. Merkelys creates a 12-tone passage where, although the music is highly dissonant and there is very little sense of tonal implication (despite the E-G pedal), pitches are organised into groups across the parts, with the violins playing the most tonally-oriented material. As the piece progresses, the dissonant contrapuntal texture is adopted by more parts; towards the end of the second section ('B', bars 68 to 185), all string parts are playing similar small-range syncopated semiquaver patterns. Though fast and intricate, this contrapuntal atonal passagework is highly repetitive, creating an impression of stasis rather than movement. This is one example of material which could be seen to embody either a minimalist or a modernist impulse, or both. Without

wanting to place too much emphasis on such loosely-defined categories, this kind of juxtaposition (minimalist/modernist or modernist/postmodern) recurs in conversations around many contemporary Lithuanian composers – Merkelys, Balakauskas, Valančiūtė, Mažulis, and more to be explored throughout this study. Though none of these tropes are necessarily in any sense characteristically 'Lithuanian', their recurrence in discourses around these musics can be viewed in relation to the kinds of (re)negotiation of modern and postmodern identity constructions discussed in Chapter 2.

Merkelys's preoccupation with the Renaissance idea of *numerus sonorus* aesthetics correlates with his apparent general interest in building music from numbers. When calculated in terms of minutes of duration (a parameter to which Merkelys has demonstrably paid deliberate attention in this piece), the suggested point of interest in terms of the 'golden ratio' is about 7 and  $\frac{3}{4}$  minutes. This is a moment of significant textural/sectional contrast: the frenzied non-tonal ostinato-texture abruptly drops off about here, giving way to a *pianissimo* crotchet E-G pedal that paves the way for the entrance of quoted material with a strong sense of E minor tonality. Overall *MiKonst* is comprised of four sections (see tables above), the first three of which are structured by alternations between sharply contrasting groups of material or subsections. Merkelys combines regular and irregular subsection lengths; the smaller accompanying table shows the proportions of each section of the piece, in number of crotchets (the smallest unit still resulting in whole integers), given over to each of the two kinds of contrasting material comprising the section (labelled 'i' and 'ii'). The opening bars, with their abrupt, antagonistic phasing alternation between the E string pedal and atonal piano clusters, therefore contain a micro-level expression of the strong sense of opposition underpinning much of the work. In spite of its markedly less argumentative and more cohesive tone, contrast is still important in section C' as the tonal quotation repeatedly attempts to emerge in an atonal context. Particularly in section C', due to the tonal, melodic nature and regular phrase length of the material, the quotation takes on the character of a refrain, countering the loose, timeless feeling created by irregular numbers of bars of E pedal and subtle atonal clusters with no suggestive harmonic motion and with accents placed at points contradictory to the notated metre. Considering the piece as a whole, the difference between the energetic, dissonant, noisy earlier sections and the extended ending section repeating the Nocturne quotation over an E-G pedal is one of the most significant global contrasts.

As the piece progresses, the gaps or boundaries between groups of material generally become less stark. In the very first bars, the clashes between the E pedal and atonal piano clusters are percussively abrupt; in section A, the larger contrast between the rigid, almost clunky pedal-phasing and a lively melodic or contrapuntal passage in the strings with a greater sense of dynamism and free forward momentum, is equally striking. Later on, the

unceasing presence of the E pedal acts as 'glue' holding the atonal material and the quoted nocturne passages together in section C', which tends more towards synthesis than antagonism. Since the 'Mi' pedal has been recurring with great frequency from the first note of the piece to the very last, it also acts as a synthesising agent for the entire work, across strongly differentiated sections and subsections. Although continuity is clearly an important element, this does not diminish the intensity of contrast and discontinuity in this piece, and its overall trajectory can be seen to express a comparatively journey-like or teleological structure, albeit subtly expressed and without any explicit or obvious narrative suggestions.

'Minimalism' primarily manifests in *MiKonst* as smaller internal pockets of intensive repetition or process within a piece with a more varied overall trajectory. As suggested above, despite the economy of material evident in the multiple reuses of pitch cluster and E pedal elements, this work departs from common conceptions of typically gradual, cumulative minimalist music as it regularly introduces sudden change with abrupt introductions of contrasting material. In the case of *Gemma* (1990), for saxophone/clarinet and string quartet, a more consistently repetitive example can be observed. The piece opens with the insistent 'knocking' of three *non legato*, *fortissimo* C# crotchets in the clarinet against a similarly assertive quaver B natural ostinato from the string quartet, also marked *ff* and *non legato*, and alternating between 3/4 and 2/4 time signatures; this short section may be repeated up to 5 times. By limiting other parameters of change, Merkelys draws out a concentrated impact from the differentiation of short, alternating melodic loops, creating a more characteristic post-minimalist effect. Similarly, the restriction of variety in the ostinato parts serves to highlight the significance of the shifting accentuation – a feature also seen in *MiKonst*.

Published a year later in 2001, *FlaVio* displays a more 'spacious' or free-sounding approach to repetition when compared with the almost machine-like relentlessness of *Gemma*. The assertion of a limited number of referential pitches anchors the opening in a sense of sameness in spite of the comparatively looser relationship between the series of more 'gestural' rhythmic figures that occur early on. Later in *FlaVio*, as in *MiKonst*, layers of small, repetitive cells of different lengths are combined to produce a denser and more complex whole, resulting in a characteristically busy, insistent, polyrhythmic texture. There is also in *FlaVio* a moment comparable to the phasing that characterises the opening bars of *MiKonst*. Though the note values here don't change, the D $\flat$  and E $\flat$  pedal notes, being different lengths (8 and 7 semiquavers long respectively), undergo a 'phasing-like' process. *FlaVio* reflects *MiKonst* (or vice versa) still further in the way the texture drops away here from a dense, busy one built from layers of repetitive cellular cross-rhythms to only a couple of instruments more laconically repeating their respective pedal notes. As mentioned earlier, the corresponding transition in *MiKonst* is also potentially significant for falling around the

area that would represent the 'golden section' if calculated in terms of clock-time. The clock-time 'golden section' in *FlaVio* would fall at just under six minutes into the piece, around the same proportional moment when a transition almost identical to the one in *MiKonst* occurs. While this is not a precise measurement, and though the relevance of the ratio may be contested, it is interesting that the most notable events occurring around the clock-time 'golden section' in both these two pieces (of a slightly different length and scale from one another) are similar.

At the beginning and end of *FlaVio*, an A natural and D $\flat$  respectively are asserted in repetitive patterns that suggest a degree of pitch centricity. Although the relationships appear to have no diatonic function and there are plenty of notes from outside the diatonic scale, several of the other pitches here may also serve to reinforce the sense of A-centricity by implicit reference to familiar hierarchies of pitch relationships. The occasional alternation with G $\sharp$  or A quarter-flat below (notated as a steep downward glissando from a quaver A) and the scalar ascent to a prominent, sustained D natural, E natural and upper G $\sharp$  create strong enough associations with subdominant, dominant and leading note roles that, while not lending a sense of tonality as such, they strengthen the role of the repeated A as a referential pitch. *FlaVio* is a non-tonal piece, but Merckelys makes significant use of a repeated 'major third' pedal (D $\flat$ -F, juxtaposed with an E $\flat$ -G $\flat$  dyad) in a similar way to *MiKonst*. The marked presence later on of a D $\flat$  bass pedal supports the implication of D $\flat$  major as a centre more strongly, against the flute's insistent G natural. The pitch material comprises an atonal set which, after the A-centred opening of the piece, has moments suggestive of D $\flat$  major. The first subsection comprises A, B $\flat$ , B, C, D, E, G and A $\flat$ . Around the score's rehearsal mark '1', the introduction of the complementary D $\flat$ , E $\flat$ , F and G $\flat$  completes the 12-note set. The organisation of these additional pitches at their introduction leans more towards tonal implication than much of the preceding material, and the piece ends with a lone rhythmic D $\flat$  pedal in the viola. In *Gemma*, the pitch set is again atonal, though the major-second juxtaposition at its opening, in the absence of other harmonic implications and with the B clearly asserted more strongly than the other pitch, suggests B as a referential centre in spite of the increased chromaticism later on. *Gemma* is laced with recurring and irregular numerical sequences; in terms of the shifting accents on the insistently repeated B natural pedals, a different, less regular pattern is juxtaposed with the regularly alternating bar lengths (3/4 and 2/4 respectively) and clarinet interjections. The five notes in *Gemma* – A, A $\sharp$ , B, C, C $\sharp$  – form a symmetrical set. The pedal B is the central axis of the set when organised as an ascending sequence, and the central point of the oscillating loop. Similar 'turn-like' figures are also seen in *MiKonst*, in the contrapuntal material in

section B; Merkelys makes repeated use of these kinds of ostinati (whether fully intact or fragmented and layered) in different ways in different works.

Overall this examination of music by Merkelys has demonstrated a tendency towards driving rhythmic repetition of a surface-level nature; a more contrast-based approach to structure than a cumulative or process-based one; a moderate modernist inclination with regards to parameters like temperament, metre, and timbre; and a preoccupation with recurring numeric patterns. These correlate in large part to verbal discourses around his music, though two small but interesting points of friction emerge: the rhetoric of uncompromising, 'fiery' rationality combined with the relative consonance and regularity of the music; and the associations with 'minimalism', which are no less appropriate for this composer than countless others who have been similarly described, but which may possibly recur with greater frequency in this context due to the overrepresentation of euphonic styles in the international musical exports of the region.

Merkelys's music could be described as moderate modernism with a strong discursive emphasis on constructivism and calculation. Notwithstanding the composer's dislike of many of the musical associations that come with the term, Tomas Kutavičius's music could for the purposes of comparison be characterised as moderate modernism, with a contrastingly strong discursive emphasis on intuition and communication.

## **5.2 Tomas Kutavičius (b. 1964)**

In some ways leaning towards a similar sound world (rhythmic, motorically repetitive, dissonant but often implying tonality), Tomas Kutavičius takes a different view on what is most important in composition. Son of the enormously influential Bronius Kutavičius, the younger composer has a distinctive style which at times seems closer to Balakauskas's dissonant extended sonorities than the work of his father – due in part to his career as a jazz pianist.<sup>14</sup> On some levels, however, commonalities with Bronius Kutavičius's approach clearly emerge. In an interview (Vilnius, October 2018, with Tomas' daughter Vilma Kutavičiūtė kindly acting as a translator<sup>15</sup>), Kutavičius told the story of his earliest training:

At the beginning, with my father, from my early childhood, he was always giving me things to listen to, telling me which composers to explore; when he was writing music I was a little child, running around the piano, listening, knocking everything over, climbing all over everything...<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Tomas Kutavičius interview, Vilnius, October 2018, supporting translation by Vilma Kutavičiūtė.

<sup>15</sup> Condensed version published in *Deep Baltic* ('Jazz, instinct and meaning: Tomas Kutavičius and contemporary Lithuanian music', 25 June 2019, <https://deepbaltic.com/2019/06/25/jazz-instinct-and-meaning-tomas-kutavicius-and-contemporary-lithuanian-music/>).

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*

The young Kutavičius went on to the National MK Čiurlionis School of Art and studied jazz.<sup>17</sup> He relates playing piano for seven to eight hours a day, sustaining practice-related injuries, and travelling internationally ('Detroit [...] Paris [...] All the best jazz festivals'<sup>18</sup>). Kutavičius spent around ten years touring in this way — but following this, he identifies a moment of change: 'when I was 42 years old I entered the academy to study composition. I started to work very seriously on it – I left my jazz playing behind and turned completely towards contemporary art music.'<sup>19</sup>

Kutavičius' early career was focused on improvisation and performance; he started composing in earnest when he was 25. Though he did perform his own music as a pianist, he relates that he had begun to feel somewhat constricted by conventions in the types of jazz he was playing. Although his performing work tended to involve 'quite free' jazz, Kutavičius felt that in many ways this resulted in music-making that he no longer experienced as liberating: 'I started to feel like it wasn't interesting anymore. Like, there are... borders – in jazz... [...] Limits'.<sup>20</sup> He said that what, for him, was missing, was the ability to effect much control over form or structure, explaining, 'one moment you felt like the piece had to finish there, but we couldn't stop at the moment we should have.'<sup>21</sup> Kutavičius elaborated on his experience of improvisation:

In jazz you feel the moment – I mean, you are in the moment in that time and place... and you are reacting in that moment to what you're listening to. You hear something and you react and bring in another idea. And that's the situation – something happens, something else happens...<sup>22</sup>

Expressing a desire to be the 'captain of the ship, not just one of many crew members',<sup>23</sup> the composer acknowledged a certain vulnerability inherent in the team dynamic of this ensemble work, in which each performer is 'only like a part. If you don't have good communication with your partners, it all goes wrong. It's like luck. Sometimes you will have a great performance, sometimes it's absolutely disastrous. You can't predict what will happen.'<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, he acknowledges that these experiences were influential in his musical training and formative — to an extent — as he developed an individual compositional language:

I took a lot from jazz. Rhythm, dynamics. I found my own style. They [critics] call my work minimalist with some jazz influences. Well, somebody said that I have some 'jazz blood' in my pieces, but I don't agree with that. But most people think that I'm a

---

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*

jazz man, that my work is more or less close to jazz music – I mean, the Lithuanian elite composers... the VIP composers.<sup>25</sup>

During the course of our conversation Kutavičius evoked a wide array of other styles, movements and composers; these discussions are useful for how they help to situate his own work and ideas about music in context. Regarding comparisons with major international movements in art music, although Kutavičius's evocations of minimal music were more focused on spiritual minimalism or non-minimalist composers' (like Ravel's) use of repetition, there is a certain affinity between his music and that of American post-minimalist David Lang (a spotlight composer at the 2017 GAIDA Festival); this timbral, harmonic and rhythmic affinity is matched by a certain similar ambivalence towards modernism. However, Kutavičius work is typically more rhythmically involved than music by Lang and other post-minimalists or Bang-On-A-Can-style postmodern composers. In fact, contrary to one interviewer's assertion that Osvaldas Balakauskas was unusual among Lithuanian composers for 'pay[ing] particular attention to rhythm'<sup>26</sup> (although this could also be interpreted in line with Gruodytė's discussion of Lithuanian serialism's habitual restriction to pitch organisation alone<sup>27</sup>), Lithuanian (non-euphonic) postmodern works are often highly rhythmically complex and syncopated, from Balakauskas through the machinists to Remigijus Merkelys, Tomas Kutavičius and Vykintas Baltakas, when compared to composers like Lang, Phillip Glass, Terry Riley and Louis Andriessen. The rhythmic complexity of some Lithuanian post-minimalisms could be likened to the driving energy of compositions by Steve Reich; however, the latter composer's explicit 'borrowing' of rhythmic ideas from musics of the global south following studies in Ghana<sup>28</sup> lends a different kind of self-conscious cosmopolitanism and exoticism to this work, whereas for Lithuanian minimalists the adoption and development of minimal styles constituted a comparatively – or rather, putatively – more abstract affair than something referential or (deliberately and self-consciously) culturally-specific (of course, white/European bourgeois modernism is as 'culturally specific' as anything else, but it is also strongly characterised by the false assumption/assertion of its own blankness and neutral normativity<sup>29</sup>). Nakas elsewhere corroborates the comparative academicism, abstraction and 'local' quality of Lithuanian minimalism.<sup>30</sup> Interestingly, Kutavičius's thoughts on the boundaried, or even limited, structural possibilities afforded by the jazz genres he had been operating in previously evoke a certain modernist stance, in contrast with both his strong emphasis on affect and his open dislike of the types of avant-

---

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Bamberger, 'Fate and Osvaldas Balakauskas', 152.

<sup>27</sup> Gruodytė, 'Modernism and National Identity', 76.

<sup>28</sup> Sumanth Gopinath, 'A Composer Looks East: Steve Reich and Discourse on Non-Western Music', *Glendora Review* 3/3-4 (2004), pp. 134–45.

<sup>29</sup> Namwali Serpell, 'Vacuity', 215.

<sup>30</sup> Nakas, 'Minimalism in Lithuanian Music', 16.



garde or experimental composition he interprets to be designated by the broad term 'modernism':

CM: ...So how would you describe your relationship with modernism, then?

TK: I don't like it. Like this [referring to a piece programmed in a recent concert] – [mimicking scraping and scratching sounds of extended string techniques in torturous fashion]. I'm more interested in affecting the emotions, engaging and connecting with people. I don't run after fashionable trends in composition or do things because they're popular in the moment. I was never interested in this thing where you could say, 'oh, this person is writing in the Darmstadt style', and 'this other composer is writing in this other style', or chasing after the most recent style from Europe. I think this is a particular pressure for young composers, and I'm completely against it. [...] It's more important to have a really solid understanding of how harmony works than to chase the newest techniques for the sake of newness.

[...] You can make an entire piece with one chord. When a string orchestra plays a chord starting from Do, and then plays it starting from Fa, it's a completely different colour, feeling, identity. It can be the same chord on paper but it will never be the same – on a psychological level, the orchestra will play it in a different way. One of the performers will play very precisely, another will play more expressively and less exactly, and in every case you will have a completely different chord. And when you just look at the score, the notes on the paper, you wouldn't believe that.<sup>31</sup>

Rather than produce a fixed work that 'is what it is' based on an abstract mental concept or a pre-existing extra-musical form like a stained-glass window or numerical pattern, examples here suggest a greater interest in parameters pertaining to performers, performance spaces, and audiences. Kutavičius's assertion that he left jazz for contemporary classical composition in a bid to gain greater individual creative control over the musical end-product is mediated by his recognition of the fluidity of works passed on to the musicians who play them.

Interested by what I perceived to be certain sonic commonalities between music by Balakauskas, Merkelys and Kutavičius — and given the former's influence in contemporary Lithuanian art music — I mentioned Balakauskas in an open question. Kutavičius's reply

---

<sup>31</sup> Kutavičius interview, 2018.

clearly implied that, while finding Balakauskas to be a hugely significant figure, he did not feel necessarily feel that their approaches to writing music were comparable in impulse, ideology, or approach. Following Kutavičius's statement that most critics interpreted his work as being strongly inspired by jazz, I asked:

CM: People have said that a lot about Osvaldas Balakauskas too, right? Do you see any parallels with that? Because he often denied that he wrote jazz-influenced music...

TK: But he did! For example, *Sonata for Donatus*. But he makes a mistake – he writes very exactly. In jazz, it's not possible, this very exact approach... daaa-da, da-dah di-dih-da [he mimes anxiously reading a complex and obsessively precise rhythm]. With an orchestra, everybody will play accents in the same places – tenuto, staccato, marcato, and legato... [mimes effortful/difficult playing]

CM: And it doesn't always sound quite right, does it, if you notate jazz in that kind of obsessive way?

TK: Yes, you have to swing the written music. This da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da [mimics even quaver rhythm pattern] – all the notes the same value – no. [writes eight even quavers on paper]. In jazz, you have to swing – to feel the rhythm. In an orchestra, everyone plays academically. They play what's written [mimes uptight precision] – not this [mimics more free, swung, syncopated rhythm], which is another style, another colour. And Balakauskas... thinks about it very, very precisely...

CM: Like in *Bop Art*?

TK: Yes, like *Bop Art* – this... [mimics struggling to read very complex notation, then tearing out own hair]. Argh!

CM: [laughs] – but still, precision was quite important to you? You wanted to move to something more precise?

TK: Yes – and I just want to say that Balakauskas is one of the greatest Lithuanian composers. He's completely different from my father, though they're both so important. If Balakauskas takes any kind of instrument – like a piano, for example –

he will... [mimes squeezing and wringing every drop out of something] ...he will use 100% of the instrument's potential. He never uses an instrument for just a few notes or a few ideas.<sup>32</sup>

Kutavičius seems to express a certain admiration for Balakauskas' brand of musical economy — a characteristic that, in other ways, is also redolent of his own work, in which extensive repetition in some ways gives the impression of a tightly-controlled plan (albeit one based on generating effect and affect rather than one intrinsically motivated by structural concerns). In relaying his compositional experiments while a student, Kutavičius described writing much more constructed works, including a piece that seems to tap into the influence of Pärt. The juxtaposition of musical fingerprints strongly associated with euphonic, Baltic minimalist styles and a formalist/structuralist, calculated methodology that the composer explains he has now left behind in favour of a more affect-oriented approach is interesting for how it contributes to the deconstruction of the hegemonic idea of Baltic euphonic minimalism as an anti-intellectual, intuitive counterpoint to modernist-leaning composition:

CM: [following discussion of Balakauskas's *Dodekatonika*] So do you compose with a system? Or not really?

TK: That's a difficult question... Well, twelve years ago at the Academy I was writing very different pieces – absolutely mathematical. There was one piece, called *Signum*, which was based on Gregorian chant – on neumes. It was a trio for cello, piano, and violin – very strict. So you know how the Gregorian chants are in one voice – monody – and I was working out how to have this effect of one voice, but with three instruments, to subvert this idea of the Gregorian chant. So the cello is always playing an inversion of the violin line, and it creates a symmetry around this constant central line of the piano [drawing diagrams]. Like reflections in the water. And the piano strings are prepared with aluminium foil, so when you play it makes this ... [mimes playing] chuk-chuk-chuk-chuk... and the notes kind of spread out in this cumulative way, expanding further outwards with every bar.

CM: So, quite a minimalist impulse, then...?

---

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*

TK: It's always cumulatively increasing, going all the way up to 9 [degrees higher than the central note] and then back down. And there are variations, like the neumes – 4 bars, 4 variations. 32 notes, 32 bars.

CM: It sounds very precise!

TK: Yes, and every neume has 4 variations.

CM: Was it kind of like, establishing the rules so that you could break them?

TK: No, I didn't want to break any rules here – in this piece I wanted absolutely strict structure. It was very complicated because the tempo changes were like this... [writing down rapid time signature changes – 3/8, 4/8, 5/8...] – and it's very complicated, very difficult for players. [...]

CM: Very 'academic' music?

TK: Yeah, yeah.<sup>3329</sup>

Having explored some of the potentials of this type of strict, planned orientation early on in his compositional career, Kutavičius subsequently made a decisive move away from it. We discussed how his priorities had changed and developed, with the composer suggesting that he had experienced a general loss of interest in complexity for complexity's sake. Kutavičius acknowledges that his music was 'very academic before'.

CM: And now it's a bit more free?

TK: Well, I focus on other details. But for example, nowadays, I will only write... [draws a simple 3-in-a-bar time signature]. In all my pieces, I do it this way now. Because, in this rhythm you can write whatever you want.

CM: And you don't need to change every bar.

TK: Yes! Because if you do it the other way, everything is very complicated, and all the players are thinking, ugh! [throws up hands in despair]

---

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*

CM: But you can still write complex rhythms, like in Thinking Reed

TK: Yes – it's the same, it's just easier to read. The musical result is the same but you don't have such big problems. Ligeti does this also, like... 1/8, then 5/8, and then 1/8, and I just think... why, why? ....I don't really like electronic music – I mean, this really unhuman, unnatural precision. I like pure, acoustic sounds. I don't like these digital things, all the effects.

CM: And what do you think about the 'machinist' trend?

TK: Hmm... it's not my thing. This kind of D-D-D-D-D-D-D-D [mimicking rapid-fire mechanical repetition]... and [they are] very academic, using these microtonal systems. I ask you... if you have, for example, a hair, here [mimes holding a single hair] – and then I say, I'm going to separate it into eight parts... [shrugs]. It's a hair! But I mean... [they write] this.... [notates a given pitch] 'plus 64'! Or 'minus 36'! How do you play that?!

CM: Not very instinctively?!

TK: Well, it's like these phasing techniques. And, you know, [miming obsessive divisions and trying to read extremely complex instructions]

CM: [laughs] I guess you don't really like it...

TK: Well, it's just impossible to understand this music. But, [these composers are] very intellectual, thoughtful, always thinking. When I'm writing music, I'm just thinking: does it work or not? Does it express or communicate the affect – the feeling – I want, or not? I focus on the feeling of one small detail, honing it until it has the right effect. If there's one tiny detail that's not right, then I will spend as long as it takes to fix it. It's a huge job, to work out the expressive and emotional communication in this level of detail in a large-scale piece and make sure every moment is as engaging as possible.<sup>34</sup>

Kutavičius has a clear idea of where his music sits in relation to modernist, postmodern, accessible, avant-garde, academic and/or emotive artworks and ideas. He felt that the jazz ensemble styles he was playing did not afford him the individual control and precision he wanted. When afforded this control, he has tended to direct his energy towards a carefully

---

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*

intuited approach rather than any systematic formalist approach, reflecting his own recollections of Bronius Kutavičius's intuitive approach to form and composition. The remainder of this Chapter will primarily explore, contextualise and interpret musical characteristics of three pieces: *A Glow-Worm for Maria Morawska* (2015), *A Thinking Reed* (2017) and *Ritus Rhythmus* (2018). These case studies map a continuity of language across a variety of forms — a work for piano solo, one for orchestra, and one for a smaller ensemble. Tomas Kutavičius's earlier classical works leaned towards tonal theatre pieces and music for children;<sup>35</sup> his later works, while not necessarily any more authentic or important by comparison, contribute in more relevant ways to the ongoing exploration here of repetitive, paratonal, modernist-leaning musics in Lithuania and the discourses that surround them. As such, unlike in some other Chapters, the selection of case studies here is taken from a smaller and more recent timeframe, representing an individual, later-period style which, being at a greater remove from euphonic paradigms, has comparatively greater significance for the themes taken up by this study.

### **5.2.1 Three works by Tomas Kutavičius: *A Glow-worm for Maria Morawska*, *A Thinking Reed*, and *Ritus Rhythmus***

With its extensive syncopation, predominant octatonic harmony, high degree of cellular repetition, motoric ostinati, and referential pitch pedals Kutavičius's 2015 piece *A Glow-worm for Maria Morawska*, for piano, displays many features characteristic of the composer's style. As in Merkelys's *MiKonst*, the piece is a homage to M.K. Čiurlionis. Kutavičius related the tale behind the work's title, from the early life of the historical composer:

When he was about 20, his first girlfriend – in Poland – was called Maria Morawska. Čiurlionis was friends with Maria's brother. When he was 18 years old he met her, and they started to see each other – and her father was very angry. Her father was saying like, 'I'll wash your clothes for you!' – meaning that he would beat him up! Anyway, one day her father called Čiurlionis to him and said, 'you must never see her again'. So Maria and Čiurlionis started to write each other secret letters, written in lemon juice. And one night they met up, and were walking through the fields on a summer night. There was a storm, and there were hundreds of glow-worms shining in the dark, and Čiurlionis put some in her hair – like a crown of lights. So she was walking through the dark, glowing, and some old woman saw them and had a fright! And he told her, like, 'You see? Old people don't understand beautiful things'.

---

<sup>35</sup> 'Tomas Kutavičius', Lithuanian Music Information Centre.

Čiurlionis' younger sister was the one who wrote this story down. It's a very romantic story, but his relationship with Maria didn't last in the end, and later on he ended up attending her wedding. It is a beautiful story, though, and that's where the title of this piece comes from. But I am not Čiurlionis, so I can only manage one glow-worm [laughs].<sup>36</sup>

At five and a half minutes in length and written for solo piano, this piece provides a usefully condensed example of Kutavičius's musical language, which can be seen projected on a larger scale in other pieces. Kutavičius's 2017 work *A Thinking Reed* is also dedicated to a celebrated musical figure. This large-scale composition lasts for around 15 minutes and is scored for orchestra in 46 parts. Dedicated to bassist Jaco Pastorius (as 2017 coincided with 40 years since Pastorius's death in 1987), the piece evokes Blaise Pascal's famous words: 'Man is only a reed, the weakest in nature, but he is a thinking reed.'<sup>37</sup> The saying holds that, although humans are physically vulnerable to any number of natural forces and phenomena, they have an immutable distinction due to their consciousness: 'he knows that he is dying and the advantage the universe has over him', while '[t]he universe knows none of this.'<sup>38</sup> Kutavičius made explicit the link, in his conception of this piece, between Pascal's words and Pastorius's lived experiences:

Well you know, Jaco Pastorius had an incredibly difficult life. I love his work, but he's also a really inspiring figure. At some points he was sleeping rough - but such a fantastic player. [...] I decided to dedicate this Gaida commission to him, in honour of his life and the techniques he created – his innovations with the fretless bass, using oil on the instrument so it plays more smoothly. All these virtuosic techniques, so much more technical than playing the piano... that's why the piece I dedicated to him had to be so technical.<sup>39</sup>

Like other Kutavičius works, *A Thinking Reed* evokes features associated with jazz, such as rhythmic syncopation and parallel extended dominant seventh harmonies. The same is true of his 2018 GAIDA commission *Ritus Rhythmus*. With characteristic humour, Kutavičius explained the origins of this smaller scale piece (lasting around 9 minutes and scored for clarinet, marimba, piano, violin, cello and double bass):

[an artistic director]... he has his own opinion and he doesn't care what anyone says. I respect him for that. He calls me up saying, "Tomas, we want you to write another piece [for us]", and I think... 'for the second year in a row?!' – well... [shrugs].<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> Kutavičius interview, 2018.

<sup>37</sup> Blaise Pascal, *The Thoughts, Letters and Opuscules of Blaise Pascal*, transl. O.W. Wight, ed. O.W. Wight (New York: Derby and Jackson, 1859), 170.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Kutavičius interview, 2018.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*

Programmed alongside Louis Andriessen's *Worker's Union* and Alexander Schubert's *Sugar, Maths and Whips*, *Ritus Rhythmus* evoked a similarly noisy, busy, clashingly tuneful spirit, swept along by a continual sense of rhythmic drive. Although their languages are in many ways highly contrasting, Kutavičius attributes elements of his own intuitive treatments of time and repetition on a surface and structural level to the influence of his father Bronius, whose impactful output has been described as 'Music that changed time.'<sup>41</sup> Ways that Tomas described Bronius's approach to repetition are reflected in some of the works discussed here, including *Ritus Rhythmus* — the title of which already evokes concepts associated with the latter's works.

Although these three pieces are distinct in scale and forces, Kutavičius has a distinctive musical voice which allows for strong musical comparisons between the works. As such, the following musical investigations will be broadly organised under the following headings: Repetition (incorporating repetition as a surface feature and structural repetitions more on the level of form) and Harmony/pitch content. Comparisons with Merkelys's work, as well as broader musical contexts (in keeping with Kutavičius's free-ranging references to multiple sources of inspiration and interest), will be threaded throughout, concluding with a discussion of the significance of this music against a still prominent backdrop of euphonic styles.

### **5.3 Repetition**

Tomas Kutavičius's music, like that of Balakauskas, Valančiūtė, Mažulis and Merkelys, is often very repetitive. Looking at this trend more closely opens up wider conversations — not only about the influence of very broad genres like minimalism and jazz, but also about what else is implied when such labels are evoked. Based on conversations with the composer and explorations of his music, both surface level and structural repetitions seem to be based more on intuiting and 'feeling' or working out where material should end or change rather than the kind of numerical and proportional preoccupations that are more significant for Merkelys. Some of Kutavičius's pieces evoke modernist composers like Stravinsky as well as non-classical genres through patterns of recurrence that suggest an approach to form other than teleological narrative or process-based conceptions. Merkelys's approach to form/structure, at least as it appears in *MiKonst*, seems comparatively more journey-like than pieces like Kutavičius's *Ritus Rhythmus* or *A Glow-Worm for Maria Morawska*, although Merkelys also uses a large amount of surface repetition/repetitiveness and some minimalist techniques (phasing) and tropes (insistent pulsed repetition of tonal-sounding objects).

---

<sup>41</sup> Povilionienė and Katinaitė, *Music That Changed Time*.



While a piece like *A Thinking Reed* has a greater sense of fundamental, large-scale contrasts between earlier and later material, the extent to which material is repeated in each section creates more of a sense of being in a state rather than being on a journey — though this is not intended to evoke tropes of minimalism, as will be discussed later.

I asked Kutavičius if, although their music is very different, he could identify any particular qualities that may have been the result of his father’s spiritual minimalist or ethnofuturist influences. The composer explained that Bronius’s approach to musical time and development had been significant in his own musical development:

TK: Jazz influenced my youth. But my father gave me the form. He was always telling me... [reaches for pencil] ...if you don’t know where to put this [indicates his drawing of double barlines] – fin – the end of the composition... then don’t write anything at all. [laughs] It’s like the number one most important rule. I think that he, my father, is maybe the only Lithuanian composer who has absolutely mastered this strictness of form, this mathematical precision. He is counting every little detail. [...] He is a magician in this way, in creating tension.<sup>42</sup>

In addition to being interested in an approach to form that could be taken to express non-linearity,<sup>43</sup> Tomas Kutavičius also often tends to incorporate extensive surface level repetition and rhythmic ostinati in his works. As shown in the accompanying table, *A Glow-worm for Maria Morawska* (2015) has four repeating groups of cellular-repetitive material, resulting in a piece of about five and a half minutes with 11 distinct short sections. The material groups are differentiated by pitch sets (heptatonic, octatonic, and decatonic), texture, dynamic, articulation and performance directions, and recur in block-like sections (section C1 is highly similar in rhythmic, motivic and harmonic terms to section C, but with one pitch changed in the note set and with melodic emphasis on different parts of the note set).

*Glow-Worm* and *A Thinking Reed*, along with Kutavičius’s 2013 piano concerto *Divine Madness* and to some extent also *Ritus Rhythmus*, all make significant use of ostinato-like repetition and short melodic cells. Early on in *Divine Madness*, an alternating

Section	Bars	Material (thematic/textural)	Pitch content
A	1-25	<i>Lusingando</i> . Syncopated harmonic switching cells around a central ostinato pedal	Gb, G, A, Bb, C, Db, Eb, E  (octatonic 1, symmetrical)

<sup>42</sup> Kutavičius interview, 2018.

<sup>43</sup> Kutavičius explained his father’s treatment of time in relation to temporality and space in William Faulkner’s writing; Ihab Hassan has described Faulkner’s method as ‘transfigur[ing] one kind of time [historical] into another [cosmic and spiritual]’. ‘Privations of Postmodernism: Faulkner as Exemplar’, in *Faulkner and Postmodernism: Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha*, ed. John N. Duvall and Ann J. Abadie (Jackson: Mississippi University Press, 1999), pp. 1-18: 16.

<b>B</b>	26-36	<i>Leggiero</i> . 2-part semiquaver counterpoint	G, Ab, Bb, B, Db, D, E, F (octatonic 2, symmetrical)
<b>A</b>	37-51	As in A	As in A
<b>C</b>	52-62	<i>Marcato rigoroso</i> . 3-4-part syncopated counterpoint	Gb, A, Bb, C, Db, E, F (heptatonic)
<b>B</b>	63-73	As in B	As in B
<b>C1</b>	74-84	As in C	Gb, A, B, C, Db, Eb, E, F octatonic 3, non-symmetrical
<b>A</b>	85-95	As in A	As in A
<b>D</b>	96-104	<i>Espressivo</i> . High point in dynamics, registral extremes and chord density.	Db, D, Eb, E, F, Gb, G, Ab, A, Bb C (hendecatonic)
<b>C1</b>	105-126	As in C	As in C
<b>B</b>	127-138	As in B	As in B
<b>D</b>	139-153	As in D	As in D

Figure 5.2 – Overview of sections in *A Glow-Worm for Maria Morawska* (2015).

D-C# quaver pattern emerges in the upper strings. As an accompaniment to the more varied chordal material in the woodwinds, this two-note motif dominates the background for around 80 bars. The semitone motif returns repeatedly after this and, notwithstanding a few passages, is a significant undercurrent for a major proportion of the work. Similarly, the opening of *A Thinking Reed* is characterised by the accumulation of layers upon layers of a chromatic three-note cell, first introduced by the vibraphone and accompanied by a semitone dyad pedal in the violins. The piece falls into two halves: the extended opening built from layers of the chromatic cell and a recurring percussion motif; and the second part, building from a new percussive motif through dense, heavily syncopated counterpoint to a repetitive antiphonal texture where the busy motor rhythms of the woodwind and string parts are periodically ‘answered’ by a syncopated two-bar refrain from the brass. Towards the end of the piece this call-and-response pattern recurs sufficiently often that the expectation of familiar patterns of change is negated<sup>44</sup> and the music occupies a non-linear, non-developmental space that is nevertheless not redolent of euphonic, ‘timeless’ stasis.

Rhythmic energy and repetition are key characteristics in *Ritus Rhythmus*. The 9-minute piece, for violin, clarinet, cello, piano and marimba is characterised by the insistent

<sup>44</sup> John Rahn, ‘Repetition’, *Contemporary Music Review* 7/2, 1993; published online 2009 (accessed online, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07494469300640031>, 01.09.20), 52.

repetition of syncopated ostinati and short, accented cells. After Kutavičius described Bronius's approach to form as like the work of a magician, I asked further:

CM: And that's got a lot to do with timing, hasn't it – with not doing anything for too long? It's not just... repeat, repeat, repeat, repeat....

TK: No... He very much liked Faulkner. My father reminds me of [the works of William] Faulkner. It's like – one character appears, somehow, and then another character appears, and they sort of move around each other in some way. Like *Bolero* [by Maurice Ravel]. that's my father's favourite composition, and that's how he says music has to be done – I mean, how to develop a piece. There's one theme, and then like, many details appearing – more dynamics, other instruments.<sup>45</sup>

This explanation reflects a cumulative orientation common to many minimalist works, in which a work's opening in particular displays a marked economy of means, often taking some time to build into a fuller texture. The repetitive music of Tomas and Bronius Kutavičius is somewhat different from a more 'vertical', Reich-like minimalism in which small building blocks are gradually but consistently layered closely together to create a more textural sense of development. Tomas Kutavičius is more likely to spin out a linear, though repetitive, line for a long time in relative isolation, or to repeat the exact same sectional block several times with no changes, suggesting a somewhat less process-based orientation. He explains that Bronius

...developed everything step by step. And this is how I like to try and do things when I write. I don't give everything, don't show everything, at the beginning. I like things to unfold step by step – although of course I have an absolutely different form from my father.<sup>46</sup>

Although Bronius and Tomas Kutavičius have very different compositional styles, the references to Bronius' Kutavičius's admiration of *Bolero* and his influence on Tomas cast interesting light on some of the latter's pieces. The main motives in *Ritus Rhythmus* and *A Thinking Reed* resemble ostinati in places due to the insistent, unembellished repetition of the same rhythmically driving melody. In *Ritus Rhythmus*, the sum total of the violinist's material for the first 80 bars still consists of the same 2-and-a-half-bar melody (shown in figure 5.3) repeated with a slight metric displacement to create a 5-bar unit, which in turn is directly repeated to create a 10-bar structural unit, played 24 times.

---

<sup>45</sup> Kutavičius interview, 2018.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.



Figure 5.3 — Repetitive melody from *Ritus Rhythmus*.

The composer recalls that critics have described his music as ‘minimalist with some jazz impulses’.<sup>47</sup> *Ritus Rhythmus* is cumulative in a literal sense (reflecting Kutavičius’s claim that he ‘like[s] things to unfold step by step’), but while the addition of a parallel part with each iteration of the theme does change the sound of the music, and it gradually builds to something fuller and louder, it doesn’t lead to the kinds of sometimes surprisingly fundamental changes, tectonic shifts or sense of closure/arrival that can occur in archetypal process pieces. Though the latter are often framed as extremely repetitive, it can also seem as though a composer has tried to compensate for the surface-level repetitiveness by building in alternative methods for creating a sense of trajectory, development, or ‘something happening’ that are interesting in their own way; there is a pay-off in that the repetitions are ultimately revealed to have some ‘meaning’ if they form a recognisable process. Kutavičius’s approach to form in *Thinking Reed*, *Ritus Rhythmus* and *Glow-Worm* is different from, and in some ways more unapologetically repetitive than, this image of process-based minimalism.

Tomas Kutavičius acknowledges the influence of Bronius Kutavičius on his approach to repetition, and implicitly to form, and the latter composer is frequently described as having written minimalist music. However, the breadth of approaches that have been associated with post-minimalism in this study so far highlights the possibility that the application of the label in the case of Baltic classical composers might carry with it a certain amount of baggage which does not correlate to the use of minimalist techniques — or even necessarily a very high degree of repetition. As much as post-minimalism in various other contexts is already defined in extremely broad terms, this question could be approached more directly, considering whether the term ‘minimalist’ is sometimes applied metonymically to Baltic art music which might be variously euphonic, slow-moving or consonant but does not particularly evoke minimalism in the sense of a fairly recognisable and conspicuous set of approaches to repetition. As mentioned before, the accuracy of a label can be considered of secondary importance to the other discursive functions it performs. Though it is frequently mentioned by writers that popular Baltic composers like Vytautas Miškinis or Eriks Ešenvalds are not strictly writing music that can be called ‘minimalist’,<sup>48</sup> the word still crops

<sup>47</sup> Kutavičius interview, 2018.

<sup>48</sup> Rupert Gough writes, in the liner notes to a Royal Holloway Choir recording, ‘Repetition permeates much of Miškinis’s music but he is not to be considered a minimalist’. ([https://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/dc.asp?dc=D\\_CDA67818](https://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/dc.asp?dc=D_CDA67818), accessed online 31.08.20); Fabrice Fitch likens Ešenvalds’s music to ‘a more ethereal form of post-minimalism, though without the processual apparatus that sometimes pertains in the latter style’. (<https://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/e%C5%A1envalds-northern-lights-and-other-choral-works>, accessed online, 31.08.20).

up regularly<sup>49</sup> — a cognate term that is very often on the tip of the tongue in conversations about these styles of choral music. Considering composers like Ešēvalds, Miškinis, and Pēteris Vasks, we might ask — is their music ‘euphonic’? Definitely. But is it minimalist? Not really. There is likely to be a high degree of consonance and perhaps a certain slowness of harmonic motion or a ‘static’ use of harmonic pedals, but in many cases the music is not markedly repetitive and does not express the kind of cellular or process-based quality that might lead to connections with minimalism. However, this is not really a question of individual writers’ choices: ‘spiritual/holy/magical minimalism’ has been established as a term to describe euphonic musics and is a widely-used concept which is collectively maintained in discourse.

Has ‘minimalist’ come to act as a byword for tropes often associated with euphonic styles? Is Tomas Kutavičius’s music called ‘minimalist’ in part because his father is Bronius Kutavičius? As we have seen, the two composers may conceptualise recurrence in similar ways — but because Tomas’s work is typically further removed from many of the markers of euphonicism that characterise key outputs from Bronius’s career (consonant extended post-tonal harmony which avoids implications of common-practice tension and resolution, explicit use of folk-inspired material, evoking ritual and/or a pagan past, spiritualism, written for choir), this commonality serves to cast further doubt (already expressed in relation to the boundaries of ‘true’ minimalism by writers such as Kyle Gann<sup>50</sup>) on the broad application of the label — particularly, in this context, to Baltic composers.

As shown above, Merkelys has also written very repetitive music. For all his ‘fiery, rational’ constructivism and the modernist rhetoric and comparisons with German expressionism surrounding his work, the minimalist label has still sometimes attached itself to Merkelys’s output. It is possible that this association is largely a result of the term’s ubiquity and influence as a descriptor for almost any (Baltic) contemporary art music which displays a tendency towards marked repetition and a language that could be called consonant-leaning by virtue of its usual adherence to an equal tempered scale and emphases on a referential, central pitch and diatonically-suggestive scale degrees. Although in *MiKonst* there are more examples of process- or pattern-based passages, it also has a more ‘journey-like’ trajectory than most of the Kutavičius pieces discussed here.

---

<sup>49</sup> The notes to a Portland State University Chamber Choir recording state, ‘Ešēvalds falls into the Baltic minimalist camp’ (<https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/eriks-esenvalds-translations-portland-state-university-chamber-choir/34633661>, accessed online, 31.08.20); John Quinn wrote in a CD review that ‘*Lacrimosa* by Mindaugas Urbaitis tends [...] towards minimalism’ ([http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2012/Apr12/Baltic\\_voices\\_DCD34052.htm](http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2012/Apr12/Baltic_voices_DCD34052.htm), accessed online, 31.08.20); David Smith describes Pēteris Vasks’s ‘sacred-leaning and more tonal works, often evoking the label of “minimalism”’ (<https://www.prestomusic.com/classical/articles/2543--interview-p-teris-vasks>, 31.08.20); Jūlija Jonāne considers Vasks’s music to display significant characteristics of ‘Holy Minimalism’ and ‘Sacred Minimalism’. Jonāne, ‘View on Sacred Minimalism and music by Pēteris Vasks as incarnation of theological ideas’, *Menotyra* 23/3 (2016) pp. 215-227.

<sup>50</sup> Kyle Gann, ‘Minimal Music, Maximal Impact’, *NewMusicBox*, 1 Nov 2001 (<https://nmbx.newmusicusa.org/minimal-music-maximal-impact/2/>, accessed online 31.08.20).

This interesting in-between-place of Kutavičius's approach to musical time, recurrence and structure (highly repetitive, nominally cumulative, not really minimalist, not teleological or developmental) can be related not only to the influence of his father, but also to comments made by composer Vykintas Baltakas about the nature of Osvaldas Balakauskas's relationship to jazz (another significant long-term influence of Kutavičius's). Baltakas's description of material that recurs in 'different layers, different densities' but does not express a particular sense of trajectory or development aptly depicts the progress of *Ritus Rhythmus*, which repeatedly adds non-functional harmonic layers to the same insistently repeated melody:

I think that that's something that actually I have discovered is the closest link between me and Balakauskas. Because now I realise, there are many thoughts about Balakauskas and jazz... and it's true – I mean, he is coming from jazz – but I think they are on rather a superficial level, you know, with these harmonies and these rhythms and so on... but that's not the essence. I think that the essence of the jazz is his form, which actually doesn't want to go anywhere. Because that's what you have in jazz, basically – you have your starting material, and basically it goes about changing, in different layers, different densities, etc, but it doesn't go about any formal direction, or... express something not musical.<sup>51</sup>

This in turn is interesting in relation to Kutavičius's turn away from jazz and towards classical art music composition, which he explained was motivated by a strong wish to take complete control of form in his music. However, having gained this control, the composer often produces forms which could be interpreted as 'not really going anywhere' in a similar way to Balakauskas' highly-controlled, often non-developmental forms (as well as Baltakas's experiments in circularly recurring and non-linear structures). In jazz ensembles, Kutavičius recalls that 'we couldn't stop when we should have'; a composer of repetitive music, he has emphasised the importance of choosing the, from his perspective, right moment to end a piece or section. In the art music paradigm Kutavičius has the ability to control when each section or idea stops, but his music can also be repetitive in a similar way to, and even to a greater extent than, some forms of improvisatory music which loop a fundamental base as a ground for solos.

#### **5.4 Harmony/pitch content**

As Baltakas has pointed out, comparisons between jazz and supposedly jazz-inspired classical music like Balakauskas's work often draw on surface level characteristics such as

---

<sup>51</sup> Vykintas Baltakas interview, conducted by Claire McGinn, Brussels, December 2017.

harmony — for instance, octatonic material stacked into tonally-allusive structures evoking non-functional, major-minor dominant seventh chords. Tomas Kutavičius uses a similar approach in *A Glow-Worm for Maria Morawska*. Among the five differentiated groups of pitch material in *Glow-Worm*, the one that is most tonally allusive is the symmetrical octatonic scale used in section A, which in context is frequently arranged in small-range, repeating patterns; the right hand, for example, circles continually around what could in a tonal context be read as a diminished triad or as the upper three notes of a dominant seventh. The repetitive nature of the music and limited range of the pitch content undermines the tonally-disruptive effect of the non-diatonic pitch content. Although the mid-texture C natural ostinato pattern which is insistently repeated throughout section A does not create the impression of a pitch centre as such, the continual re-assertion of the same notes and close-range intervals provide a sense of stability.

Some sections of *Glow-Worm* are more tonally-suggestive than others, though much of the material is characterised by conspicuous, insistent repetition of looping cells outlining a minor third, supporting implications of tonal harmony in sections based on third-and-fifth based octatonic structures. Section B uses a different octatonic scale and section C expresses a heptatonic set, while C1 again has eight notes and is therefore in some sense ‘octatonic’, but does not conform to the symmetrical intervallic pattern that facilitates the construction of dominant-suggestive chords. Finally, Section D is hendecatonic, featuring denser chords including small intervals low in the bass, a much bigger register, louder dynamics and accented, *marcato* playing, all of which contribute to a greater overall impression of dissonance. Though the sections or material groups A-D occur in the non-linear sequence of A-B-A-C-B-C1-A-D-C1-B-D (as detailed in the accompanying table), there is still an overall trajectory of increasing harmonic ‘intensity’, as Balakauskas might call it; section A is the most tonally suggestive, and section D the most dissonant, ‘intense’ and non-tonal sounding. Nevertheless, section D maintains a rhythmic, syncopated repetitiveness and immediate recurrence of short passages of material, creating a strong sense of continuity with earlier sections. As in the case of other aspects of his composition, Kutavičius’s choice and treatment of the pitch material in *Glow-Worm* does not seem to be based on a particular system or calculation. Like in *Ritus Rhythmus*, close attention appears to have been given here to what are the ‘right’ sequences and proportions to achieve a specific musical effect, rather than basing the musical output — as Balakauskas openly committed to doing — on a series of numbers that are designed to be essentially arbitrary in rhythmic terms.

The opening solo violin melody of *Ritus Rhythmus* (see figure 5.3) — which becomes the primary material for all parts in section A — uses 11 pitches. The hendecatonic melody nevertheless gives a relatively tonal-leaning impression. While it is not serial, featuring a

high degree of repetition of pitches, it is clearly not straightforwardly tonal or euphonic. There are some commonalities in execution with Balakauskas's melodic writing — for instance, a general avoidance of highly dissonant intervals in close succession (or rather, an emphasis on 'low intensity' intervals). The melody falls into relatively clear internal segments due to the rhythmic pattern, in which rests or quavers are interpolated at points between consecutive semiquavers. The music between each of these points of 'rest' can be heard as a discrete block within the larger phrase, even as the whole is dynamic and expresses continuity through repetition of similar intervals and contours. This segmentation contributes to the overall consonant effect of the melody. While in the course of the melody eleven pitches are heard and there is no sense of a clear tonal centre, each cell within the melody tends to be confined to a relatively well defined area. The cells each contain a small set of notes which in most cases correspond to a diatonic scale or chordal figure (for example, the first cell contains G, B $\flat$ , D and F, which in a tonal context would spell a minor dominant seventh; the fourth contains F, G, A and B $\flat$ , as in an F major scale). Between these cells, there is also a sense of movement by relatively minimal or tonally coherent degrees — for example, a cell that uses only notes that would also occur in an F minor chord is followed by a cell that uses only notes that would also occur in a C minor chord — rather than by notes that would in tonal music belong to a very distantly related key. Subsequently, although the melody is not tonal, does not follow diatonic logic, does not seem to differentiate between notes in any obvious hierarchical way, and contains 11 pitches, it also creates a high degree of consonance and sense of stability. Kutavičius is not trying to write tonal or diatonically-suggestive music, but is instead writing consonant-leaning non-tonal music in a way that is closer to Balakauskas's harmony in sonic effect than to the palette typically associated with euphonic music, despite his lack of interest in a highly constructivist approach.

*Ritus Rhythmus* also tends towards fifths-based harmony; with each new repetition of a short section, another part enters, usually a fifth below the last part to have joined the texture. The result is a fast moving, syncopated, short-value sequence of parallel chords; the dynamic melody is expressed in parallel quintal projections. This penchant for building a fixed chord structure and transposing it around through different places and registers to create different effects is reflected in the composer's comment that '[y]ou can make an entire piece with one chord'.<sup>53</sup> This same technique features significantly in *A Thinking Reed*. After a long, gradually unfolding opening, a sustained string chord, underpinning both the end of the ponderous first section and the beginning of the percussive second one, subsequently becomes the basis for a consistently repeated harmonic structure as the second section

---

<sup>53</sup> Kutavičius interview, 2018.



progresses. Busy semiquavers emerge in the woodwind, again doubling and tripling in parallel motion. Eventually, long, complex and rhythmically dynamic melodies are expressed in dense parallel chords. Midway through *A Thinking Reed*, Kutavičius has the whole orchestra play a lively, syncopated rhythmic unison, in parallel but starting on many different pitches. The vertical construction approximates a dense extended chord on A, with pitches that could be interpreted in a tonal context as added sixth, major and minor sevenths, diminished fifth and 11th notes. By directing the focus to the distinctive unison rhythm, using low dynamics and short note values, the impact of the clashing parallel chords and rapid harmonic rhythm is diminished, instead creating the effect of one melody that has been vertically smudged. About this distinctive, bassline-like rhythmic figure from the Pastorius tribute, Kutavičius explained that the material was not quoted: ‘there’s nothing in common with any melodies from his music, just a kind of technique – or more like... a memory, or an impression.’<sup>54</sup> The antiphonal response from the brass (example in figure 5.4), which alternates with the bassline figure towards the piece’s end, is also a series of parallel chords, this time with more familiar implications from tonal or tonal-adjacent music: a major-minor dominant seventh chord with an added sixth, which ascends in parallel in a tonally suggestive sequence (invoking something like a I<sub>b</sub>-V7-I cadential progression). This additive chord, with a major-minor tonality redolent of octatonic works by Balakauskas and Stravinsky, might also be considered reflective of Kutavičius’s previous work as a jazz pianist, since parallel chords are a feature of jazz harmony and particularly idiomatic for the piano.<sup>55</sup>

Although Kutavičius did study *Dodekatonika*, the idea that he has drawn on it in his own work is borne out neither by interviews with the composer nor by examination of the pieces discussed here. What can be reinforced by these investigations is the impression of an orientation earlier described in relation to Balakauskas as moderate modernism. As discussed previously, this term does not have the same connotations beyond the Soviet era. However, it is still a meaningful concept with which to characterise these tendencies against the vivid backdrop of radically or self-consciously non-modernist euphonic styles.

---

<sup>54</sup> Kutavičius interview, 2018.

<sup>55</sup> ‘Parallel 7ths in Jazz’, Harmony.org.uk website, (accessed online, [https://www.harmony.org.uk/book/voice\\_leading/sevenths\\_in\\_jazz.htm](https://www.harmony.org.uk/book/voice_leading/sevenths_in_jazz.htm)), 14.09.20).

Figure 5.4 — Parallel brass chord refrain in *A Thinking Reed*.

## **5.5 Affect**

Kutavičius's biography asserts that he combines a 'rational mind' with jazz influences and 'improvisatory feeling'.<sup>56</sup> What emerged more strongly from an interview with the composer is his preoccupation with affect and engagement. Explaining that he experimented with rational, system-based ways of writing as a student, he says that he is now not so interested in this approach and that his composition has become freer and less academic. The composer also makes a distinction between the more 'intellectual' approach of Rytis Mažulis and his own, more emotive, concerns with communication and engagement. Unlike Balakauskas, Kutavičius has no interest in writing 'difficult' music. Beyond the practical level, in spite of a few basic apparent parallels — a comparable dissonant paratonal inclination and a shared taste for repetitive rhythmic drive — between some machinist works and Kutavičius' output, the composer objects to the micro-level preoccupations and digital

<sup>56</sup> 'Tomas Kutavičius', Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/composers/kutaviciustomas/>, 25.10.19).

aesthetic of these styles. He explains that while, in his view, composers like the machinists are ‘very intellectual, thoughtful, always thinking’, his own approach is more intuition-based, in the sense that, ‘[w]hen I’m writing music, I’m just thinking: does it work or not? Does it express or communicate the affect – the feeling – I want, or not?’<sup>57</sup> When asked how he would describe his relationship with modernism, Kutavičius — referring to a particular a-thematic, a-melodic avant-garde work programmed in a recent concert by way of pinpointing his contextual definition of the word — was succinct: ‘I don’t like it’.<sup>58</sup>

Overall this consideration of Remigijus Merkelys and Tomas Kutavičius’s music and statements about music has revealed a number of similar elements in their respective sound worlds and positions in the Lithuanian art music context. They are of the same generation — composers who grew up during the Soviet regime and have been professionally active during independence — and the works discussed here are from the two decades following 2000. Both work within the same Lithuanian art music networks; both are or have been well known for professional musical careers in other areas than art music composition. Both write music which is lattice-based,<sup>59</sup> non-tonal and dissonant but typically equal-tempered and leaning towards consonance or tonal implication, rhythmically complex and syncopated but typically adhering to a regular metre; both make conspicuous use of surface-level repetition as a musical treatment, and have occasionally come into contact with the label ‘minimalist’ although their work does not evoke the conceptual palette that often accompanies this term in relation to repetitive, euphonic Baltic art music.

Alongside certain similarities, these composers have expressed contrasting ideas about how to approach composition. Kutavičius expresses a dislike for modernism and does not consider his work to be ‘modernist’. He writes dissonant, complex music but prioritises simplicity in notation, and retains metric regularity and idiomatic allusions (rhythm patterns, chord structures) that are close enough to jazz styles that they can be received with the kind of somatic entrainment which Balakauskas went to some lengths to avoid. Son of the famous euphonic/folk-inspired composer Bronius Kutavičius, Tomas Kutavičius studied art music composition after an international career as a jazz performer. Although this move was inspired by a desire to gain greater control over form and structure, Kutavičius is not interested in a highly formalist approach. By comparison, Remigijus Merkelys is more committed to constructivism, geometry, and rationalised structures. Although both composers are closely concerned with intuitively fine-tuning a precise global effect through

---

<sup>57</sup> Kutavičius interview, 2018.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Trevor Wishart’s term for musical paradigms which are concerned ‘with the organisation of pitch in finite sets, rhythms using summative notation and most usually in fixed tempi, and sets of instruments grouped into clearly differentiated timbre-classes.’ Wishart, *On Sonic Art*, ed. Simon Emmerson (Amsterdam: Harwood, 1996), 8.

attention to smaller details, Merkelys expresses his interests in terms more redolent of proportional balance than affect or communication:

My great concern is to find a perfect relationship between sound and silence not only within the frame of the work and its course but also in the sound itself, in its activity and passivity. On the other hand, no less important to me is the feel of the whole — of the entirety of different musical components and their interactions over the greater scope of time.<sup>60</sup>

His music, like Kutavičius's, may be repetitive and tonal-leaning, but as a composer he has seemingly prioritised pattern and proportion. Although his work as a director and manager in the arts sector has taken precedent for some years now, he was previously active and recognised as a composer. Both of these composers have written music that is distinctive. Both share some impulses with Balakauskas's dynamic, rhythmic, sharp, dissonant language, but Kutavičius tends more towards simpler rhythmic entrainment and tonal allusions. Both composers have shared a context and a penchant for repetition with the euphonic style, which it differs from greatly in instrumentation, scale, complexity, textual associations, harmonic language and rhythmic tendencies, and the characteristic machinist works, from which it differs in that Kutavičius and Merkelys (the former more so than the latter) have tended to avoid electronic or digital paradigms, preferring to write for more 'traditional' ensembles and formats, and generally keeping the level of complexity below a threshold that might typically be considered reasonable for acoustic performance (unlike, for example, Mažulis's penchant for precisely notated microtonal pitch shifts and minutely calculated degrees of change in rhythm, both for live performers and computers).

Though seemingly motivated by very different impulses, Kutavičius and Merkelys's works nonetheless coalesce around the recurring features of paratonicity, a decidedly lattice-based orientation, and a rhythmic repetitiveness, which create a running thread through most of the works discussed in this study despite the variety of attitudes to modernism and composition expressed by this broader group of composers. Merkelys and Kutavičius are each, in their own multivalent ways, plugged into independent Lithuanian professional music networks and have built rich, varied, and in many ways international careers. However, a drive to depart the country altogether is not only a product of the repressive atmosphere of the earlier Soviet period. The following Chapter introduces Vykintas Baltakas, a composer who, as a student in the late 1990s, felt that he had to leave a stylistically homogenous Lithuanian scene behind in order to be able to write the kind of music he needed to write — and who, although he is emphatically proud to be Lithuanian

---

<sup>60</sup> 'Remigijus Merkelys', LMIC website.

and has since returned to his home country, expressed a strong feeling of outsidership to and difference from Lithuanian art music in the formative years of his career.

## **6. Leaving Lithuania Part I:**

### **Vykintas Baltakas — Silence, screaming, and soup**

The music explored in this Chapter sees a return to familiar overarching threads: repetitive, driving rhythmic dynamism and densely chromatic but equal-tempered paratonal harmony recur across works considered in this study. However, compared to the composers discussed in the previous Chapter, Baltakas's experiences and ideas diverge in ways that can in part be narrativised around one event — his departure from his home country in 1993 to study composition in Germany. Though it is not inevitable that this should impact his music, Baltakas has linked his departure to a desire to escape from dominant euphonic compositional trends. His patiently intuitive approach differs from the constructivist impulses of Merkelys, Mažulis or Balakauskas; like Tomas Kutavičius, he is led more by a desire to engage and affect listeners, and is drawn to the immediate experience of sounds more than their rational organisation. However, compared with the composers discussed in the previous Chapter — each of whom in their own way has had a close relationship with Lithuanian networks and institutions — Baltakas has at times felt more like an outsider to these centres, in spite of the overall success and recognition he has achieved.

Although Baltakas's output and the way he talks about composition are different in many ways from more straightforwardly minimalist-like Lithuanian art music – and although he views the highly successful 'Mažulis-like minimalism' as a separate style with which his own creative intentions are not aligned, Baltakas's work does still share points of connection with the lattice-based, drivingly rhythmic, tonal-adjacent trends that resurface across music discussed in this thesis. Paratonal tendencies in Baltakas's music seem to emerge in part from the frequent return to referential centres in pursuit of a non-linear/recursive form, and the centrality of discrete, usually twelve-tone melodic lines (which, although Baltakas was not influenced by Balakauskas and writes in a far more intuitive and spontaneous manner, nevertheless distantly echo the latter's gravitation towards equal-tempered melody and harmony as a foundation for other music features). Baltakas's music expresses a 'vertical' lattice-like orientation in the way that certain aspects could be compared to Rihm: melodic lines are discrete, sharp, clear, often equal-tempered, not smudged or indeterminate or of a highly 'gestural' quality. Nevertheless, in a 'horizontal' sense Baltakas's work typically creates a very different effect from the relentless or inexorable adherence to the grid found in pieces by Mažulis or Balakauskas like *Canon Mensurabilis* or *Rex Re*. Baltakas's relationship with Lithuanian art music, as with any composer, is not one of neat adherence to narrativisable categories. He disliked the late-twentieth-century trend for what could be seen as overly profound neo-folklorist expressions, but does not himself approach

composition in a rationalist vein (finding, like many creative producers, that concepts like ‘modernism’ and ‘postmodernism’ are ultimately limiting).

### **6.1 Vykintas Baltakas (b. 1972)**

Born in Vilnius in 1972, Baltakas departed for Karlsruhe in the early 1990s, where he studied composition at the Music Academy with Wolfgang Rihm — and later with Peter Eötvös in Karlsruhe and Hungary — as well as training as a conductor with Andreas Weiss.<sup>1</sup> At the time of our 2017 interview, Baltakas was living in Belgium, but mentioned that he would like to move back to Lithuania, partly for the benefit of his young children.<sup>2</sup> At the time of writing, and since 2018, Baltakas is based once again in Lithuania, teaching at LMTA as well as (remotely) in the Netherlands. He says he is ‘very proud to be Lithuanian’ and strongly feels that this is an important part of his identity (though he does ‘not intentionally express this in [his] music’<sup>3</sup>). Nevertheless, his departure from Lithuania, unlike the experiences of the younger composers in the next Chapter, seems to be inextricable from the early development of his compositional approach and style. As will be discussed in this Chapter, Baltakas became intensely disenchanted with the hegemony of euphonicism in the late twentieth century, and still consciously links his decision to emigrate to his desire to escape what he experienced as a stifling creative climate.<sup>4</sup>

Baltakas’s own distinctive compositional style bears some affinities to that of his mentors: a sharp clarity and immediacy of line echoes Rihm, though the latter’s work evinces a dramatic, lyrical, or almost romantic quality by comparison with Baltakas’s music. Although he has no interest in writing music that does not engage listeners, there is in another sense a certain dry, detached – though not alienating – quality to Baltakas’s work, in contrast with Rihm’s, that perhaps speaks not only to his late postmodern context but also to the overarching influence of Stravinsky, Prokofiev and Shostakovich (the latter ideologically contrasted with Schoenberg) on late-period Soviet-sphere composers.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, Baltakas’s description of how he approaches composition – centred around the idea of sound as a living, moving, dynamic entity – and the resulting freshness and un-mannered nature of his music, calls to mind the spontaneity and organicism of some of Eötvös’s work, such as *Windsequenzen* (1975/2002).

This section will discuss compositions from Baltakas’s early and more recent career: *Pasaka* (1995), *Nichtstück / Sinfonia* (both 1996; two arrangements for different ensembles),

---

<sup>1</sup> ‘Biography’, Vykintas Baltakas website (accessed online, <http://www.baltakas.net/biography/>, 16.11.20).

<sup>2</sup> Conversation with Vykintas Baltakas, Brussels, December 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Vykintas Baltakas, *Kairos* album version of 2017 interview (2020).

<sup>4</sup> Vykintas Baltakas interview with Claire McGinn, Brussels, December 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Stanevičiūtė, ‘Modernisation of Lithuanian Music’, 24.

*Smokey Arnold* (2015), and *Sandwriting* (2018). Explorations will show that some preoccupations, notably a strong or even antagonistic resistance to the dominance of euphonic stylistic conventions, have evolved somewhat over the years, while others, such as an interest in non-linear, looping, spatial articulations of temporality, remain consistent. The Chapter will explore three themes based on ideas that emerge from these works and from Baltakas's own thoughts in related texts and interviews: escape from the euphonic-dominated compositional scene in 1990s Lithuania; escape from linear classical forms and the work concept; and the idea of approaching composition and performance in a non-rational, intuitive fashion concerned with directness and communication.

### **6.2 Five pieces by Vyintas Baltakas:**

#### ***Pasaka, Nichtstück, Sinfonia, Smokey Arnold and Sandwriting***

The technical realisation of *Pasaka* (1995) for piano and electronics was made possible through the ComputerStudio of the Institut of new Music and Media at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik Karlsruhe.<sup>6</sup> The main title means 'Fairytale', but Baltakas gives strict instructions that this should not be translated into other languages regardless of the performance location or context. This also applies to the text spoken by the pianist and on the recorded tape part; not only must it remain in Lithuanian, but concert organisers are advised not to reproduce the full text in the programme ('a short description is best').<sup>7</sup> As will become clear, these decisions are closely tied to Baltakas's resistance against the insistently profound, heavily-laden 'meanings' of the mystical-minimalist style works that dominated in Lithuania around the time of his departure. Continuing the theme of satirising an overlaid meaningfulness by retaining its form (the performer conveys their desperation to communicate through the tone and register of their speech) but nullifying its content (the text is fragmented to the point of incoherence and is deliberately expressed in a language which is widely unfamiliar outside of Lithuania), the performer and performance organisers are encouraged to draw out and emphasise the theatricality of the piece. Accompanying notes explain that the pianist's interpretation of the spoken parts should be 'as free as an actor's interpretation of a script' and recommend that, 'if at all possible, a stage director should be involved in the staging of the piece'.<sup>8</sup>

Satirising stylistic hegemony, *Nichtstück* (for brass quartet) and *Sinfonia* (for septet), both 1996, play on the convention of drawing on *sutartinės* in contemporary compositions. Baltakas explains that *Sinfonia* is the 'bigger brother' of *Nichtstück* ('... A sort of joke about

---

<sup>6</sup> '*Pasaka* (1995-97), for piano and electronics', Vyintas Baltakas website (accessed online, <http://www.baltakas.net/work/pasaka>, 16.11.20.)

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*



the small step between the “nichtstück” / no-piece and the “sinfonia”...<sup>9</sup>). *Nichtstück* is scored for piccolo trumpet, 2 B♭ trumpets and bass trumpet; *Sinfonia* is scored for Eb clarinet, trumpet, soprano saxophone, alto saxophone, 2 trombones, tuba and percussion. The somewhat unusual instrumentation contributes to the fact that these striking works don't receive so much attention in terms of concert outings as *Pasaka*, despite their potentially similar appeal:

VB: It's almost never performed. [...] the instrumentation is very impractical, so you don't have these instruments that often — particularly like in *Sinfonia*, you have percussion, you have two trombones, tuba, so it has to be... and plus, let's say you get all these instruments...it's only, you know, a three minute piece. [laughs]<sup>10</sup>

Meanwhile, *Smokey Arnold* (2015) is scored for the distinctive but somewhat less unusual setup of Pierrot ensemble (flute, clarinet, violin, cello and piano) and, like *Pasaka*, includes some speaking parts. Though it can be played as a standalone piece, this fourteen-minute work is designed to slot into Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* part-way through one of the original movements ('Heimweh'). Commissioned by ensemble Het Collectief and the Belgian TRANSIT festival,<sup>11</sup> *Smokey Arnold* moves on from open challenges against hegemonic euphonicism, though it still engages playfully with canonic convention and the work concept. A uniting feature across all the pieces discussed in this Chapter — a preoccupation that permeates Baltakas's output — is the desire to find alternate (more circular, more spatial, less linear) modes of temporality.

Taking the quest for non-linearity to different places through a technological intervention, *Sandwriting* (2018) places control of the music's trajectory into notionally impartial, algorithmic hands. Commissioned by WDR and the Witten Festival for New Chamber Music, this fifteen-minute piece for two keyboards and electronics was 'realised in close cooperation with the Experimentalstudio des SWR, Freiburg.'<sup>12</sup> The form of the piece is organised according to a non-linear, episodic structural principle, resulting in a different sequence of events each time it is performed. Each keyboard part consists of about 20 variations on an original 'theme'. These can appear in any order; the computer, 'operating prepared algorithms' makes suggestions by selecting 'the best suited episode for continuation' and presenting the keyboard player with the score for the episode in question. The computer continually responds to what the live performers play by adapting the score they will be given, including changes to harmony and timbre. In this way, '[t]he articulation, dynamics and attack immediately [affect] the texture, timbre and form of the piece.'<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Email correspondence with Vyintas Baltakas, Feb 2017.

<sup>10</sup> Vyintas Baltakas interview, Brussels 2017.

<sup>11</sup> '*Smokey Arnold*', Vyintas Baltakas website (accessed online, <http://www.baltakas.net/work/smokey-arnold>, 16.11.20).

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> '*Sandwriting*', Vyintas Baltakas website (accessed online, <http://www.baltakas.net/work/sandwriting>, 16.11.20).

### **6.3 'Freedom scream': Leaving Lithuania**

Baltakas strongly expresses the dissatisfaction he felt as a younger composer in a musical environment saturated with what he saw as epigonisms. Nevertheless, he acknowledges the huge cultural significance of the artist generally credited with leading the field, who briefly taught him in his early education. On the subject of Bronius Kutavičius, he observed:

...his music was very popular, because suddenly it came together with all these political changes and the political movement of, you know, they had this 'Singing Revolution'. And his music is very much related to all this 'ethno' music, et cetera. And somehow, we'd never had contemporary music being so popular as in these times. Everybody knew his name — it was sort of like Verdi in the Italian revolution. And he is very... intriguing. [...] And his ideas are quite intriguing but I think in many cases they are really working... but — after that, you have all this crowd — particularly in these times when Kutavičius was a big hero — who started to copy. But they did a disservice, taking all of this 'ethno' style and all that, and it was just like – in the '90s, after independence, you know, let's say, the first five years – it was like... I couldn't stand it any more. Because it was all just this – but, you know, kind of... bad copies of it.<sup>14</sup>

Although this trend seems to have deeply frustrated Baltakas, he attributes his desire to leave Lithuania not so much to a perceived pressure to write this kind of music himself, nor necessarily to the feeling that other people were not at all interested in what he was doing, but more so to a powerful curiosity about what might be discovered outside. He reminisces: 'Ah, you know, I was young at this moment anyway. So first of all, I wanted to open, you know... everything. To read, to hear, to see, to go and study, open the world.'<sup>15</sup> Explaining that international travel before independence was basically not possible, but that he had begun exploring what he could through available sources in advance of his departure, he relates,

I was so hungry. When I came to Germany I was sitting in the library for days – for days, and recording everything. I still have, you know, cassette tapes. [...] I look at the students now, and they have so much information – it's too much, they are not excited anymore, and it's such a big contrast to how it felt for me, because I was just like... wow...you know...<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Baltakas interview, 2017.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*

The arrival in Germany, however, was still tempered by a strong dose of distaste for the music scene the young composer had left behind, and his early works after emigration expressed some of this feeling.

...at this moment I was, to be honest, really fed up of all this *soup* in Lithuania — like all these copies of Kutavičius, and, you know, ethno music, and *silence*, and you know — urgh. [...] *Pasaka* [...] was the first piece that I wrote in Germany — when I was really screaming.<sup>17</sup>

Baltakas has since described *Pasaka* (1995) as ‘my “freedom scream”, by which I liberated myself from Lithuanian “musical mythologies”: the worship of silence, ethno roots, heavily loaded meanings, etc.’<sup>18</sup> In Krausas’s words, the work is ‘full of absurdity and irony’<sup>19</sup> — including literal screaming recorded by the composer himself.<sup>20</sup> *Pasaka* is atonal but sees consistent recurrence of C natural as a referential pitch in the piano material, and large proportions of the work feature an electronic C natural drone. This may constitute further commentary on ‘musical mythologies’, particularly in relation to the atemporal allusions of the chosen text. The recurrence of pedals and drones in archetypal ‘Baltic’/‘Nordic’ art musics has been apportioned a discursive significance<sup>21</sup> which conceptually aligns with the imagery of the ideologically-inflected triangle of spiritual minimalism, euphonic folk revivalism and neoliberal reinvention. However, euphonic styles are more often associated with timbral softness and organicism than with the harsh electronic sounds of *Pasaka*. The piece includes a Lithuanian-language narration of a Hindu creation story, interpolated with fragments from poetry by Gintaras Gutauskas and random phrases. In addition to a general interest in the irrational or the idea of thwarted communication, these choices are also relevant in light of the artistic climate Baltakas had left behind, which seems to have felt almost saturated with forced profundity. In having the performer emotively and theatrically speak a text which, to the majority of non-Lithuanian audiences, would be unintelligible, *Pasaka* refracts a tendency towards emphatic meaningfulness that, for the composer, had long started to cloy. In this sense *Pasaka* could be read as a quintessentially postmodern work, although Baltakas sees such labels as limiting.

Baltakas expressed a dislike for the ‘glorification’ of folk music in Lithuanian composition. The deployment of quasi-referential features in a deliberately ‘sardonic’ fashion is one way in which this was expressed in his early career. Veronika Krausas describes his lack of enthusiasm for recourse to the usual archives of cultural heritage:

---

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Baltakas interview (2017), version for liner notes for *Kairos* CD (2020).

<sup>19</sup> Biography, Baltakas website.

<sup>20</sup> Baltakas interview, 2017.

<sup>21</sup> Juha Torvinen and Susanna Välimäki, ‘Nordic Drone: Pedal points and static textures as musical imagery of the northerly environment’, in *The Nature of Nordic Music*, ed. Tim Howell (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2020), pp. 173–192.

It was his physical move to Germany that accompanied a rebellion or break from his Lithuanian heritage. As in most eastern European countries, folk art and culture are often intertwined into composer's music and aesthetics. He felt that Lithuanian music was missing impertinence. This physical and aesthetic break mixed with a modernist harmonic language, demanding virtuosity, and a healthy dose of impertinence was the result.<sup>22</sup>

The 'impertinence' attributed to Baltakas's earlier work seems to have been directed at what he saw as an excessive and over-sincere reliance on archival folk material by other composers. Krausas names *Sinfonia* as a specific, 'sardonic' example that 'mocks' this convention.<sup>23</sup>

*Sinfonia* is one of a pair of arrangements of essentially the same musical ideas for different ensembles. Asked about the ideas behind these works and in what sense they pass implicit comment on folk revival movements, the composer expands:

Like I said, when I left, all this 'ethno' music was coming from [Bronius] Kutavičius, with so many followers — and I never used it. And I was thinking... okay, I *can* do it. But I will do it in my way. So basically, not making this... [grand gesture] ...not that, but rather, you know, doing this like... deconstructively, and cutting it out, and basically...the piece actually destroys itself.<sup>24</sup>

The core material — 'just a simple, original melody from shepherding' — is taken from an archive of 'folk' sources, of which Baltakas asserts there are a great many in Lithuania.<sup>25</sup> The tune, in the composer's opinion, is 'very limited, from the beginning'. Unlike Veljo Tormis, who sees himself as merely a 'mediator' for the power of folk songs, which are precious and should be arranged with minimal authorial intervention, the interest for Baltakas is very much in an innovative treatment of the melody. He explains that the material starts to repeat incessantly, always starting again at the same point, but gradually mutating and degrading.<sup>26</sup> Baltakas describes the subsequent course of the work; the 'non-piece' title can be seen as a further dismissal of the incessant meaningfulness and profundity of euphonic folk-minimalist discourses:

after this the melody gets shorter and shorter, until nothing, and then at the end it's just... okay, I'll play the whole thing together now. You know, it becomes like...total nonsense. That was my way of...that's why it's called *Nichtstück*.<sup>27</sup>

Baltakas's arrangement of the simple melody in question, mostly expressed in rhythmic unison but vertically complicated by its harmonisation in parallel dissonant intervals, appears

---

<sup>22</sup> Biography', Baltakas website.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Baltakas interview, 2017.

<sup>25</sup> Baltakas interview, 2017.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*

to reflect specific elements of so-called 'ethno' music (or at least, alleged aspects of the same that may be recycled in art music). On the compositional influence of Lithuanian folk *sutartinės* in the emergence of modern national styles, Ben Lunn's work on Julius Juzeliūnas describes how the songs were instrumentalised in the formation of a distinctly Lithuanian contemporary idiom<sup>28</sup>, while Šarunas Nakas has identified Bronius Kutavičius' work as essentially being 'reconstructed *sutartinės*'.<sup>29</sup> Baltakas himself evoked the *sutartinės* in conversation, first in relation to minimalism and then to modernism in Lithuanian contemporary music:

VB: You know – another thing about why minimalism is so important – or rather, what they think of as an alibi for minimalism – is because it's somehow in the Lithuanian culture. I don't know if you have heard about these *sutartinės*? So yeah, it's basically this very old, pre-Christian song — and actually, it's pure minimalism. And also pure modernism, actually, if you think about the harmonies.

CM: There seems to be a lot of discourse about modern dissonance coming directly from that folk source...

VB: Yeah, exactly. The dissonance, first of all, and also this sort of minimalistic... and canon... that's how it's made – that's basically how they can sleep quietly at night and say 'it's ok, I'm not just copying American minimalism, I am doing my own thing'... Yeah, and I believe at the beginning it was like that. Like [some of the minimalist composers who didn't] speak any languages, [or didn't] know so much about the world – or at least, at that time — [...] for [them] to come to that, it was very natural.<sup>30</sup>

As shown in Figure 6.1, the clashing parallel lines, juxtaposing exuberant rhythmic energy with exaggerated degrees of stylised dissonance, may reflect a sarcastic impression of the

---

<sup>28</sup> Lunn, 'Juzeliūnas, the seed of a modern Lithuanian music'.

<sup>29</sup> Nakas, 'Minimalism in Lithuanian Music', 17.

<sup>30</sup> Baltakas interview, 2017.

Figure 6.1 — Parody of *sutartinė*-like close intervals in *Nichtstück* (1996).

more sincere inclusion by other artists of *sutartinė* melodies in multiple dissonant layers. At concert pitch, the parts are paired in a parody of *sutartinė*-like close intervals – the piccolo trumpet and trumpet II begin a tone apart, as do the bass trumpet and trumpet I, and continue to trace similar contours with frequent tone and semitone clashes across the pairs. Dyadic dissonance is a distinctive characteristic of *sutartinės*, often played on a pair of *daudytės*;<sup>31</sup> Baltakas takes it to the level of excess, doubling the traditional two-part texture with a brass quartet playing *forte*, *sforzando* lines. With the bass trumpet often high in its register, timbre is also significant, as the trumpet-like *daudytė* is wooden,<sup>32</sup> producing a softer and less brassy sound. Baltakas’s irreverent version also exploits modern brass instruments’ wide, fully chromatic range, while traditional *sutartinės* were played within the much smaller range of *daudytės*.<sup>33</sup> Baltakas subverts expectation, implicitly asking why contemporary artists have continued to reinterpret the same kinds of images of the past when their own contexts and the tools available to them are so different. These works pose a mocking question not only through their cartoonishly brash timbres, unmythically-loud volume, and abrupt chromaticism but through the decidedly contemporary, eclectic and un-folkloric nature of the instrumental ensembles called for in both *Nichtstück* and *Sinfonia*. The obnoxious repetitiveness of the works may also reflect a boredom with the repetitive classical revival of folk musics. In terms of the composer’s conception of ‘not actually getting

<sup>31</sup> Austė Nakiėnė, ‘On Instrumental Origins of Lithuanian Polymodal “Sutartinės”’, *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 44, 1/2 (2003), pp. 159-168: 162.

<sup>32</sup> Nakiėnė, ‘Instrumental Origins’, 159.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, 159-163.

anywhere' as 'an attempt at unravelling linearity', this piece keeps trying to start again, repeating the same strongly distinctive opening measures before coming unravelled each time. This effect evokes the idea — also significant in *Pasaka* and *Smokey Arnold* — of getting stuck in an emotional, historical, or cultural loop.

In spite of expressing a disconnection from the concept of national identity as a significant factor in art, Baltakas related the feeling that Lithuanian music institutions didn't always see him as a Lithuanian composer, and that Belgian institutions had come to see him as a Belgian composer. Having left Lithuania to get away from prevailing trends that felt artistically repressive or limiting, Baltakas professed in 2017 to suspecting that he was often 'tolerated' rather than promoted in Lithuania. Though the extent of homogeneity in the Lithuanian art music scene seems less pronounced when compared with the public-facing image of Brand Estonia and aesthetically-aligned musical exports, and though the dominating compositional trends seem to have changed (he explained 'it's not so much...this folkish thing, it's now this Mažulis-like minimalism'<sup>34</sup>), there is still a sense in Baltakas' story that there are certain things that are expected when performing the identity of a Lithuanian composer, and that it is possible to stray too far outside those boundaries. Having contrasted the highly constructed identity of some dominant euphonic Baltic art musics with the comparatively diverse strands of Lithuanian contemporary composition, it remains to be acknowledged that all identities are constructed, all belonging is predicated on exclusion, and that in order to narrativise anything it is almost always necessary to overlook something. Baltakas's relationship with musical networks and heritages of his home country has been complex. When asked if non-Lithuanian listeners often tried to read sincere folk music influences into his work as one writer previously had, the composer responded,

I don't know... I don't think so. No — but I mean, it's true about these categories, you know — ok, you are a Lithuanian composer, etc, but it's funny, actually — I am falling in between, somehow. [...] for example, in Lithuania they very often don't see me as a Lithuanian composer. And sometimes I really have to fight; almost, like, come on guys – I am. I am here, I am living, I am writing music [laughs], and it's being played. Because, yeah — I fell out of that soup. And sometimes it's very annoying, but maybe that's...how it is.<sup>35</sup>

Baltakas explained that he was more conscious of a lack of recognition from the Lithuanian art music community than any overwhelming sense of being pigeonholed by others, but acknowledged that, 'people outside of Lithuania say "oh, you are a Lithuanian composer" ...',

---

<sup>34</sup> Baltakas interview, 2017.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*

and that people had tended to have certain expectations about his music accordingly.<sup>36</sup> Although he felt there was a certain amount of assumption accompanying this identification, he perceived it to have diminished in recent years, as 'now people know I am spending my time here, based in Belgium.'<sup>37</sup> In spite of the belief, however, that the concept of nationality as a form of identity is something of an empty issue, when asked if he viewed himself as a Lithuanian composer, Baltakas replied very much in the affirmative.<sup>38</sup> Even so, he felt he would have had a very different career if he had not left the country: 'I mean, first of all, I don't know if I would still write music [laughs].'<sup>39</sup> In addition to the suggestion that moving overseas allowed him to find more performing groups who shared his interests, he noted,

...you know, the music scene in Lithuania is very strong, I think, so that's something good – it's very active – but at the same time, it is a small country. And – maybe when you went out to Vilnius you went to the Composers' Union? Yeah? To this house on the corner... that's what I call it – this small house on the river, you know, which actually kind of... decides everything – who's good, who's not, and... I think it's still kind of almost a Soviet tradition, because you know, like, in Soviet times, you couldn't be just free. Somebody had to decide, ok, that thing you wrote is ok or not – whether it could be played. Particularly if you're played outside, you know – the Soviet Union was like that. And I think they [the Composers' Union] are not conscious that they're doing that a little bit, but – I think it's a wrong concept, that actually kills quite a lot of interesting artists. And I'm not talking about myself, because I am independent still. But like... the Music Information Centre should just be some kind of very open service – open to all styles and open to everything – but actually they are very selective, too selective – choosing – and I can imagine that if I was in Lithuania, and writing what I'm writing – first of all, I wouldn't get as many possibilities to write that music. Yeah, because they expect some different style, and so on. No – I'm tolerated, and I do my own activities, so... but basically I would say I'm not really promoted there, just tolerated.<sup>40</sup>

Although Baltakas has since returned with his family to live and work in Lithuania, there is no doubt that the 'break' described by Krausas is inextricable from the formation of his distinctive compositional style. The non-replicable historical moment in which the composer left his home country shaped his artistic position in ways that are inevitably different from both an older generation of composers who were more established at the time of Bronius Kutavičius's breakthrough to national fame, and a younger generation for whom living and

---

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*



working abroad (for those with the social and financial capital to access this option) is a less central issue because it was not, by the time they were old enough to imagine it, any longer prohibited.

#### **6.4 'The hero kills the, er, destiny...': Resisting linearity**

Another issue which preoccupies Baltakas is how to escape the confines of assumed linearity which have governed the construction and interpretation of much Western classical music. In conversation I asked what repetition meant to him and how important it was as a concept in his work, to which he replied:

Well, for me it's not repetition – it's rather a state. That's what I'm trying to get. Because repetition by itself is not really interesting to me. But, ah, being in [some kind of state] – that's what I've been trying for many years to get, to achieve – and... I'm not sure that I have achieved it ever... but a kind of music which [...] is not linearly made [and] doesn't go from point A to B and C and this kind of typical, almost Romantic thing. But I mean – that's how we listen to music, that's ok, but that can be a different thing from what the composer writes. But what I like is... being in a sound-space, basically, and the sound moves around you – that's how I would visualise it. And from this point, I try to find some kind of circle structure, or something like that, which actually doesn't need to go anywhere.<sup>41</sup>

In Baltakas's music, ideas of circularity, endlessness or nonlinear time are frequently central. Krausas's biography highlights the composer's fascination with redirecting the temporal experience of music:

Baltakas acknowledges that you cannot get rid of temporality. However, he does believe that you can try to unravel the linearity of it. [...] Baltakas mentions the influence of Gogol's *Viy*, the story of a young man's attempt to escape from a witch and being continually brought back to her. This idea of not actually getting anywhere is an attempt at unravelling linearity.<sup>42</sup>

Similar concepts may of course be related to the more overtly minimalist-like works discussed in earlier Chapters. However, Baltakas talks about nonlinearity in different terms, and expresses it musically in other ways. Asked about minimalism, he acknowledged the strength of its presence in contemporary Lithuanian art music, though his own feelings on its popularity were often ambivalent.

An interest in musical time is evident from his earliest German works. *Pasaka's* text, though intended to be incomprehensible to most audiences, is meant to allow a performer

---

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> 'Biography', Baltakas website.

to make 'a reasonable interpretation'. Based on a creation story, much of its content is focused on time and timelessness ('time did not exist yet...'; '...the sister had forgotten her dead brother [...] though death didn't exist yet...'), while later interpolations evoke historical time and historiography ('Your Majesty?! Emperor! The Empire falls!'; 'Caesar answered what struck him as right'). Gintaras Gutauskas's short poem *Alegija no. 9* also touches on mortality ('a match said: "it's the end, I pass away"') amidst the frantic conclusion, as voices shout random scattered fragments ('I am the source of Time'; 'why go to such trouble?'; 'I create') before a final scream of 'Morte' abruptly ends the piece. The accompanying diagram (figure 6.2) shows the main sections of *Pasaka*, in which contrast is underpinned by the strong continuity of a near-ubiquitous electronic C natural drone. Timings are based on a publicly available recording of *Pasaka* as played by pianist Benjamin Kobler (Ensemble *MusikFabrik*), who has also performed this work on multiple commercial releases of Baltakas' music.<sup>43</sup> The shape of the trajectory in figure 6.2 illustrates a tendency to loop back and revisit (though not strictly repeat) earlier ideas and material; what has been labelled as section 4 is similar to section 1 through the centrality of an isolated, meandering, piano line matching the conversational narration, while section 5 reflects ideas from both section 2, being anchored by a prominent electronic C natural pedal note. From section 5 onwards, the subsequent sections remain effectively 'frozen' or trapped in a similar state or mood of sustained, almost uncomfortable intensity. As Baltakas wrote in relation to *Smokey Arnold*, an intense affective state tends to collapse meaning and create a sensation of being stuck in a loop. Like the protagonist in Gogol's *Viy*, which Baltakas claims as an influence, progressive sections of *Pasaka* are continually lured back, drawn to anchoring features (a persistent C natural pedal note and C-dominated non-functional harmonic material; a purposefully incomprehensible narration which therefore cannot progress the story [which in any case is deliberately fragmented non-teleological]; lively and *secco* syncopated heterophony), and never move that far away from where the piece began.

Loops, or moments of dynamism locked in a point of stuck time, occasionally punctuate the frequently spacious texture and freely wandering trajectory of *Pasaka*. For example, at around 2'20" into the piece, all previous material has been atonal and essentially ametric: time signatures change almost every bar and the piano either imitates the rhythm of the spoken parts as they occur or gives over to ponderous and fragmented meandering; momentum and intensity increase and the recorded piano is added to create a busy heterophonic texture which is more dynamic but still lacks regularity of pulse). At this point the piano arrives at a notably different passage. Bookended by faster and more frantic or *secco* sections, the loop settles into a steadier tempo (crotchet = 72-80, as opposed to

---

<sup>43</sup> 'Pasaka', Baltakas website.

between 120 and 135) and a 'rich and full sound'. The tape-piano is silent for around 16 seconds while the live piano repeats a four-bar passage (see figure 6.3), which itself constitutes four varied occurrences of the same two-chord gesture. The harmony in this passage is more extended-tonal than atonal; the first chord is a traditionally-spaced and -voiced C major, while the second is a C major triad with an added F#, followed by a brief arpeggio flourish that also encompasses A# and C#. The loop is repeated until the tape part starts the new section, on hearing which the live pianist — jolted into action by the sudden scream of the tape-pianist — should jump immediately to the next bar. Although Baltakas has said that he would 'feel it like a failing'<sup>44</sup> if people were to read earnest 'folk influences' into his work, this phrase is redolent of aspects of the mazurka (a genre which has been refracted back through romantic and contemporary classical music so intensively that allusions to it do not necessarily constitute allusions to 'folk' genres at all anymore).

---

<sup>44</sup> Baltakas interview, 2017.

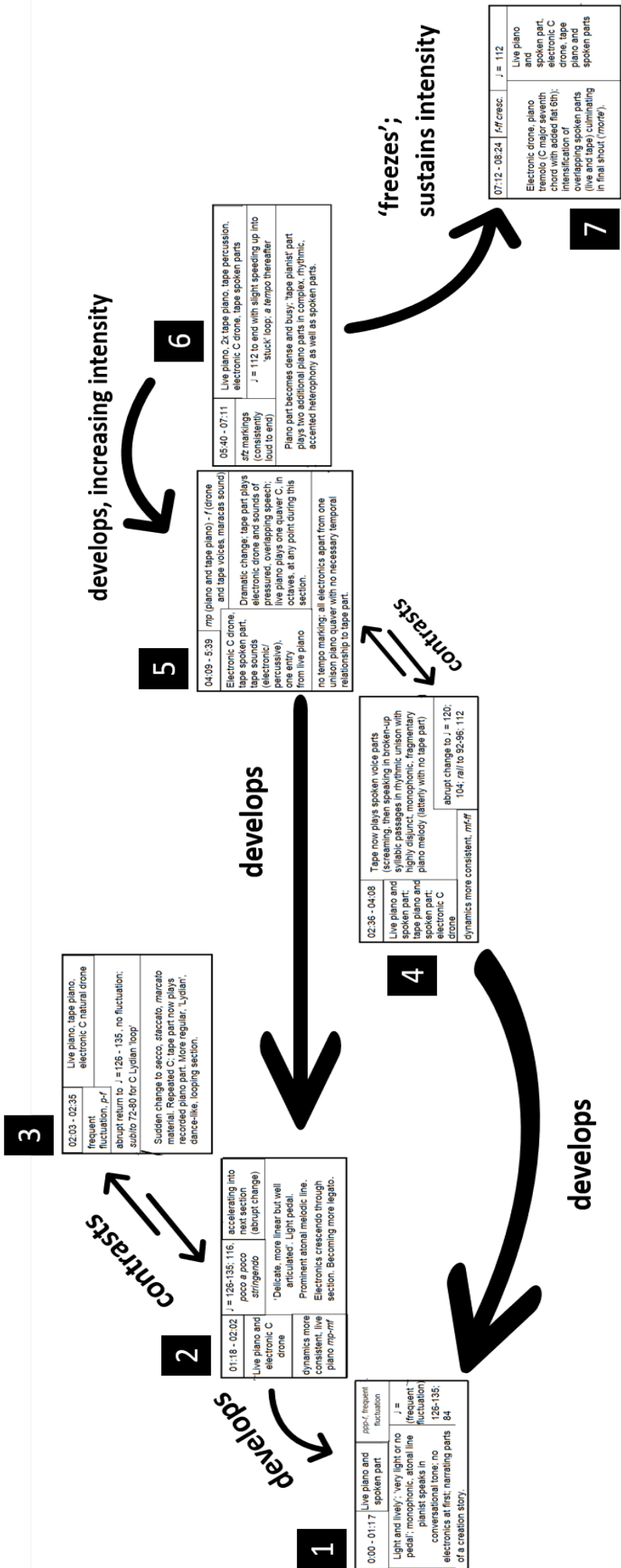


Figure 6.2 – Outline of sections in *Pasaka*



Figure 6.3 — Dance-like paratonal loop in *Pasaka*.

In conjunction with the rhythmic, syncopated, gestural, internally repetitive and harmonically economical quality of the loop, the heavy accents placed on the second beat of each iteration of the two-chord statement, and the triple metre (disrupted, but more decisively metric than any preceding material), this brush with Lydian or distorted-plagal harmony evokes the spectre of folk revival discourses. Baltakas has elsewhere deliberately parodied elements of related contemporary genres, and as such it is possible that this passage reflects a stylistic loop which he refused to be locked into.

Contrasting with this stylistic loop is a kind of semantic loop or point of breakdown later in the piece. At around 4'09" into the piece, a 1'30"-long section sees the tape part take over. The live pianist plays nothing but a unison C natural quaver, to be placed 'anywhere you choose' since 'it has no special relation to the tape'.<sup>45</sup> Meanwhile the tape part continues a now very loud electronic C natural drone, overlaid occasionally with a staccato piano C or a rattling 'maracas-like sound'. The main interest, however, is from the multi-tracked vocal parts of the speaking tape-pianist, which after around 40 seconds of tense stasis launch into simultaneous layers of emotive, excitable tirades which are designed to be unintelligible to the audience and therefore can be interpreted as not developing or progressing the 'fairy-tale' in any meaningful way. Towards the end of the work, the piano once again gets momentarily stuck in a loop. Seven short bars, this time dominated by a recurring F# in the bass but lacking the tonal implications of the first loop, are repeated during a moment of silence from the tape-pianist; the live pianist begins to shout the word 'AŠ' ('I' or 'me') at the

<sup>45</sup> Vyktintas Baltakas, *Pasaka*, Universal Edition (2013 [1997]).

start of the loop, stretching the pronoun into a wavering scream while waiting for the return of the electronic voice, at which point the live pianist responds by moving to the next bar.

As discussed earlier, *Nichtstück/Sinfonia* can similarly be understood as caught in a self-destructive loop, reflecting Baltakas's early frustration at what he perceived as an incessant recycling of musical ideas. Nonlinearity and disrupted temporal trajectories are also central in *Smokey Arnold* (2015), in which context the composer explicitly evokes the idea of being stuck in a loop. The way that time is understood here is already distinctive because of the way the piece was conceived – as an intermezzo to be slotted in partway through the performance of a century-old canonic classic, which is itself made up of fragmentary tableaux. For a first-time listener familiar with the original, Baltakas' interruption four bars into 'Heimweh' could presumably cause a degree of temporal friction – like a stuck record or a skipping CD – as they wait with wavering degrees of certainty for the original piece to resume. The composer's notes to the score explain:

I noticed that when any emotion gets exaggerated it loses its functionality and becomes a routine, a loop. Once familiar with the emotion there seems to be no more need to solve anything and the emotion gets disconnected from its content. Melancholy may take on different forms and expressions, but in the end it keeps running into itself, no escape, no linearity of thought. Just like a moving swing. This back and forth motion is exactly what shapes the musical form of my work.<sup>46</sup>

Two decades later, Baltakas' frustration may have dissipated, but his compositional interest in non-linearity remains a key preoccupation. Reflecting a recurring interest in irony, *Smokey Arnold*, as the notes to the score explain, is 'a slightly sardonic commentary' on the piece which inspired it.<sup>47</sup> The instructions stipulate that the ensemble should play the first four bars of 'Heimweh', which are printed at the beginning of the Baltakas score, and then move immediately to the opening of *Smokey Arnold*, which is played until its end at bar 354 — at which point the original "Heimweh" score is to be resumed 'at the 3rd beat of bar 24'.<sup>48</sup>

The title, extended harmonies and some moments of instrumentation, timbre and gesture seemingly constitute a nod to some strands of jazz, perhaps corroborated by the composer's acknowledgement in the notes to the score that 'alternative tracks are more common' in this genre, where 'different versions of the same piece often appear in a single CD production, offering new and refreshing perspectives on an original idea.'<sup>49</sup> Similarly, the 'stuck record' effect of the stutteringly repetitive interpolation evokes images of old, warped jazz gramophone records appropriate to the theme of nostalgia — frequently anchored to

---

<sup>46</sup> Baltakas, *Smokey Arnold*, 2015.

<sup>47</sup> Vykintas Baltakas, *Smokey Arnold* (2015), notes to score (digital copy provided by the composer).

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Baltakas, *Smokey Arnold*.

older technologies and genres like trad jazz and record players, but also itself at times a kind of stuck record, as the composer observes elsewhere. Towards the end of

312

min. 7 x

K ♩ = 102

Fl.

B♭ Cl.

Pno.

Vln.

Vc.

1. vln: "sure"  
 2. -  
 3. pno: "hmm... are we stuck in a loop?"  
 4. cl: "yes, so it seems..."  
 5. fl: "should we keep going?"  
 vc: "it doesn't bother me..."  
 6. -  
 7. vln: "come on..."

marcato

Figure 6.4 — Conversation over looping bars in *Smokey Arnold*.

the insert, the score instructs the players to chat as though in rehearsal ('...small talk: be natural, do not act'). At bar 298, the flautist says 'I am on 298, you?'; at 310 the violinist asks 'are you taking the train home?', and the cellist responds 'want a lift?'. At bars 312-13, which are repeated a minimum of seven times, the ensemble have a brief conversation about the music; as shown in Figure 6.4, the pianist ponders 'hmm...are we stuck in a loop?'

*Sandwriting* (2018) is a mutating or evolving loop with an indeterminate, non-teleological trajectory. In 2017, Baltakas mentioned his plans to explore non-typical formal trajectories still more deeply in a new work which was premiered at the Wittener Tage Für Neue Kammermusik in 2018.<sup>50</sup> The resulting piece, *Sandwriting*, is scored for two pianos and electronics.<sup>51</sup> In advance of the work's completion, Baltakas said:

<sup>50</sup> Wittener Tage Für Neue Kammermusik 2018 Programme, WDR 3 (accessed online, [https://www.kulturforum-witten.de/uploads/tx\\_cikofilelist/Programmflyer\\_2018.pdf](https://www.kulturforum-witten.de/uploads/tx_cikofilelist/Programmflyer_2018.pdf), 25.10.19).

<sup>51</sup> Also performed at the 2018 Gaida festival.

...the process is extremely interesting — and frustrating! I'm writing for two piano players [...] and electronics, and they're working together in a very experimental style. The electronics are very much the third player, structurally. So actually — when you play, it listens to what the musicians are playing. And according to how they play, the computer proposes to add something, or remove something — change the harmony, change the colour, maybe play with MIDI keyboards... so actually the computer will make a lot of changes according to what the pianists play. And these changes, yes, are prepared — but not in a timeline. And after that, the computer listens again — and actually basically proposes a direction: where should they go, what is next? And that is basically the material, and it's very simple, because this is very much about being a state — but a state which is always changing. And indeed, this part has something of minimalism in it, but in a different vein.<sup>52</sup>

The computer produces the score for *Sandwriting* live during the performance, a point of particular interest in relation to some of Baltakas' own comments about the centrality in his output of the idea of reciprocity, of reshaping his own works in response to the 'impulses' received in return.<sup>53</sup> When asked if he felt in any way that his earlier works had been part of a process of working towards this more immediate manifestation of reciprocity, Baltakas mused, 'it could be, because I have been searching for that for ages [...] really *searching* [...] because I'm fed up with this formal thing, you know, form which is from [gestures]... til...[gestures]...'.<sup>54</sup> He acknowledged possible connections between this impulse and a desire to reject the work concept, or the idea that a given piece of music must be essentially the same every time it is played, expanding on his formal motivations. Though it is not uncommon for composers to revisit and revise pieces, entries on the 'works' section of Baltakas's website list a 'last revised' date, and several of his works appear in multiple versions; the process of reciprocity remains an open one after a piece has been premiered and published. *Sandwriting* takes this resistance to the work concept and interest in dialogic reciprocity to another level, since its form is generated live in response to what the performers do and will always be different. The work, Baltakas asserted, moves 'like a labyrinth' and 'could go in any direction', but simultaneously retains an essential identity (the basic material), resulting not in the feeling of multiple sections but rather of a deep continuity.<sup>55</sup> On this note he was reminded of an earlier mention of Balakauskas, reflecting:

I think that that's something that actually I have discovered is the closest link between me and Balakauskas. Because now I realise, there are many thoughts about Balakauskas and jazz... and it's true – I mean, he is coming from jazz – but I think

---

<sup>52</sup> Baltakas interview, 2017.

<sup>53</sup> Biography, Baltakas website.

<sup>54</sup> Baltakas interview, 2017.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*



they are on rather a superficial level, you know, with these harmonies and these rhythms and so on... but that's not the essence. I think that the essence of the jazz is his form, which actually doesn't want to go anywhere. Because that's what you have in jazz, basically – you have your starting material, and basically it goes about changing, in different layers, different densities, etc, but it doesn't go about any formal direction, or... express something not musical. And that's what this classical form is, basically – I mean like, think about Beethoven – ok, we have our hero, now the hero has a... problem, and the hero, kills the, er, destiny, and the hero is... victorious [laughs]. You know?<sup>56</sup>

While Baltakas clearly associates linear structures and dramatic narrative form with the shadow of a repressive traditionalism, his non-linear works are at a discursive remove from the rhetoric of 'timeless' euphonic styles (the 'soup' of 'silence') and do not resemble process-based minimalisms.

### **6.5 Clouds and bubbles: directness and the irrational**

Previously in this study, concepts like 'modernist' and 'postmodern' have been evoked to distinguish the export and reception of certain styles — the broad idea of 'modernism' primarily intended to be understood as a rhetorical, as well as stylistic, counterpoint to the prevailing and strikingly coherent euphonic paradigm. Already, at every stage of its articulation, this obviously false binary comes apart. The motivation behind repeatedly revisiting it pertains to the fact that, although the binary always already falls apart from the beginning, it falls apart in interesting and productive ways in this context. The particularly loaded nature of this dichotomy relates to the perception (or stereotype), which I argue is inherent in some reception of euphonic styles, that the Baltic states and other post-Soviet regions emerged in the late twentieth century from a fundamentally backward regime and were, as a result, culturally and technologically 'behind' their late capitalist counterparts. As such, the inevitable undoing of the conceptual binary of unsophisticated, traumatised, spiritual, euphonic paradigms as an opposition to or rejection of the cosmopolitan, academic, elitist modernism of the capitalist global north<sup>57</sup> in each instance casts a more nuanced, complex or ambivalent light on the other ways of thinking about contemporary classical music and creativity that have been articulated in reality by composers not subscribing to hegemonic conventions. Baltakas's music is not only sonically distinct from euphonic styles, but is consciously shaped, at least in his earlier career, in direct, antagonistic opposition to

---

<sup>56</sup> Baltakas interview, 2017.

<sup>57</sup> David Dies, 'Defining Spiritual Minimalism', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Minimalist and Postminimalist Music*, ed. Keith Potter, Kyle Gann, and Pwyll ap Siôn (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2016 [2013]), 317-319.

them. However, where Balakauskas's rejection of 'simple', duple-time or dance-like styles ('the soil in which banality sprouts') was articulated through a strict adherence to constructivism, Baltakas embraces and celebrates the irrational.

Far from framing his work more or less explicitly as some kind of hybridisation of potentially conflicting impulses, as can be seen in some discussions of the machinists and Balakauskas, Baltakas does not find such distinctions hold much interest or relevance. Expressing a commitment to the primacy of sound more redolent of Cage than modernist constructivism — but also echoing Balakauskas's claim that what is written on 'the covers' of pieces of music is ultimately irrelevant to the contents<sup>58</sup> — he explained:

To be honest, I really don't know anymore what ['modernism' and 'postmodernism' are]. It's all so mixed in different arts and contexts... All that terminology: contemporary, experimental, avant-garde, modern, post modern, you name it... Safety jackets for those who are afraid to jump in to insecurity of listening. The sound doesn't care how we call it.<sup>59</sup>

Asked directly about whether he saw any connections with Balakauskas's consciously constructivist approach – the idea of writing rhythm by 'rational' methods — Baltakas was clear that this did not match his own aims. Observing that *Nichtstück* and *Sinfonia* are very dance-like as well as complex and irregular, I mentioned a quote from Balakauskas in which he claimed that he writes symmetrical rhythmic patterns in order to avoid the '1-2-1-2 dancing of the feet' — instead wanting to emulate the 'dancing of the nerves'. I enquired as to whether this idea was evocative for Baltakas in his composition, to which he responded:

I mean – I was not influenced by Balakauskas. But, yeah, this rational process... well... for me, I am not such a rational composer. I am trying to get there, but I, [laughs] to be honest, I don't have enough patience. So I, immediately when I find something interesting, I just follow it – so my rationality, I leave it behind.<sup>60</sup>

Baltakas' further explanation of how he conceptualises the process of composition speaks to a comparatively greater regard for intuition over planning and control – he evoked images of listening or waiting for something at the edge of his own thoughts, rather than calculating or working out a system:

I begin with a sound idea. So let's say, you can compare it to anything — like an idea about a thought, which is, at the beginning, very incomplete — but at least you have some kind of...very... light sense of what it could be. Maybe it's like...some kind of cloud, almost. And, okay, maybe this cloud is... dark, light, heavy, big... you know,

---

<sup>58</sup> Asta Pakarklytė, 'Osvaldas Balakauskas' Symphonic Tetra', *Lithuanian Music Link No. 15* (Oct 2007 - Mar 2008), Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-15-october-2007-march-2008/osvaldas-balakauskas-symphonic-tetra/>, 13.11.20).

<sup>59</sup> Vykintas Baltakas interview with Claire McGinn (based on 2017 Brussels interview, updated and revised by Baltakas for liner notes for *Kairos* album [2020]).

<sup>60</sup> Baltakas interview, 2017.

and actually the whole work process is just trying to get more and more precise. [...] [I]t is a very careful process, because this cloud – I mean, this idea – can be destroyed very easily by your own thoughts. If you start immediately writing some notes, these notes will become much stronger than the idea itself – and after, you will need to search for it again, you know – it's gone [laughs].<sup>61</sup>

Similarly to the composer's interest in the irrational, his understanding of music as something more immediate, physical, and even alive — a phenomenon to be observed and represented rather than a pure, abstract set of relationships between ideas to be invented from nothing, manipulated and controlled — sits outside the failed binary of euphonic-intuitive / modernist-constructivist. Baltakas expands on his process, drawing into the frame the idea that this perspective on writing music facilitates a directness and engaging quality that further sets his work apart from the discursive figure of the archetypal arch-modernist who doesn't care if 'the public' don't like a composition (or who even sees this disconnect as a mark of success). Baltakas, like Tomas Kutavičius, has a strong desire to communicate — not to communicate a meaning, but to engage and affect listeners. Also touching on some contrastingly Balakauskas-like ideas of music as a fundamentally abstract, a-historical entity, he explains:

I believe, I still believe actually, in the kind of directness of music — the power — and that music can work directly. So let's say, all these discussions, you know, all these Stockhausen things, like... first you have to listen like three times, and after that you will understand what this is about... I was never against it, but at the same time I don't think it's how music should work. And, okay, at the other extreme is very simple music which everybody can understand... but I think I'm coming from this very simple concept that music is a sound which is actually physical — and it works on us in a sort of physical way. And all that we write, you know, we put all these categories and notions, musical notions, stylistic notions, etc — but basically, for the sound — the sound doesn't care about that. So actually, now my notion of form is ... you have a sound, and that sound is alive — it's moving — and that the description of the movement of that sound is the form. And after that you can say, okay, it moves fast, or slow, or higher, or bigger, whatever, but that's the form. Not anything, you know, based on harmony, based on rhythm — it's just basically a sound. And this is something I care about quite a lot. Myself, I'm very sensitive to sound, and I hate musicians who play notes but don't hear them, don't listen before they play. And I think that's probably what you hear — why it has this kind of directness. I mean — sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. But I take a lot of care with this. Let's say

---

<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*

there's somebody who has never heard music. It should still work, without any notion, without any understanding, without any explanation.<sup>62</sup>

Following the implicit thread of (a kind of) anti-elitism, through the ideal of music's perceived potential to have universal and immediate relevance for all audiences, Baltakas has explored other, more structural, avenues in pursuit of the broader goal of pushing back against dry, academic conventions of performance, composition and pedagogy that can lead to styles and contexts appearing both exclusionary and irrelevant. In 2017 Baltakas and jazz musician Liudas Mockūdas launched a new Masters course in contemporary music performance at the Vilnius Academy of Music and Theatre, combining the study of score-based contemporary music with a core focus on improvisation.<sup>63</sup> Among the phenomena they seek to redress are the alienating factors of the performance contexts often expected for contemporary classical music (i.e. the concert hall); a feeling that students performing contemporary music may be restricted by overestimating the importance of the score; seemingly narrow listening habits of students in classical and improvisation-based education respectively; and spurious and unproductive barriers between so-called academic and improvised musics.<sup>64</sup> Baltakas' interest in performance context and social dimensions of music-making did not emerge only recently, however. Attention to these parameters was also one of the reasons that keeping *Pasaka's* text in the original Lithuanian (regardless of where it is performed) has been a fundamental part of the work's conception. Comments in the score reinforce the importance of creating the sense that the speaking pianist is desperately trying to express something that, firstly, they are often unable to finish articulating in time with the music, and, secondly, most of the audience is likely to not understand anyway. In addition to avoiding the overtly sentimental, this choice also represents a challenge to the new context the composer found himself in. Baltakas explained:

[W]hen I came to Germany you know, the public was a typical German public, and they would go to listen to Bach – and they don't listen. They just follow the text, if they have the text. You know, 99% of the public is just reading the text. And I thought, no, no, no, no — but I wanted to do something with text somehow, and I thought — okay — the text will be in Lithuanian. Nobody will understand it. And for me it's not about the text. It's important to have... a reasonable text, so that the musician [...] can make an interpretation out of it. But actually the piece is not a fairytale about what the text is saying. The fairytale is about that musician who is trying now to tell the fairytale.

---

<sup>62</sup> Baltakas interview, 2017.

<sup>63</sup> Ugnius Babinskas, transl. Romas Kinka. 'Academic Informals: To Perform Music is to Fly. An Interview with Vykintas Baltakas and Liudas Mockūnas'. *Lithuanian Music Link no. 20*, 2017, Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <http://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-20-january-december-2017/ugnius-babinskas-academic-informals-vykintas-baltakas-liudas-mockunas/>, 22.02.19).

<sup>64</sup> *ibid.*

So, it's a little bit like, you know, if you had some person [...] having totally lost all sense of reality, living in their own bubble, and telling something out of his bubble — you can understand some words but actually it makes no sense anymore — but sometimes it's so strong, that person being in that bubble, that actually you don't need anything else. And that's a little bit like what the effect is, what I was doing — and that's why the text is not so important, actually.<sup>65</sup>

Again, Baltakas demonstrates a preoccupation with the irrational — strongly linked to a breakdown in the ability to communicate efficiently and accurately — situated outside the kind of binary that comes up in descriptions of euphonic styles as a emotional counterpoint to the perceived unfeeling rationalism of modernism. He actively eschews the mythologies of Lithuanian euphonicism and folk-inspired arrangements, but does not engage strongly with rationalist rhetoric or constructivist techniques in order to define his work as distinct from these paradigms.

Baltakas is particularly invested in the idea of receiving directions in composition; that repeated feedback from different performance contexts is a vital part of any work's conception. In something of a post-authorial spirit, Krausas' biography states:

His view of musical composition and conducting is one of reciprocity. He says that both as a composer or conductor 'you can influence it, suggest ideas, give it direction, make decisions. You give impulses but you also receive impulses back from the music that you then process again and which then reflects back.'<sup>66</sup>

In *Sandwriting*, this concept reaches news heights; the fact that this reciprocity is built into the live performance, witnessed by the audience in real time, serves to intensify it. The composer's motivation to produce the interpolation is symptomatic of a general preference for connecting composition and context; he aims to link his work 'to a specific concert situation: a specific musician, location, or in this case a specific repertoire'.<sup>67</sup> In addition to ideas about directness, listening and irrationality, the focus on context and reciprocity — departing from the idea of a fixed, abstract text that might appeal more to a composer like Balakauskas — highlights the decomposed binary already discussed in this Chapter. The focus on reciprocity, like the approach to sound in composition described above, brings to the fore again a concept that comes up repeatedly throughout this thesis in relation to different ideologies: the idea that a composer does not invent, build, imagine, construct, or manipulate music according to their own wishes, but reaches into a space where it already exists in some form in order to access, mediate or facilitate it in some way.

---

<sup>65</sup> Baltakas interview, 2017.

<sup>66</sup> Krausas, 'Baltakas'.

<sup>67</sup> Baltakas, *Smokey Arnold* score.

Baltakas's music sits further from the centre of the paratonal, lattice-based, minimalist-like paradigm that has so far connected much of the repertoire explored in this study. Nevertheless, characteristics of his work identified in this chapter — a recursive tendency motivated by a nonlinear orientation resulting in a frequent sense of a referential (pitch) centre; a concern with directness and an intuitive approach to writing; a certain 'detached', dry quality (somewhat like the 'bittersweet glamour' of Valančiūtė's composition) as opposed to a more sentimental inclination; and a clarity of melodic line that seems to keep pitch and rhythm on a higher footing than timbre — serve to link his output in a more roundabout but (I would argue) quite audible way to the other musics discussed here. Tracing the potential influence of Balakauskas down through generations of LMTA<sup>68</sup> composition students, the concept of the immanence of musical ideas is also significant for Albertas Navickas, whose work will be explored alongside Justina Repečkaitė's in the next Chapter. These two composers, both born around the late 1980s, also left Lithuania and subsequently live and work elsewhere, but have different and individual relationships to this departure and to the idea of what it means to be (seen as) a Lithuanian composer, or not.

---

<sup>68</sup> Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre (<https://lmta.lt/en/>).

**7. Leaving Lithuania Part II: Justina  
Repečkaitė and Albertas Navickas  
— Circles, science, and spectra**

This Chapter discusses two younger composers who also emigrated from, and are still currently resident outside, Lithuania — but who, compared to Baltakas, seem to have felt a stronger sense of belonging to Lithuanian networks and institutions of contemporary music. Justina Repečkaitė and Albertas Navickas are of a similar generation and age (both were born in the second half of the 1980s and effectively grew up in an independent Lithuania); additionally, they both studied under Balakauskas at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre. Both have lived in France, but while Repečkaitė remains resident there, Navickas has since moved to the US. Both composers have also expressed overlapping interests in spectralism, timbre, and a Balakauskas-like view of abstract musical immanence. Although they share some major interests, the two composers discussed in this chapter write different-sounding music. Repečkaitė's work bears some resemblance in terms of colour and gesture to Grisey or Varèse, though often denser and more consistently saturated in terms of texture; Navickas's compositions, which typically offer a little more breathing room, are also informed by a strong interest in North American minimalism, and his collaborative work with the experimental collective *muzika yra labai svarbi*<sup>1</sup> reveals a greater affinity to Bang On A Can or Fluxus-style postmodern expressions. As this Chapter focuses on a younger generation of composers, case studies here are all drawn from within the last fifteen years and mostly from within the last ten. The works explored show a variety of forms (two works for string orchestra, one for full orchestra and one for flutes, voice and electronics) and illustratively contrasting preoccupations (humanistic, romantic inspirations and abstract, geometric ones).

Repečkaitė's relationship with Lithuanian modernisms can be understood through connections to Balakauskas, and to some extent also Ričardas Kabelis – but her work is also characterised by quite significant departures from many of the trends already discussed here, which in turn could be seen as related to Repečkaitė's long-term emigration to France and her interest in timbre (which, she has explained, is not typically perceived as a very 'Lithuanian' musical trait). Of all the work discussed in this thesis, Repečkaitė's music sits possibly on the furthest edge of a broad Venn diagram of combinations of characteristics – but is still a vital piece of the picture, illustrating the variety of directions taken by composers

---

<sup>1</sup> Asta Pakarklytė, 'THEME. New [Re]Generation of Lithuanian Contemporary Music', *Lithuanian Music Link No. 17* (2009-2010) (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-17-october-2009-march-2010/theme-new-regeneration-of-lithuanian-contemporary-music/>, 04.12.20).

influenced by major twentieth-century Lithuanian figures like Balakauskas, Bronius Kutavičius, Mažulis and Ričardas Kabelis. Discursively, her output is often framed in more unequivocally modernist terms by comparison even with composers of hyper-complex, 'rational' music like Mažulis (whose associations with minimalism may play a large part in the frequent recourse to a rhetoric of liminality or hybridity surrounding his compositions). Unlike almost all the other music considered here, Repečkaitė's work is not paratonal but is characterised by a strong fascination with timbre not necessarily tempered, as may be in the case of Navickas, by the idea that melody is emergent. In terms of the recurring theme in this thesis of strongly lattice-based musics, Repečkaitė's composition typically does not express the same kind of clean, flat, 'digital' tone as some of Mažulis's, where common-practice European classical-musical grammatisation is laid bare with MIDI-style precision and bluntness. Still, Repečkaitė's works (particularly more explicitly 'geometrical' pieces like *Chartres* and *Cosmatesque*) strongly evoke a certain kind of grid axiom or fixed two-dimensional structure, in that both works rely conceptually on the image of a delimited structural shape, inside which there is a predefined amount of space and proportional relationships are fairly rigidly restricted – a very different kind of sense from Baltakas's much more organic, spontaneous, and flexible image of sound as a living, moving cloud that a composer must carefully listen to and try to follow.

Navickas's work, though seemingly anchored around similar major influences, sits differently alongside, and somewhat closer to, the other musics discussed in this study. It is frequently paratonal – far more so than Repečkaitė's – emphasising consonance and sometimes prominent diatonic or modal melodic lines. Some of the ways in which Balakauskas influenced Navickas may have contributed to this tendency, along with Navickas's strong interest in U.S. minimalism. With regard to a tendency toward a strongly lattice-based orientation: although all the music discussed in this study is fundamentally 'lattice-based' in Trevor Wishart's sense (that is, primarily constituted in terms of pitch and time, with timbre as an additional but lesser dimension not on an equal footing with these 'vertical' and 'horizontal' planes), there are degrees to this quality. As reflected in critical reception, Navickas's pieces tend more towards smudged than sharp edges, more to soft than harsh timbres. *Blanche t'a vu* makes use of electronics (a key element of Wishart's vision of a move away from lattice-based music<sup>2</sup>) – although, while the 'echo' effect achieved by these means in some sense represents a departure from a rigidly *notated* metric grid, the staggered vocal parts still enter at metrically 'regular' intervals. Similarly, while much of Repečkaitė's work evinces a 'geometric' quality that to an extent relies on some kind of underlying grid-like orientation, she has also – unsurprisingly given her fascination with

---

<sup>2</sup> Trevor Wishart, *On Sonic Art*, xi.



timbre – written electroacoustic works of a different tenor (for example, *TORO*, 2015, for euphonium and electronics). Overall, however, Navickas's music leans closer to paratonicity and Repečkaitė's to a lattice-based quality, at least in the sense of a preoccupation with the precise tessellation of internal blocks.

### **7.1 Justina Repečkaitė (b. 1989): 'Drawn with the sharpest pencil'**

Repečkaitė, at the time of writing, is living and working in Paris.<sup>3</sup> To date, she has held a scholarship at the International Center of Nadia and Lili Boulanger and has also been a composer-in-residence with ensemble Le Balcon and artist-in-residence at the Singer-Polignac Foundation.<sup>4</sup> Although she has now been based outside of the country for some time, Repečkaitė still enjoys recognition from Lithuanian art music institutions. Her 2013 work *Chartres* won LCU's Best Debut Prize,<sup>5</sup> and recordings of several of her works have been included on major compilations such as *Anthology of Lithuanian Art Music in the 21st Century* and the *ZOOM in series*.<sup>6</sup> Her orchestral piece, *Cosmatesque*, one of the case studies in this Chapter, was a commission of the 2017 Gaida Festival,<sup>7</sup> and she has been a member of the Lithuanian Composers' Union since 2015.<sup>8</sup> Repečkaitė's evokes constructivist impulses – particularly in its accompanying verbal interpretations — that are at odds with dominant euphonic narratives of Baltic art music. When asked whether she felt more connected professionally as a composer to contemporary music networks in Lithuania or to those in France, or whether she saw herself more as part of a broader European or global scene, Repečkaitė responded:

I would like to think that my music helps to export Lithuanian culture, it represented Lithuania several times in World Music Days (2015, 2018), International Rostrum of Composers (2013, 2017) and in albums *Zoom in* ([volumes] 10, 12). I got commissioned by Gaida and my music is played in other festivals in Lithuania, but I don't feel like I belong to my generation of Lithuanian composers. Even if my music travels a lot to different continents to be replayed, it is mostly commissioned by France, my place of residence.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> 'Biography', Justina Repečkaitė website (accessed online, <http://www.justinarepeckaitė.eu/biography/>, 23.10.19).

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Justina Repečkaitė, Lithuanian Music Information Centre website (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/composers/repeckaitė/>, 03.12.20).

<sup>6</sup> 'Biography', Repečkaitė website.

<sup>7</sup> Festival Programme, Gaida 2017 (accessed online, [http://www.muzikosantena.lt/bukletai/gaida/Gaida\\_2017\\_bukletas.pdf](http://www.muzikosantena.lt/bukletai/gaida/Gaida_2017_bukletas.pdf), 23.10.19), 124.

<sup>8</sup> 'Biography', Repečkaitė website.

<sup>9</sup> Justina Repečkaitė interview (with Claire McGinn, conducted via email, February 2019).

Some of the ways in which Repečkaitė's approach could be viewed as different from other Lithuanian composers of her generation is in her exacting focus on modernist preoccupations like refining the fixed architectural form of a work based on an abstract structural ideal — and descriptions of her music as 'sharp', 'hard' or 'geometric' — which contrasts with the more postmodern conceptual terrain that may be associated with contemporaries like Rūta Vitkauskaitė (whose work evinces a strong interest in avant-garde performance art), Justė Janulytė (who frequently composes in a euphonic mould) and, to an extent, Albertas Navickas. Though she has acknowledged that 'the sensation of listening to [music] is never objective and changes with time',<sup>10</sup> there appears to be a perceptible contrast between Repečkaitė's carefully crafted works and stronger focuses seen elsewhere on subjectivity, communication, accessibility, and listener engagement.

Repečkaitė and Navickas have both identified different aspects of Balakauskas's compositional teaching, as well as individual support for their educational and career development, that were particularly significant for their respective approaches to writing music. In a 2013 interview with Vaida Urbietytė-Urmonienė, the following exchange highlights the importance of this relationship for Repečkaitė:

VU: I know that you were the last student of Osvaldas Balakauskas. What does that mean to you?

JR: I was sad when Osvaldas Balakauskas retired. I used to visit him even before applying to the academy. Once he wanted to give me around a hundred books about music, I must confess I was ashamed to admit the fact that I can't read all those languages he knows. Professor O. Balakauskas is a real cosmopolitan and intellectual, without him I would have failed to enter the academy.<sup>11</sup>

Commonalities between Balakauskas's well-known commitments to formalism and complexity, and the language and imagery chosen by others to describe Repečkaitė's music, may also be observed. In an extract quoted on Repečkaitė's page on the Lithuanian Music Information Centre website, Šarunas Nakas observes,

Repečkaitė cultivates a particularly strict manner of writing. In this kind of music every move and detail is accurately prospected, the primal conception develops in to a well calculated system where all important aspects are balanced. [...] Repečkaitė's musical language is complicated, but clear and readable. Gravitational waves ruling

---

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Vaida Urbietytė-Urmonienė, 'Interview with Justina Repeckaite: "I had a sincere confidence in my piece"', as published in English on Repečkaitė website, October 12 2013 (accessed online, <http://www.justinarepeckaite.eu/press/interview-with-justina-repeckaite-i-had-a-sincere-confidence-in-my-piece/>, 23.10.19), originally published in Lithuanian in *Literatūra ir menas*.

a piece determine [the] ruthlessness of this aesthetic and there is no attempt to daydream or spend any time in the state of beauty. It is an intellectual move whose orbit is drawn with the sharpest pencil.<sup>12</sup>

This and other writings on Repečkaitė demonstrate a strong recourse to a rhetoric of 'high' modernism – strict, calculated, ruthless, clear, ruling, intellectual, sharp, no attempt to daydream and no time for beauty. The distinctions modernist / postmodernist are not practicable or meaningful as ways to compartmentalise music (far less artists). Nevertheless, the richness of the contrasts (aesthetic, ideological/political, etc) between the ideas commonly associated with modernism and postmodernism in discourse – and their prominence in existing writings about many of these composers – suggest that this is an important level on which to consider contemporary objects/events of music/art and their contexts. Due to the complexity, academicism and relatively challenging nature<sup>13</sup> of Repečkaitė's musical language, in conjunction with the ways her work is written about, there are meaningful parallels to be drawn with discourses of modernism in relation to Lithuanian art music context where tonal-leaning post-minimalism remains a dominant style.

Geometry as a constructivist analogy or metaphor strongly characterises Repečkaitė's work. Her idiom is contemporary but seems to have strong roots in formalist ideals, often drawn out in accompanying discourse. Ben Lunn writes that her work is 'highly modernistic, giving almost nothing away to the listener',<sup>14</sup> evoking the idea that autonomy of the artwork supersedes more reception-oriented concepts like intuition or emotion. To a certain extent these kinds of ideas are redolent of descriptions of Balakauskas, whose output has in the past been associated with coldness and alienation through an overt commitment to formalism that was unusual in twentieth-century Lithuanian art music. However, as discussed in Chapter 3, Balakauskas can in many ways be viewed more as a moderate modernist. Repečkaitė seems instead to take as a departure point the conceptual framing of Balakauskas as an uncompromising modernist, herself producing music which, while it could never be free of certain restraints or obligations, demonstrates creative exploration seemingly unhampered by a need to defend her approach. Repečkaitė's response to the question 'what do you consider to be your relationship with modernism?' was as follows:

Innovation is the key of creation today but it does not [necessarily] present a musical progress. I imagine history turning in a cycle, coming back to avant-garde events and throwing itself to a comeback of neo-styles. Today the common factor is the multiplicity of styles but I reject eclectic[ism] and I am wary even of spontaneous

---

<sup>12</sup> 'Repečkaitė', Lithuanian Music Information Centre website.

<sup>13</sup> Ben Lunn, 'Justina Repečkaitė's profile by Ben Lunn', Repečkaitė website, February 22 2018 (accessed online, <http://www.justinarepeckaitė.eu/press/justina-rapeckaites-profile-by-ben-lunn/>, 23.10.19).

<sup>14</sup> 'Justina Repečkaitė's profile by Ben Lunn', Repečkaitė website.

contrast. The transformation of my music is slow because I stay faithful to my rigid taste of aesthetics and creativity with a structure in mind.<sup>15</sup><sup>13</sup>

In other ways this conceptualisation strongly evokes Balakauskas's compositional thought. The a-historicist rhetoric of *Dodekatonika* asserts that fundamental, physical relational tensions exist between notes of the equal tempered 12-tone scale, which govern the composition of (European art) music regardless of its historical period or the stylistic conventions brought to bear on it. Repečkaitė's commitment to slow, 'rigid' aesthetics and structure in the face of cyclical history, stylistic multiplicity and eclecticism, echoes this position. Tomas Kutavičius and Vykintas Baltakas have expressed similar feelings, and Albertas Navickas, as will be discussed in this Chapter, also discusses ideas related to immanence and 'natural', ahistorical musical logics.

Overall, the twentieth-century roots, particularly in Balakauskas's thought, of this interest in finding methods for approaching composition that can be framed as equally valid regardless of the historical period, current artistic climate or latest trends, could be seen in this context (though it of course proliferated in different ones) as a response to repeated occupations. While in some ways compatible with a Soviet rejection of bourgeois artistic fashions, instead discursively leaning towards the favoured domain of empirical science, this understanding of composition can also be seen as providing a foundation for writing music that can be understood by its author as artistically meaningful even in the face of repeated, drastic upheavals such as the change, multiple times in a single century, of the country's political economy, dominant ideology and epistemology, and independence status. For Balakauskas, the compositional philosophy of *Dodekatonika* may have also meant that he could support the idea that his approach to writing music could remain constant as a creative endeavour no matter who was in government. This could be interpreted as a powerful form of the 'silent resistance' so often attributed to Soviet-occupied nations like the Baltics. That such concepts have had some meaning for Baltic artists can be seen, for example, in Šarūnas Nakas's reflection in *Kitman* (2012, for piano)<sup>16</sup> of twentieth-century Lithuanian-Polish political exile Czesław Miłosz's emphasis on the potency of cherishing your innermost thoughts — drawing on the Islamic philosophical concept of *ketman* — as a last, untouchable vestige of sanctuary and defiance in a political context of extreme repression.<sup>17</sup>

For Balakauskas's generation of composers, this perspective might reinforce the knowledge that their internal sense of artistic identity and purpose could withstand changes

---

<sup>15</sup> Repečkaitė interview, 2019.

<sup>16</sup> Šarūnas Nakas, *Kitman* (Vilnius: Lithuanian Music Information and Publishing Centre, 2012).

<sup>17</sup> Czesław Miłosz, *The Captive Mind* (London: Penguin Books, 1997 [1953]), 54-58.

to the regime over the decades; for younger generations, it could allow for an internal sense of artistic identity to remain conceptually intact through the turbulence of the independence struggle, the ultimate collapse of the USSR and the widespread experience of institutional transition. While it should be acknowledged that few composers would be likely to admit openly that they are led by transient fashions and are just trying to write something that will be well-received in their respective moment, it makes sense that, following a century of extreme political upheaval and radical changes to locally approved epistemologies, artists might gravitate towards an orientation that allows them to reject the significance of the current political climate for their creative identities.

When asked to which aspects of composition she would typically give most attention, Repečkaitė explained: '[t]he most important thing to me is the conception. Without it composition would be just a hoax. From the main idea originates all other decisions about form, rhythm, harmony and all other musical parameters' — which, for her, 'only serve' as a basis for the concept.<sup>18</sup> Regarding the sources of these ideas, she explained that all of her compositions originate in some kind of non-musical concept or image, adding '[i]t can be visual arts, theology, theatre, improvisation, proportion or even geological processes. All these topics might seem to be from completely different worlds, however they all come from my interests.'<sup>19</sup> The composer's overarching preoccupation with shapes, codes, systems, processes, and strong visual analogues for musical construction finds a succinct expression in *Cosmatesque* (2017) and *Chartres* (2012), discussed in this Chapter.

## **7.2 Albertas Navickas (b. 1986): 'Baltic, "archaic"...whatever...'**

Albertas Navickas is currently a postdoctoral researcher in biochemistry and biophysics at the University of California San Francisco. Having started a PhD in musicology and social sciences, Navickas redirected his career path in 2012<sup>20</sup> to focus on life sciences, studying at the Université Pierre et Marie Curie in France,<sup>21</sup> and is now part of the School of Medicine at UCSF.<sup>22</sup> Having previously studied at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, Navickas enjoys the opportunity to compose alongside research ('writing for orchestra is still a very colourful yet challenging experience for me'<sup>23</sup>) and has had orchestral works commissioned by the Gaida festival in 2017 (*memory lines*<sup>24</sup>) and 2018 (*sunrise of the*

---

<sup>18</sup> Urbietytė-Urmonienė, 'Interview with Justina Repečkaitė'.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Email correspondence with the composer, January 2019.

<sup>21</sup> 'Curriculum Vitae', Albertas Navickas website (accessed online, [http://albertasnavickas.lt/CV\\_eng.pdf](http://albertasnavickas.lt/CV_eng.pdf), 25.10.19).

<sup>22</sup> 'Albertas Navickas, PhD', UCSF Profiles, University of California, San Francisco (accessed online, <https://profiles.ucsf.edu/albertas.navickas>, 25.10.19).

<sup>23</sup> Email correspondence with the composer, January 2019.

<sup>24</sup> Gaida Festival 2017 programme booklet (accessed online, [http://www.muzikosantena.lt/bukletai/gaida/Gaida\\_2017\\_bukletas.pdf](http://www.muzikosantena.lt/bukletai/gaida/Gaida_2017_bukletas.pdf), 25.10.19).

west<sup>25</sup>). Though currently working as a full-time research scientist, Navickas has had a multifaceted career, achieving significant institutional recognition as a composer and postgraduate certification as a musicologist in addition to laboratory work. Starting at the beginning, he explains how this duality unfolded:

I think, since a very young age, I was interested in both — sciences, life sciences, math, and music. So my family is mainly musicians, and they didn't want me to become one because they thought it was a difficult life... [laughs]. And so they... you know, there is this book, that I haven't read, but I remember the title, about you know... like physical sciences being given more value than like, the humanities, and the book is called, *I Wanted To Be A Baker but I was Good At Maths*. My family kind of incited me to, you know, develop my interest in physical sciences. So, I liked it a lot too... but then at some point, like, I was 12, I realised I was interested in music too, so I really wanted to pursue that — and I did.<sup>26</sup>

He reflects on the complexities of his arrival at his current position. After having completed a Masters — 'which [...] actually was the first time I kind of combined [...] what I was studying as a biologist, to apply it to music history and music analysis'<sup>27</sup> — Navickas considered pursuing further research in music and social science. Although he embarked on a doctoral program, the comparative lack of funding available for arts and humanities projects was a serious obstacle:

I went back to Paris for a PhD in social science and musicology — and that was, you know, a very interesting time, where I was... looking for a fellowship for my PhD, and I was like...really, kind of *trying*, and failing, for a couple of years. And then, you know, to sustain myself I was working in a lab as a technician because [...] I had this other education, and so I could do this. [...] [T]his is one of the basic things that I have witnessed [...] I've been both sides. And I've seen my colleagues in social sciences really...struggle. And then...my colleagues in life sciences *think* they struggle — and they do! — but...there's a...you know... It's like, impossible to do biology if you don't have the money. While it's still *possible* to do social sciences on your own, working night shifts at a bar — and so many people do that. While the lab work, it just costs so much that you can't.<sup>28</sup>

Ultimately, the greater availability of resources, funding and infrastructure to put his scientific research skills to use created a tenable career path, while it had become apparent that pursuing musicology full-time was not an option:

---

<sup>25</sup> Email correspondence with the composer, January 2019.

<sup>26</sup> Navickas interview (with Claire McGinn, conducted via phone), March 2020.

<sup>27</sup> Navickas interview, March 2020.

<sup>28</sup> Navickas interview, 2020.

And then, you know, I was like, “Okay... I’ve done all these university degrees and everything — and what do I *want* to do in my life?”. And I thought I wanted to do, you know... Because I really enjoy, still, up to now, thinking about music and the role of music in everyday life, and how we perceive music, and all that — and so I thought I would, you know, I would go deeper in that. And like, everyone around me was really encouraging. [...] And so, actually... this entire project didn’t work out, right? I didn’t find funding. And then, I was working in the lab, and I realised that... I like doing science. And so I thought probably I wanted to do social science with music. And then... I ended up doing... molecular biology [laughs].<sup>29</sup>

Eschewing the kind of wilful romanticism that often characterises artist biographies, Navickas emphasises the unplanned nature of his career path and gently dismisses the notion that his music is somehow a direct reflection of his scientific research interests:

So, I studied both music and chemistry, biochemistry — and [...] you know, when I would tell people that I was studying both, they would often ask me if biology, or chemistry, or whatever, you know, physical or life sciences, influenced my music or my music writing. And I would always say that I wouldn’t find like, obvious... I don’t know, it wasn’t really — like it wasn’t... *mysterious* enough, or somehow *exotic* enough... for me, that I would kind of ‘combine’ those...<sup>30</sup>

Like Repečkaitė, Navickas was taught by Osvaldas Balakauskas at the Lithuanian Academy of Music. Revisiting the suggestion from Chapter 3 that Balakauskas has been particularly influential as a moderate modernist, Navickas’s recollections of his mentor corroborate this impression, highlighting Balakauskas’s insistence on the significance of fundamental, ‘lattice-based’, tonal western classical or ‘common practice’ musical building blocks (when his students might have preferred to explore less entrenched canonical terrain):

I think he is... [...] a very reserved person, very... soft-spoken. [...] However, with very strong opinions. So, yeah, I think he was an influence in this, like, rational approach to music-making. [...] He, actually, he you know, I would ask him, I said, like, ‘Professor, but what has influenced *you* the most?’. He would respond, ‘Well... Bach’. [laughs]. You know, he’s like...there are three main things in music: it’s rhythm, it’s harmony, and it’s the melody. And probably, in this order. And nothing... nothing much else, you know? And I was really disappointed at that time; I was like, ‘but...what about the...SPECTRAL....?!’ ...You know? [laughs]. And he’s like, ‘Well, but that’s the wallpaper! Why would you...why would you buy a house [based on] the wallpaper?’. [...] And then, obviously, back then I was like, you know, maybe

---

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*

not *completely* convinced — and I was looking a lot into... French spectralist movement...<sup>31</sup>

Although his interests in spectralism managed to withstand these interventions, other aspects of Balakauskas's influence may be seen in Navickas's musical thought. Repečkaitė has highlighted the importance of abstract shapes and structures, circles and cycles, in her composition; Navickas approaches from a different angle, but touches on similar concepts. The idea that some constant, external phenomenon is already 'out there', like gravity, waiting to be tapped into in the process of composition, is also appealing to Navickas. When asked about the significance of spectralism for his work, he explained:

[Y]eah, actually...probably more often than not I *do* construct my harmonies from the spectral... [...] it's pretty technical in a way that, you know, you imagine that your harmony will be, like, a part of something...natural, a natural sound spectrum. And then... [...] Asta Pakarklytė [...] you know, she's a musicologist, and... [...] she was writing about generative art<sup>[32]</sup> [...] from a semiotics position [...] and [...] she once told me, she was like, '*you* are doing a generative art'. And I think, like, retrospectively... like, I'd never thought of this, but I believe that this... [...] is something I kind of... not on purpose, but, *do* a lot in my creative process where [...] I kind of, have to find a *key*... in how I approach... various elements of the musical language. That is, like, I can convince myself that it is not...accidental — it's, you know, it's made the way... that it *had to be* this way. Like, it's not like I invented something — I just... follow the rules — and obviously, like, it's all in my mind, right, the rules are mine... But I imagine that, you know, it's just the way it *had to be*. And those spectral harmonies are something like, well... the spectrum is like that by nature, so I do not, you know, have to think more than that. I just take it. And then, combine with some other things that are also, in my mind, pre-defined. And then I go with that.<sup>33</sup>

This clearly serves to link both composers strongly to existing traditions represented by some of the major proponents of twentieth-century Baltic art music; not only or especially to the concept of listening, mediation or intuiting embodied by Pärt, Tormis, Bronius Kutavičius and others, but to Balakauskas's logic of immanence — of accessing 'natural', physical conditions and relationships that exist outside and independently of particular stylistic conventions, historical moments or individual intentions — as discussed previously in relation to the *Dodekatonika* treatise. Balakauskas's ideas occupy orthogonal conceptual spaces to euphonic mythologies, but he sidestep mystical or supernatural articulations in

---

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> 'Generative art is art made using a predetermined system that often includes an element of chance'. 'Generative Art', Tate website (accessed online, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/g/generative-art>, 06.10.20).

<sup>33</sup> Navickas interview, March 2020.



favour of the cultural cachet and capital afforded (perhaps particularly in the Soviet period, but certainly still now, as evidenced by Navickas's experiences and those of many others) by the association with discourses of science and empiricism. Navickas's comments reflect the idea of compositional systems embodying some kind of natural system as he recalls Balakauskas's evocation of the laws of physics when describing the draw of melodic writing:

...he helped me a lot — [...] as every young person, I, you know... I wanted to experiment a lot — to... invent, probably often, a wheel... [...] I wanted to, like, do things that I thought... you know, like, *different* from before, what everyone has done before. And he was, he used to repeat to me, you know: ... 'Melody is like gravitation' — you can pretend it does not exist, but yeah... [laughs].<sup>34</sup>

Physical and geometrical relationships and proportions are notably significant for Repečkaitė, whose compositions may be reminiscent of Merkelys in their 'hard unforgiving shape and geometric perfection.'<sup>35</sup> Drawing on these qualities, Lunn has described her work as having 'many similarities to a diamond'.<sup>36</sup> One piece that neatly mirrors this idea is *Cosmatesque*, a 2017 orchestral work inspired by the precisely cut coloured stones of the mosaic style which is its namesake. The following sections discuss this piece alongside three further case studies by the two composers considered in this chapter, drawing comparisons and highlighting contrasts between their styles and approaches: Repečkaitė's 2012 *Chartres*, and Navickas's 2017 *memory lines* and 2006 *Blanche t'a vu*.

## **7.3 Case studies by Repečkaitė and Navickas**

### **7.3.1 Cosmatesque (Repečkaitė, 2017)**

Repečkaitė's twelve-minute work for orchestra, commissioned by the Gaida festival for 2017, is based on a mosaic technique of the same name. The composer explains the structural motivations behind the work, the title of which 'refers not only to a medieval style of geometric decorative inlay stonework but also to a developed symbolical system', that can express 'concepts and ideas' related to the structure of the universe through 'coded geometry'.<sup>37</sup> The *Cosmatesque* technique describes the mosaic-like process by which variously-shaped and -sized pieces of stone are collated into an elaborate pattern (see Figure 7.1<sup>38</sup>). One noticeable feature of *Cosmatesque*'s score is the 'missing pieces' or gaps in the mosaic (see Figure 7.2), where bars of rest are frequently indicated by an absence

---

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Ben Lunn, 'Repečkaitė's profile', Repečkaitė website.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Justina Repečkaitė, *Cosmatesque* (2017), notes to score (digital copy provided by the composer).

<sup>38</sup> Public domain image, 'Aachen pavement cosmatesque', from Wikimedia Commons (accessed online, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aachen\\_Pavement\\_cosmatesque\\_24092016\\_1.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aachen_Pavement_cosmatesque_24092016_1.jpg), 07.12.20).

not only of notes but of any staff notation at all and discrete phrases appear visually in isolation against a blank background like separate tiles or building blocks. In the notes to the score, Repečkaitė writes that a 'singular proportion in permutation is used' in the piece 'to create different temporality canons'.<sup>39</sup> At the very opening of *Cosmatesque*, the woodwinds enter one by one. The flute entries are at first staggered in multiples of 9



Figure 7.1 — Cosmatesque mosaic tiles in Aachen Cathedral.

<sup>39</sup> Repečkaitė, *Cosmatesque*, notes to score.

The image shows a musical score for a woodwind ensemble. On the left, the instrument parts are listed: Flute I, Flute II, Flute III, Flute IV, Oboe I, Oboe II, Oboe III, Clarinet in Bb I, and Clarinet in Bb II. A tempo marking of  $\text{♩} = 56$  is at the top left. The score is divided into two sections by vertical lines. The right section shows complex rhythmic patterns with various dynamics like *mf*, *p*, *pp*, and accents. The woodwind parts are highly active, with many notes and rests.

Figure 7.2 — *Cosmatesque* extract with gaps in score

(semiquavers), though the number of other parts, values, and different simultaneous ‘temporalities’ here, as elsewhere in the work, detracts from an audible sense of regular pattern. Still, this opening is a demonstrative example of an initially obvious imitative texture in the woodwinds, particularly in the four flutes. The composer explains that the canons ‘build the musical architecture repeating themselves again and again while the orchestra register opens up’, noting that different sections within the ensemble each have a characteristic ‘tempo, duration, register and colour’.<sup>40</sup> The woodwind parts, for example, usually share the same motivic material. The brass, strings (plus harp) and percussion represent the other groups, and it is the latter who ultimately take over the final direction of the work. Repečkaitė writes that *Cosmatesque*’s ‘superposed repetitive patterns are condemned to be broken by the developed percussion lines’, which ‘symbolically’ destroy the ‘musical mosaic.’<sup>41</sup>

Recurring cellular motifs within what quickly becomes a dense texture can be grouped based on their dynamic, articulation, and playing technique. Different single-note gestures, irrespective of pitch, are also characterised by a distinctive shape and direction. Some motifs are dynamic retrogrades of one another, expressing subtle micro-level symmetries. Later on in the piece, larger symmetrical shapes appear in the score, notably as the orchestra makes its last few statements against the dominating percussion parts, with layers building up momentarily in vain only to fall away again almost immediately. In terms of pitch, the split woodwind parts (the four flutes, four oboes, and four clarinets) have an opening set of six:

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*

F, E half-flat, Eb, D, B half-flat and Ab. The opening section overall contains an expanded set ('filling in' some of the gaps like adding tiles to a mosaic): F, E, E half-flat, Eb, D, Db, B, B half-flat, A, A half-flat and Ab. The first sounded notes are a high F in clarinet 1 and a mid-low G# in the double bass; following this, the general trajectory of the upper parts over the first section is a gradual descent while the overall trajectory of the lower parts is a gradual ascent.

The juxtaposition in *Cosmatesque* of simultaneous crescendo and diminuendo hairpins in different parts often means that shifts from one moment to the next are more notable in terms of 'colour' or timbre than loudness, though the composer makes dramatic use of dynamics at various other points. In general, this work creates a slow-burning tension in which continual, gradual, mid-level ebbs and flows seem to be favoured over resolution, relaxation, or significant, clear-cut sectional contrasts, at least until the 'destructive' percussion begins to gain momentum in the latter portion of the work. Even then, the accompanying material is still dominated to an extent by long, overlapping tones with internal variety provided by timbral colour, playing technique and microtonal inflections. Though at a considerable remove from the punchy, syncopated cells found in works like Tomas Kutavičius' *Ritus Rythmus*, there is also an element of repetitiveness and stasis to the consistency of the apparent textural/timbral emphasis in *Cosmatesque*, which offers a wealth of tantalising sonorities but, as Lunn suggests, is less accommodating in terms of accessible anchors for listener orientation.

Looking again at the ways in which Repečkaitė's work has been described, there is often an emphasis on a 'sharp', 'hard' quality to her music. This might fit appropriately with the rhetoric of classical modernism in general, but it is interesting to consider its possible applications, for example, in a work like *Cosmatesque*. As subjective as such a judgment could only be, one of the most obvious and straightforward ways to interpret these comments in relation to this work (metaphorical allusions to the physical qualities of stone mosaic tiles notwithstanding) would probably concern Repečkaitė's greater use of sharp, harsh timbres. She explicitly links this timbral interest to French compositional thought, implicitly evoking an image of a Lithuanian art music idiom which is simpler than her own compositional language (a comparison which may help to explain her earlier comments about not feeling a strong sense of belonging to her generation of Lithuanian composers):

I always thought that Lithuanian composers hear my music as being very different, they tend to describe it as French because it is easier to situate it if you choose a geographical dimension. [...]. After listening to *Tapisserie* (2015) at World Music Days

2018 in Beijing [...] Andris Dzenītis,<sup>[42]</sup> told me that my music is very much Lithuanian but standing on a new, more complex level. In France it is always perceived as Lithuanian. I myself think that on the basis of how it is structured my music represents [the] Lithuanian school but the timbre is much more developed so the sounding might deceive a listener to think that it is somehow French.<sup>43</sup>

Repečkaitė relates that composition teachers in France convinced her that ‘timbre is a key to music’ and that harmony and timbre can not be separated.<sup>44</sup> She observes, ‘I think that [the] Lithuanian school lacks interest in timbre. I had a chance to pick the best bits of each school.’<sup>45</sup> The fact that, in Repečkaitė’s music, cyclical preoccupations and structure can be traced to Balakauskas’s influence, while her interest in timbre was developed during studies in France, is corroborated by Navickas’s comments about Balakauskas’s commitment to a conception of melody and harmony as discrete phenomena and timbral effects as mere ‘wallpaper’ which can and should be kept separate.

Repečkaitė’s often visually-inspired works frequently use visual shapes and patterns (the Chartres Cathedral rose window, a Cosmatesque inlay, an abstract geometric painting) as constructivist metaphors. *Unbennant-2* (2016), a response to the block-like and angular Sam Grigorian painting of the same name<sup>46</sup>, is evidently inspired by similar ‘geometric’ impulses to other of Repečkaitė’s works. This preoccupation can serve to link Repečkaitė’s output to Remigijus Merkelys’s and (another important mentor) Rytis Mažulis’s work; these composers share a fascination with rational, numerical systems of organisation (whether they be *numerus sonorus*, medieval mosaics or mathematically precise microtones), building relevant patterns into their works. The visual layouts of some of Repečkaitė’s scores bear witness to this impulse.

Repečkaitė’s music has a quite different effect from the more obvious motoric repetition that characterises many of the works explored previously. The music explored in the current Chapter more often departs from the overarching theme of pulsed/rhythmic repetition that unifies a large proportion of the pieces covered in this thesis. This distinction may be in part explained by the interest in timbre the composer developed in France — often producing a more ‘textural’ or colouristic effect than Balakauskas’s Bach-inspired, or Merkelys’s German-Expressionist-leaning, musics, in which clearly distinct, rhythmically accentuated and equal-tempered contrapuntal lines interact to create melody and harmony notionally independent of timbral concerns. However, Repečkaitė’s work — influenced by Balakauskas and machinist Ričardas Kabelis as well as Grisey, and frequently accompanied by recourse to

---

<sup>42</sup> ‘Andris Dzenītis’, Latvian Music Information Centre (accessed online, [https://www.lmic.lv/en/composers/andris-dzenitis-304#//](https://www.lmic.lv/en/composers/andris-dzenitis-304#/), 23.10.19).

<sup>43</sup> Repečkaitė interview, 2019.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Repečkaitė interview, 2019.

the language of ‘high’ modernism (in contrast to a dominant postmodern tone in wider pictures of Baltic art music) — is relevant to the questions raised in this thesis about modernist heterogeneities in Lithuanian art music. On the question of links between her work and Balakauskas’s output, Repečkaitė evokes cycles:

Both in my and Balakauskas's music there is an obsession with cycled structures! I think his ideas on organised music influenced generations of composers in Lithuania and of course being the last student of his I am one of them. Not only with his music but especially with his [*Dodekatonika*] and pedagogical work he showed us a rational way of creating music.<sup>47</sup>

Repečkaitė has acknowledged the significance of repetition in her musical thought – with passing reference to the *numerus sonorus* concept that has also preoccupied Merkelys, and that she elsewhere describes as, for her, the ‘most inspiring’ aspect of medieval music and theory. The composer explains that ‘[r]epetition has an essential role because I consider my music as a fractal-like structure repeated over and over, but observed from different angles, zoomed in and out.’<sup>48</sup> Moreover, although it may be articulated in contrasting ways when compared to the more minimalist-leaning pieces explored elsewhere in this study, the sense that musical time could be conceived of as more ‘spatial’ in some of Repečkaitė’s compositions serves to connect her work, like Baltakas’s, to a common contemporary theme of finding different means to push back against residual conventions of linearity.

Continuing this exploration of the conceptual pull for Repečkaitė of shapes, patterns, and the geometric art of antiquity, *Chartres* for string orchestra, written five years earlier, is similarly inspired by a complex, colourful arrangement of solid blocks; rather than stone or diamond, here the material is glass.

### **7.3.2 Chartres (Repečkaitė, 2012)**

*Chartres*, for string orchestra, offers another example of music constructed in response to a pre-existing visual shape. The concept behind this work, intended to depict the south rose window at Chartres cathedral, again draws on a pre-existing, non-linear, non-temporal shape. Repečkaitė’s interest in timelessness, or in temporalities traditionally atypical to more teleological European classical musical forms (a recurring thread throughout many of the works discussed in this study, but expressed in a variety of ways) is reflected in her recognition of composers who inspired her. She relates that her compositional development drew ideas from Gerard Grisey, for his “‘ecological’ acoustics’ and processes, and Bronius Kutavičius, for his creation of a ‘legend of a Lithuanian pagan past, expressed by archaic

---

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*

simplicity and syncretic art, [the] canon form so present in *sutartinės* and [the] mythological repetition connected with a form of ritual.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, the preoccupation with extra-musical concepts, structures and shapes – a self-identified feature of Repečkaitė’s process – may relate to her observation that Ričardas Kabelis, with whom she commenced study after Balakauskas retired, is ‘a very conceptual thinker’.<sup>50</sup> A similar sentiment is echoed in her assertion that the image she would choose to represent her relationship with composition is a stained glass window, as it ‘corresponds well with the idea of the cycle,’ which the composer describes as ‘omnipresent in my music’.<sup>51</sup> Inspired by the south rose window of the cathedral at Chartres, the composer’s notes to the score for her piece of the same name explain:

Chartres Clue [a circular representation of the piece shown on the title page of the score — see Figure 7.3] represents the epitomised material of the piece, composed according to the stained glass rose model. The musical parameters of this composition, which constantly follows the system, are organised according to the proportion of the numbers 6:8:9:12 while the visual form of the arc of the circle is embodied in the score.<sup>52</sup>

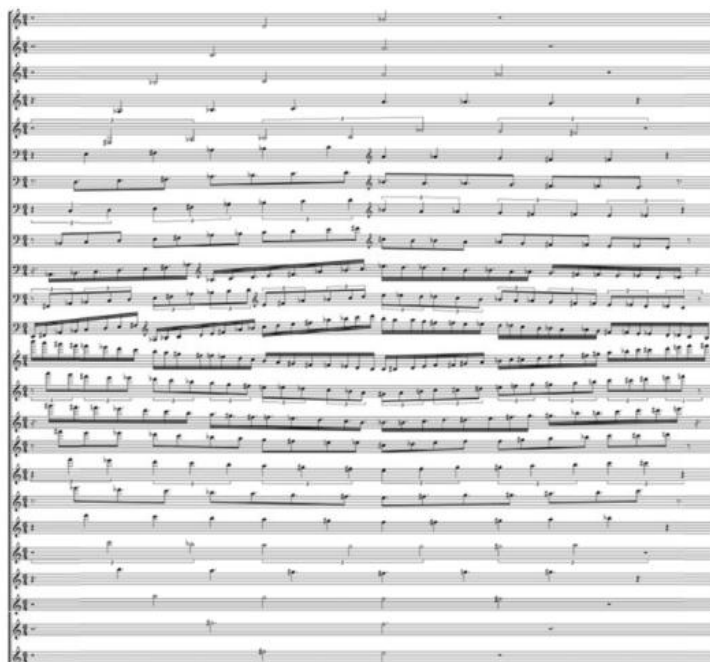


Figure 7.3 — ‘Chartres Clue’, circular image accompanying *Chartres* score

Although the dense, monumental, sustained block chords of *Chartres* evoke stasis, the simultaneous impression of movement created by incremental internal shifting is equally strong. Confronted with a highly complex, ten-metre-wide stained-glass window containing

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Justina Repečkaitė, *Chartres* (2012), notes to score (digital copy provided by the composer).

multiple discrete miniature scenes, as much as a viewer might try to comprehend the whole picture at once, the gaze inevitably focuses in on different aspects, moving around the circumference and flitting between eye-catching features. The simultaneous proportional layers in *Chartres* in some ways reflect the experience of looking at a huge, static shape which is at once simple and complex — there is a stillness, in that all proportions and ratios are present in one moment; but there is also a continual potential for dynamic motion, in that the perception can focus on and flit between smaller internal details and trajectories. The texture of *Chartres* presents distinct strata governed by the proportions 6, 8, 9 and 12 (for example, violin 1 plays a series of notes which are all six beats long; those of violin 4 notes are worth 27 beats [ $3 \times 9$ ] and those of violin 3 worth 18 [ $2 \times 9$ ]). These layers express a vertical symmetry while their horizontal values take them out of sync with each other, creating arc-like proportions such as those shown in Figure 7.4.

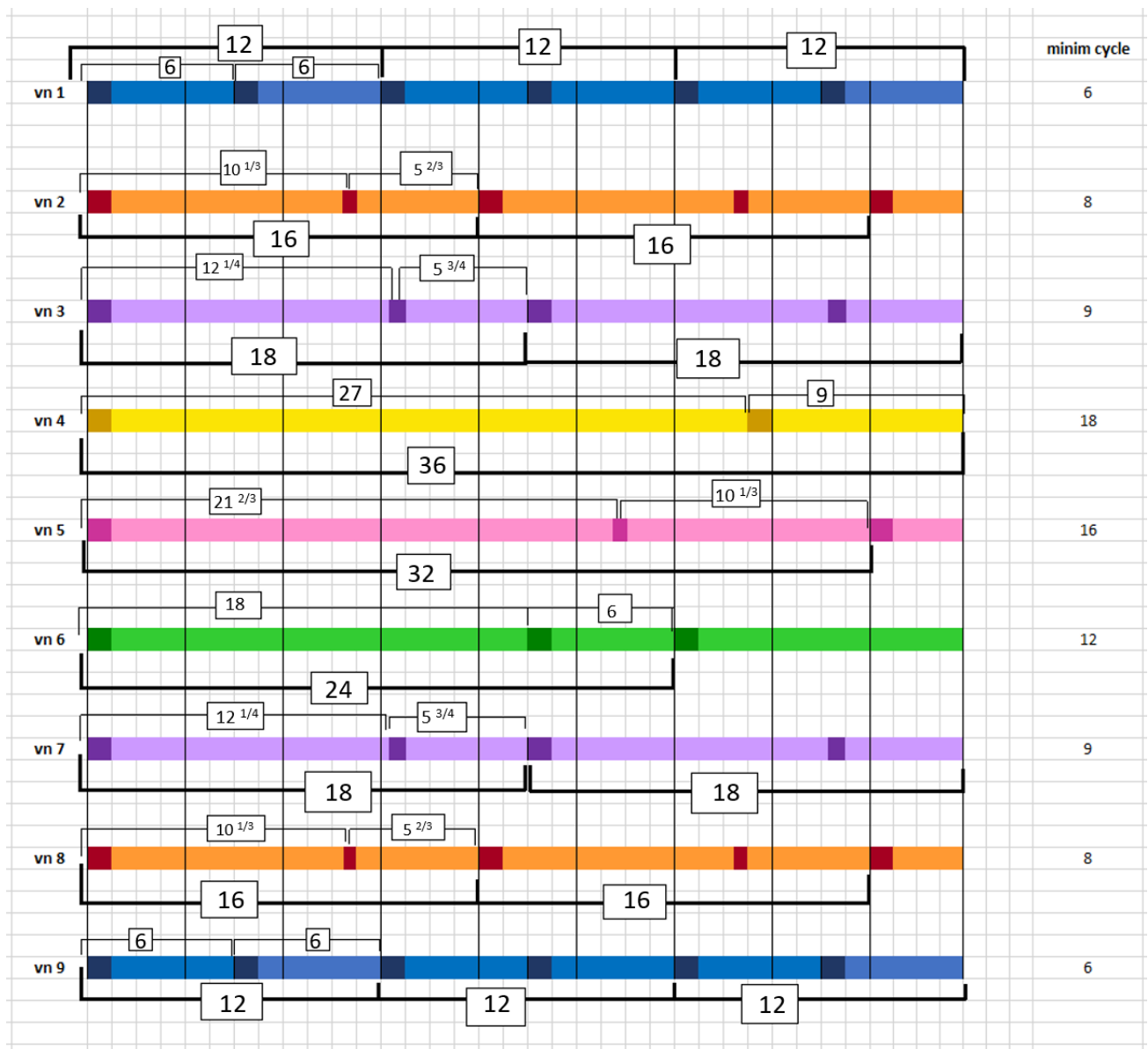


Figure 7.4 — Proportional strata in *Chartres* (violin parts, bars 1-9).



This highly visual, pattern-oriented approach is reminiscent of another contemporary Lithuanian composer, this time a former student of Rytis Mažulis:<sup>53</sup> Egidija Medekšaitė (b. 1979), a composer and textile designer whose musical work consistently draws on the patterns of warp and weft in differently woven fabrics to inform composition on multiple levels.<sup>54</sup> While Medekšaitė's approach, through the technological continuity between the Jacquard weaving loom and early computers,<sup>55</sup> more clearly maps onto Mažulis's preoccupation with the digital, there is a vivid shared interest between all three composers in numerical proportion — and, particularly in Repečkaitė and Medekšaitė's work, in its visual mapping and physical representation in the form of the score. The visuality of both *Chartres* and *Cosmatesque* is another element which can contribute to the impression of rationalism surrounding Repečkaitė's work. Whereas discourse around Pärt and similar figures focuses heavily on listening (the famous images of the composer with eyes closed and hands cupped around his ears discussed in Chapter 1), the idea of extrapolating key proportional elements of a piece and representing them visually — not an impressionistic mimesis but a deliberate mapping of properties that are visible to the eye — evokes rationalism and modernity.<sup>56</sup>

*Cosmatesque* uses microtonal inflections, glissandi and the timbral affordances of different extended playing techniques to create sonic differentiation. Repečkaitė's 2015 work *TORO*, for euphonium and electronics, moves further in the direction of timbral parameters, exploring the 'animalistic' sonorities of the brass instrument,<sup>57</sup> while the harmonic language of *Chartres*, in the words of a reviewer, 'occupies a wonderful place between dissonance and consonance'.<sup>58</sup> Though a statement that could be interpreted very broadly, in the context of *Chartres* this seems to apply to the fluctuations between 'stable' (if dissonant) chords and those containing microtonal variant pitches. As a result of slow, staggered glissandi between consecutive pitches in a sequence, the opening of the piece is characterised by sliding shifts between 'stable' chords, which may be seen to take on a greater semblance of 'consonance' by contrast with the microtonal material. In this sense *Chartres* shares some organisational impulses with *Canon Mensurabilis* by Mažulis — a significant Lithuanian constructivist, as discussed in Chapter 4.

---

<sup>53</sup> 'Egidija Medekšaitė', Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/composers/medeksaitė/>, 23.10.19).

<sup>54</sup> Egidija Medekšaitė, 'Mapping Textile Patterns into Sonic Experience', PhD thesis, Durham University, 2016 (accessed online, <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/11527/>, 04.12.20).

<sup>55</sup> James Essinger, *Jacquard's Web: How a hand loom led to the birth of the information age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>56</sup> Definitions of 'visuality' include 'In Foucauldian discourse, the role of vision within an epistemological regime: in its ascendancy, the objectifying and subjectifying power of vision within the 'scopic' regime of modernity, based on optics, linear perspective, and Cartesian rationality'. ('Visuality', Oxford Reference [accessed online, <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803120057418>, 19.10.20]).

<sup>57</sup> Justina Repečkaitė, 'Music', Repečkaitė website (accessed online, <http://www.justinarepeckaitė.eu/music/>, 19.10.20).

<sup>58</sup> Ben Davis, 'Chartres review by Ben Davis on Sight Listen blog', Justina Repečkaitė website, September 24 2014 (accessed online, <http://www.justinarepeckaitė.eu/press/chartres-review-by-ben-davis-on-sight-listen-blog/>, 23.10.19).

As outlined above, Repečkaitė has emphasised the importance of timbre for her approach. This, in conjunction with their shared interest in approaches to composition associated with French artists or contexts (Grisey, Saariaho, timbre, spectralism) serves to link Repečkaitė's work conceptually to that of Navickas. Though Repečkaitė's work is habitually represented verbally as rigid, glittering, geometric and unyielding, and Navickas's as nuanced, supple, floating and pastel-shaded, their respective sound-worlds connect at certain 'quilting points'. Though one evokes cut glass and the other vague, half-remembered thoughts, Repečkaitė's *Chartres* and Navickas's *memory lines* both tap into sonic idioms that move beyond equal-tempered scales and show a more exploratory interest in timbral parameters than many of the composers discussed previously, but often still lean towards consonance.

### **7.3.3 memory lines (Navickas, 2017)**

Strongly contrasting with Repečkaitė's usual inspirations, emotionality, subjectivity, ambiguity and irrationality are brought to the fore as important motivations in Navickas's programme notes to *memory lines*:

For a couple of years my creative thoughts have constantly got "trapped" in the thoughts about the lives of some of my long-lived family members. Probably (subconsciously and at the same time openly romantically) I try to keep these lives in my memory the way I wish they were and, sometimes, to ignore their actual state. This time, while writing *memory lines*, I mostly thought of the hierarchy of my memories; what makes some of them float on the surface of memory and some gradually sink into oblivion.<sup>59</sup>

This work is also an illustrative example of Navickas's tendency towards the dense, saturated harmonic writing, softer timbres, smooth, sustained gestures and blurry transitions that may have contributed towards the critical impression that his music bears fingerprints of French impressionist styles.<sup>60</sup> Pakarklytė sees Navickas's output as reminiscent of 'forms of French culture (from impressionism, to authors heavily influenced by French music, such as Kaija Saariaho)', describing his work as 'serene [...] supple, pastel, nuanced, formed of transparent textures and subtle dynamics, with specific acoustic colouring'.<sup>61</sup> Navickas — while acknowledging an interest in spectral constructions — is less certain about the application of national associations to his work in general. When asked if he felt more like a

---

<sup>59</sup> Gaida 2017 Programme booklet, 26

<sup>60</sup> Asta Pakarklytė, 'Albertas Navickas', Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/composers/navickas/>, 25.10.19).

<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*

‘Lithuanian composer’, more like an ‘international composer’, or as though such a distinction might simply be useless, Navickas replied:

I think it’s...anyways an *interesting* distinction. Because people *do* that distinction. Depending on where you are, right? And I have not lived in Lithuania for the past, probably...ten years now? [...] And so [...] I can share with you this, this little anecdote, so: when I was living in France, they would talk about, ‘oh, Albertas lives in *France*’ — and, you know, I have *briefly*, like, for six months, studied in the Paris Conservatoire — and... and then, you know, it probably was enough to kind of... [...] ...I don’t say that people have *labelled* me, but they would...happily associate my music with, you know... French...post-war...and I...I don’t *think* that my music sounds like Boulez, but — when we start speaking about, you know, like Grisey, or Saariaho, or, like, those kinds of music, you know... [...] I remember very well, some of my music has been programmed in the Gaida festival [...] ...definitely once with a piece by Saariaho — and then, also [...] with these French musics. And — as soon as I moved to the United States (which was, like, completely biology-related! *Only that...*) ...I have found myself in programmes with John Adams...you know, and now [...] when they...give some biographical notes, and I live in the U.S. now, and so...then the, you know, *American* music label kind of sticks — as if, as if... you know... so — abroad, I believe I would be seen more as a Lithuanian composer, and... I think... people *could* find some, you know [...] like what would you call, like ‘Baltic music’, or something like that, right?... So, if you want, you can find — oh, there is some kind of...‘ritualistic’ approach, or repetitive structure, or this...‘*Baltic*’, ‘*archaic*’, whatever — you know? And then...and I’m fine with that, right? And then, when I’m played in Lithuania — which I’m mostly played at — you know, people actually find some...those influences from abroad that... you know, are also *paired* — sometimes maybe not...on purpose, but paired...with where I live...at the moment. You know, and so [...] if I move to...Austria next year...I might be programmed with Schoenberg. I don’t know.<sup>62</sup>

Interestingly, while Navickas does not claim to be perturbed by potential associations of his music with a ‘ritualistic’, ‘Baltic, archaic, whatever’ template, it is clearly a familiar phenomenon the existence of which he does not dispute. While he does not reject this paradigm as Baltakas did, he acknowledges the trope and seemingly takes at best a neutral view on its application to his work rather than endorsing it as an accurate association. This lessened intensity in pushing back against euphonic stereotypes, while it could simply be a matter of individual perspective and preference, could also reflect one or both of the

---

<sup>62</sup> Navickas interview, 2020.

following: firstly, that the cultural power of the euphonic paradigm itself has faded somewhat (though Pärt has remained the most performed living composer for many years running, it is possible that his music and similar styles have lost their impactful novelty to a certain extent). Second, that, centralised though the scene may be, aspiring composers in Lithuania in the 2000s and beyond could be better connected to international contemporary music-making than ever before through both the internet and the end of Soviet restrictions on travel and exchange — and therefore be less likely to feel that escaping their context was the only way to achieve creative integrity. Although it might more readily be interpreted as emblematic of a 'French' spectral/impressionist influence, *memory lines* was programmed at the 2017 Gaida Festival alongside works by major American post-minimalist David Lang and the premiere of *Chiarascuro Trilogy* by Žibuokle Martinaitytė, a Lithuanian-born composer now based in New York, also featuring (as noted by the programme) US-Lithuanian pianist Gabrielius Alekna. This and similar instances presumably serve to reinforce Navickas's suspicion that his current (if non-Lithuanian) place of residence, whatever it might be, is likely to be taken as shorthand for an affinity with constructions of the national culture in question.

The beginning of *memory lines* is shaped according to a similar process – alternation between two contrasting groups of material that 'phase' in and out of sync with one another – to that seen in the first section of Merkelys's *MiKonst*, though here the sense of opposition is lessened by the timbral, harmonic and textural similarity of the two groups, the very low dynamics, and the gradual entry of material rather than the percussive attack indicated in Merkelys's score. Moreover, the resulting sonorities in each work are in strong contrast to one another and each piece demonstrates a radically different approach to a pitch/timbre continuum. In the case of *memory lines*, the harmonics, glissandi and whispering *sul tasto* technique compound the blurring effect of the microtonal palette, while the exaggerated hairpin dynamics serve to 'smudge' the edges of the antiphonal iterations of homophonic blocks and the pauses between them. At a consistent tempo of *crotchet* = 52, the upper strings have a regular pattern of  $1^{1/6}$  bars' sounding and  $1^{5/6}$  bars' silence. The lower strings first come in at the same point one bar later, but their entry is subsequently brought forward by one quaver or triplet quaver increment with each iteration (still ending in the same place, so the phrases gets incrementally longer rather than entirely shifting). The entries align at rehearsal mark 1, a transitional point which sees the introduction of more sustained, melodic material — first signalled by violin 1 as it breaks away from the continual alternating pattern of block chords and silences to hold a high G#, coloured with a vibrato and fullness of tone explicitly absent from the preceding homophonic material, across the gaps. This subsequently develops into a trend of short melodic (and in isolation effectively diatonic) fragments distributed across the ensemble, which continues to sustain similar dense,

relatively static chords until the latter collide and merge into a sonorous mass. The melodic fragments typically express triadic and scalar F# major figures, using pitches drawn from the wider spectral palette used in the textural parts. This approach — distinctly separating out equal-tempered material drawn from the harmonic spectrum from microtonal material also based on the harmonic spectrum — also characterises *Blanche t'a vu* (2006), to be discussed shortly. This approach speaks to the influence of Balakauskas, who had suggested that (12-tone) melody and harmony are elementary and that techniques like spectrally-derived harmony should be used colouristically in conjunction with these more foundational parameters.

Navickas has acknowledged that 'more often than not' his harmonic materials are drawn from the spectrum, but also comments on the influence of Balakauskas's teaching on the fundamental importance of melody. Writing in 2000, Julian Anderson observed that (at least at that time),

...with certain notable exceptions, spectral composers have had a lot of trouble discovering ways to write melodically, or for that matter polyphonically. One answer to this problem is to deny its existence altogether: supposedly such standard concepts as 'melody' and 'counterpoint' have ceased to have any meaning in the new syntax of spectral composition.<sup>63</sup>

Proponents of spectral music, Anderson explained, at times leaned towards melody and counterpoint and experimented with various approaches — '[b]ut melodic and linear writing remains untypical of this type of composing.'<sup>64</sup> This is interesting in relation to Navickas's recollections of his mentor Balakauskas's strong emphasis on melody being more important than techniques like spectrally-conceived harmony. Though he does not explicitly link this to Balakauskas's own logic of immanence, Navickas identifies his interest in spectral music as being motivated by impulses that he links to generative art; to what is, essentially, the same idea about some demonstrable, naturally-occurring or inherent rightness to particular sets, combinations or sequences of materials. As Anderson observes, Navickas is not alone in this, as a great many modern composers, both spectralists and others, shared this preoccupation with finding what Anderson calls a "'natural" justification' for compositional decisions:

In common with Cowell and Partch, Hindemith repeatedly cites his acoustical researches as "natural" justification for his theories, implying that they are therefore inherently superior to other theoretical conceits of the time such as the twelve-tone system, for which he presumably felt no such natural justification could be found.<sup>65</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup> Julian Anderson, 'A Provisional History of Spectral Music', *Contemporary Music Review* 19/2 (2000), pp. 7-22: 15-16.

<sup>64</sup> Julian Anderson, 'A Provisional History of Spectral Music', 16.

<sup>65</sup> Julian Anderson, 'A Provisional History of Spectral Music', 10.

Given the multiple influences of spectral music, ideals of immanence, and Balakauskas's strong insistence at a formative stage for Navickas that ingredients like melody are the foundations on which other kinds of technical or stylistic 'wallpaper' should be laid, Navickas's explicitly 'melodic' spectrally-conceived pieces are interesting. Taking both Balakauskas and Anderson at face value, it might be accepted that melody as a core phenomenon has been, if not incompatible with spectral 'wallpaper', then at least difficult to combine effectively, without compromising some sense of integrity of process or the desire to innovate away from established conventions. In some ways, Navickas's relationship with newer and more traditional classical idioms is a contemporary reflection of Balakauskas's own negotiation of an individual approach to modernist paradigms. It similarly resembles Valančiūtė and Tomas Kutavičius's strong desire to communicate, and Baltakas's claim that both 'the progressive and the traditional' are required and mutually dependent, and that, unmoored from anything conventional or familiar, art can become 'so distant as to have lost its ability to communicate', instead turning into 'a private language, without any social relevance.'<sup>66</sup> Navickas's attention to spectral and melodic parameters is illuminating, as his accommodation of the progressive and the traditional speaks to a recurring theme in modernist-leaning and non-euphonic styles discussed in this thesis. It is also a potential point of contrast with Repečkaitė, who stays 'faithful' to her own 'rigid taste' and is said to '[give] almost nothing away to the listener'.

But in what sense, if any, does melody behave (metaphorically speaking) 'like gravitation' in *memory lines*? After roughly two minutes of unapologetically vertical writing, accentuated by stark silences in between each block chord, one violin breaks the pattern, flipping a 'line' on its axis and switching to the horizontal plane with a long, luxuriously shaped, vibrato-heavy tone that stretches across seven bars and two sustained block chords, chaining the obstinate vertical blocks into something more linear. The gaps thereafter shortly fade away and the resulting wall of sound, which could itself otherwise seem just as 'vertical'<sup>67</sup> or non-linear as block chords punctuated by surrounding silences, is disrupted by dynamic fragments of melody of around a bar's length, distributed across parts and highlighted with decisive *mezzoforte* and *vibrato* indications against the sustained *pp-p* background. The dispersed melodic fragments get steadily more frequent and closer together, eventually overlapping. In this sense the initially homophonic music is steadily 'pulled' towards melodic activity, the earlier motion from short *glissandi* pitch bends evolving into more discrete thematic shapes. The melodic cells surface like fragments of a memory, their comparatively tonal, romantic and expressive nature contributing to the theme of

---

<sup>66</sup> Bálint Varga, 'The Courage of Composers and the Tyranny of Taste: Reflections on New Music', 2016, Vykintas Baltakas website (accessed online, [http://www.baltakas.net/texts/2016\\_Varga\\_courage/](http://www.baltakas.net/texts/2016_Varga_courage/), 22.01.21).

<sup>67</sup> The term 'vertical' is used to describe static and non-teleological musical temporalities in Jonathan Kramer, *The Time of Music: New Meanings, New Temporalities, New Listening Strategies* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1988), 56-7.

nostalgia — with strong links known to exist between music, memory and people's narrativisation of their own lives — and perhaps implicitly looking back at the twentieth century from the perspective of now elderly family members:

...my grandmother was a person that was very special to me, and she has passed away a couple of years ago. And then...before she had passed away, I was, like, constantly focusing on, you know, our relationship — in very many terms. And the way that she... she passed away when she was very old [...] And I was thinking about [...] you know, like, 'memory lines' because — because, she would talk a lot about memories, that's what old people do, right? They kind of...skip what has happened yesterday — but then they are so lucid about what has happened in the 1920s.<sup>68</sup>

Regarding later sections where the whole ensemble adopts a staggered, cascading, imitative texture (see example in Figure 7.5), Navickas further explained that in many ways he treated the idea of lines 'pretty literally' in this piece, and again mentioned

The image shows a musical score extract for seven violins, labeled vn I through vn VII. The score is written in treble clef and features a series of descending lines across the staves. Key markings include dynamics such as *p* (piano) and *pp* (pianissimo), and performance instructions like *gliss.* (glissando) and *div.* (divisi). A box with the number '4' is present in the upper right section of the score. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and articulation marks, illustrating a staggered, cascading texture.

Figure 7.5 — Extract showing descending lines in *memory lines*

<sup>68</sup> Navickas interview, March 2020.

Balakauskas's comments about gravity in relation to lines travelling up and down. Spectrally-conceived harmony could be seen to provide great opportunity for an approach in which melody (in this case assuming a somewhat traditional, romantic-classical, tonal understanding of melody) is seen to exert an irresistible pull — 'like gravitation'. Because a diatonic dominant seventh is inherent in the spectrum, these materials provide a decidedly non-tonal palette that still potentially has something fundamentally tonal-sounding at its core. We can view this as in some ways comparable to Balakauskas's particular interest in octatonic constructions which, like spectral ones, provide the building blocks for both dissonant, non-tonal and consonant, tonally-suggestive writing. And so in addition to being a popular choice for the 'natural justification' of certain compositional materials as an end in themselves, spectrally-conceived music can also more specifically provide a 'natural justification' for more 'traditional' (diatonic/tonal) melodies in non-tonal music. It may not have particularly interested Balakauskas, in part because he was preoccupied with linear harmonic progressions that more closely approximated common-practice functional relationships and tensions, rather than the more vertical, static, colouristic or 'impressionistic' tone of Navickas's spectral palettes. However, it is illuminating to compare these different approaches and priorities to Balakauskas's ideas about immanence and to the justification of essentially tonal-leaning musical features. Navickas combines different motivations, even as some proponents of the ideas in question might have argued either that 'proper' spectralism is not really compatible with prominent melodic writing or that spectral harmony should only be used as surface-level decoration.

#### **7.3.4 'Music of a single state': *Blanche t'a vu* (Navickas, 2006)**

A similar 'smudged' quality to the blurred textures of the previous piece also characterises *Blanche t'a vu*, for four upper voices, four flutes, and electronics. A number of features could be seen to anchor this work in more familiar classical traditions in spite of its contemporary idiom: the combination of ametric, microtonal music, extended techniques, and electronic manipulation with the timbral organicism and softness of mid-register voices and flutes, the humanist implications of a sung text with romantic associations (the French lyrics reflect Old Testament Biblical love poetry in their list-like repetitive tendency), and the recurrence of consonant melodic motifs. When contrasted with Repečkaitė's 'ruthless', 'intellectual move[s]', the postmodern leanings of Navickas's work with colleagues in the ensemble *Muzika yra labai svarbi*<sup>69</sup> ('Music is very important') are clear, and this may inform both the

---

<sup>69</sup> Asta Pakarklytė, 'THEME. New [Re]Generation of Lithuanian Contemporary Music', *Lithuanian Music Link No. 17* (2009-2010) (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-17-october-2009-march-2010/theme-new-regeneration-of-lithuanian-contemporary-music/>, 04.12.20).



conception and reception of his more traditionally classically-notated pieces (when contrasted, for example, with *Muzika yra labai svarbi* collaborator Rūta Vitkauskaitė's stronger ongoing preoccupation with performance art<sup>70</sup> and compositions for alternative ensembles such as 'vegetable orchestra [carrot flutes and amplified pumpkin]'<sup>71</sup>).

Pakarklytė describes Navickas's work as 'a music of a single state (be it a chamber miniature or an opera), which spreads like an aroma and is slightly intoxicating.'<sup>72</sup> In *Blanche t'a vu* (2006), the impression of a 'single state' is heightened by multiple factors, including the strong timbral homogeneity of the instrumentation, the spacious feel of the a-metric scoring, and the continual, distinctive return of short, small-range melodic motifs and anchoring harmonic sequences. Other features contributing to the sense of a-metric simultaneity and departure from lattice-based linearity are the absence of barlines, use of ambient electronics, and loose (a-metric) imitative relationship between parts. The central refrain, 'Blanche a vu', is staggered across the four vocal parts, intended to enter at roughly equal intervals after one another; the absence of clear pulse or metre gives this and other recurring imitative patterns a strongly textural identity, serving not to drive the music in a forward-looking rhythmic or harmonic trajectory but to blur and smudge the anchoring refrain like an echo or reverb effect.

The harmonic palette of *Blanche t'a vu* also supports Pakarklytė's observation. Navickas uses limited pitch material in this work. The vocal lines consist of six notes, relatively consonant in relation to one another, from a 12-tone equal tempered scale: B, D, E, F#, G, A. The G natural appears infrequently enough, with refrains typically built around B, D, F# and A, that an impression of B minor pentatonicism prevails. The four flute parts add coloristic and textural interest with microtonal harmony and techniques like overblowing harmonics and jet whistle sounds, but the additional pitches are microtonal variants (a quarter tone higher or lower) of the six main pitches from the vocal parts or are explicitly derived from a series inherent in the vocal pitches in the case of harmonics. The singers are also instructed to whisper/audibly inhale, but the 12-tone equal-tempered notated pitches in these parts are not affected by the extended techniques used, and so the four voices establish a stronger connection to referential pitches, chords and pentatonic cells while the flutes have a more 'impressionistic', timbral or colouristic role, as in the example in figure 7.6 (although there is also plenty of perceptible repetition in their material, i.e. repeated overblowing harmonics on one of the central pitches such as F#, A or B).

---

<sup>70</sup> Ugnius Babinskas, 'The Ritual Periphery of Academic Music: An Interview with Rūta Vitkauskaitė' (transl. Romas Kinka), *Lithuanian Music Link No. 18* (2016) (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-19-january-december-2016/ugnius-babinskas-interview-with-ruta-vitkauskaite/>, 04.12.20).

<sup>71</sup> 'Full List of Compositions', Rūta Vitkauskaitė website (accessed online, <https://rutavitkauskaite.weebly.com/all-works.html>, 07.12.20).

<sup>72</sup> Pakarklytė, 'Navickas'.

The image displays a musical score for the piece 'Blanche t'a vu'. It consists of four vocal staves (v1, v2, v3, v4) and four flute staves (fl1, fl2, fl3, fl4). The vocal parts are written in a pentatonic scale and feature lyrics such as 'ton cil et tes cils qu'elle a vus Blanche a vu tes cils'. The flute parts include performance instructions like 'p vibr.', 'pp frullato', 'ord. p', and 'poco cresc.'. The score is set in equal-tempered tuning and features discrete groups of spectrally-derived material.

Figure 7.6 – Discrete groups of spectrally-derived material in *Blanche t'a vu* (equal-tempered, pentatonic material in voices and microtonal material with extended techniques in flute parts)

In a context with limited pitch material, repetitive refrains and coloristic writing which is mostly low-contrast in timbral terms, the text — itself very repetitive, but falling roughly into three parts — helps to provide a structuring impulse for this piece. The work's opening establishes a scene in both text and music, with a protracted subsection of staggered, exaggerated inhale sounds and whispered text from the vocalists, a solo line introducing vocal pitch for the first time, overblown harmonics in the flutes, and a passage with all four vocalists that introduces many of the ideas that will characterise the piece as a whole (imitative small-range vocal refrains and expansive homophonic vocal chords). The section signals a transition as the vocal parts arrive on an open fifth at the end of the homophonic phrase 'c'est Blanche, qui a tout vu'. The first flute then plays the pitches (F# — A — B) of the 'Blanche a vu' refrain, leading into the central section of the piece, where the text takes on a repetitive list-like quality.

In this central section, two key anchoring refrains — the unison 'qu'elle a vu', and a short recurring sequence of homophonic vocal chords — are modified, appearing in three different versions. With each subsequent section, the register of the unison refrain and the overall register of the chordal passage get lower, in parallel with the descent of the text

— which details Blanche’s gaze as it travels downwards over the subject’s forehead, eyebrows, eyelashes, eyes, neck, shoulders, and so on (*‘Ton sourcil et tes sourcils qu’elle a vus. Blanche a vu tes sourcils. Ton cil et tes cils qu’elle a vus. Blanche a vu tes cils’*: ‘Your eyebrow and your eyebrows, that she saw. Blanche saw your eyebrows. Your eyelash and your eyelashes, that she saw. Blanche saw your eyelashes.’<sup>73</sup>). At the end of the list the third section of the piece recaps it in rhapsodic miniature, the voices layered with pre-recorded additional parts to create denser chords (though still remaining firmly in the realm of a microtonally-blurred B-minor layered with flute overtones). The lowest voice implores, *where is Blanche? Who is Blanche?* — ‘you don’t know’ — and finally concludes ‘You’ve never seen her. Because I, I am your Blanche’.

Although the impression of a ‘single state’ is strongly inherent in the highly repetitive text (‘Blanche’ is repeated almost 60 times in the course of the nine minute piece, often in quick succession) and is reinforced by the musical repetitions outlined above, the work also falls into recognisably distinct sections. Moreover, one relevant characteristic of the Navickas pieces discussed here, in comparison with those by Repečkaitė, concerns the former’s use of silence and dynamic variation to create space and contrast within a work or section. Interestingly, while this tendency may be loosely related to the tangentially euphonic or meditative associations that emerge from Pakarklytė’s ‘single state’ description, it serves to create internal contrast — while, conversely, Repečkaitė’s *Chartres* and (particularly) *Cosmatesque* are characterised by a teeming, voluminous density and near-constant *forte* dynamic that in some ways creates a much stronger impression of homogeneity. While the Navickas pieces incorporate dynamic variation on a more structural level, enhancing the sense of difference between sections and phrases of the piece, *Cosmatesque*’s striking use of constantly fluctuating dynamic motions — created by insistent internal pockets of dynamic hairpins acting on all sections of the orchestra at all times — creates a feeling of constant energy. The ebbs and flows are expressed continually, on such a small scale that it is easy to perceive the majority of the piece as a solid wall (or mosaic) of sound. This impression is appropriate to the subject matter of the pieces. *Blanche t’a vu*, a romantic poem, and *memory lines*, a wordless expression of bittersweet nostalgia and confusion, are theatrical, elegiac, personal, story-like — befitting the relative prominence here of melody, voice and character (the singers, the character of Blanche, the figure of Navickas’s grandmother).

*Cosmatesque* and *Chartres* both depict immense, impersonal, two-dimensional geometric artworks made up from hundreds or thousands of tiny pieces, each not necessarily expressing a meaningful distinctness from all of its immediate neighbours but playing a part in the shimmering texture of the totality. In this sense, it could be said that

---

<sup>73</sup> Translated using Google Translate.

Repečkaitė's music more closely resembles a single state or architectural object — a physical totality with fixed internal patterns, like a stained glass window. Navickas's music also fits the original description, but because the 'single state' expressed in this case is typically something more like a mood, impression, or state of mind, it is far more nebulous, continually shifting, evolving, and slipping in and out of view even as it remains present and does not depart from itself to a truly contrasting state. In the kinds of objects that often form an impulse for Repečkaitė's work, the discrete pieces of the puzzle, window or elaborately tiled floor must tessellate precisely in order to create the integrity of the whole. The comparative looseness of Navickas's work, in conjunction with consonant-leaning palettes resulting from an interest in spectral harmony, creates a less high-octane, more space-filled listening experience. Though the initial impression is of a focus on gesture and primarily timbral interest, the overall texture of *Blanche t'a vu* tends towards imitation and homophony; it could be described as 'melody-dominated', as the vocal parts have decidedly melodic fragments against the more timbral or coloristic use of the flutes. A characteristic feature of this piece is this intrinsically 'melodic' and consonant permutation of the available pitches within a sound world that heavily incorporates microtonal harmony and timbral gestures. This division is reminiscent of Whittall's moderate modernist fingerprint of a distinction between consonance and dissonance (although the motivations for keeping the vocalists's material more 'singable' may also have been a matter of pragmatism). As discussed earlier in relation to *memory lines*, it still more closely reflects Navickas's recollection of Balakauskas, as his composition teacher, saying that 'all this... SPECTRAL' material was to be treated as 'wallpaper', while melody exerted an inexorable gravitational pull — a very different impression from that created by Repečkaitė's dazzling, impersonal, monumental, multi-faceted yet somehow monolithic mosaics.

Navickas has demonstrated interests in nonlinearity and different ways of thinking about musical temporality in relation to other kinds of knowledge. The composer's 2012 article 'Recombinant Teleology as the Paradigm of Repetitive Composition'<sup>74</sup> refers to the work of Robert Fink, author of *Repeating Ourselves: American Minimal Music as Cultural Practice* (who coined the term 'recombinant teleology'<sup>75</sup>), as well as a number of prominent postmodern/poststructuralist thinkers (Kristeva, Lyotard, Lacan, Deleuze) also highlighted in Fink's study.<sup>76</sup> This direct engagement with contemporary, mainstream discourses of the cultural significance of minimalist music and repetition in general for late capitalist societies — rather than recourse to any spiritual, ethno-futurist explanations — is redolent of the

---

<sup>74</sup> Albertas Navickas, 'Recombinant Teleology as the Paradigm of Repetitive Composition', *Lithuanian Musicology* 13, 2012, Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <http://xn--urnalai-cxb.lmta.lt/wp-content/uploads/2012/lietuvos-muzikologija-13-06-navickas.pdf>, 25.10.19).

<sup>75</sup> Fink, *Repeating Ourselves*, 9.

<sup>76</sup> Fink, *Repeating Ourselves*, 6; 37-38.

language and imagery deployed by Asta Pakarklytė in her discussions of alternative, urban, everyday cultural meanings of twentieth-century Lithuanian minimalism.<sup>77</sup> There may be a degree of experiential overlap in his nonlinear works with some of the more visible, ‘spiritual’ Baltic choral styles discussed previously; Navickas (almost wearily) acknowledges this as an interpretive possibility. However, a perceptible discursive distinction is apparent in the presence or absence (in wider English-language critical reception of major Baltic art music exports) of the kinds of contemporary cultural theories that are typically applied to American minimalism. Steve Reich is typically framed as open-minded, progressive, visionary, eclectic — a highly-educated, middle-class cosmopolitan hipster, practising a footloose and fancy-free (and arguably problematic or at least ambivalent<sup>78</sup>) cultural ‘borrowing’. Arvo Pärt, as explored in Chapter 2, has conversely been portrayed as a mystical, irrational, hyper-religious and highly emotional figure. Of course, it is important to recognise that there are a number of reasons, among which is that Pärt and others may have exploited aspects of this discourse knowingly. But for this to be extrapolated outwards and indiscriminately assumed to represent a dearth of stylistic diversity; a marked disinterest in formalist, avant-garde, or ‘academic’ artworks; or a supposedly unsophisticated nature on the part of other artists in the Baltic States is inaccurate and problematic.

On the subject of national labels, both Repečkaitė and Navickas felt that their work could be and had been interpreted as characteristic of a national artistic culture (Navickas’ evocation of “‘Baltic”, “archaic” ...whatever’ and Repečkaitė’s recognition that ‘In France [her music] is always perceived as Lithuanian’), but also, firstly, that their work had come to be perceived in Lithuania as essentially *of* somewhere else due to their departure from the country and, secondly, that some particular associations with French music were more or less persistent in the reception of actual features of their outputs. These two figures in many ways approach or reflect similar concepts from quite different angles. For both, timbre/spectralism and shape have been important, but Repečkaitė’s work tends to be received and described in terms of angular, academic, constructivist paradigms while Navickas’s is associated with more post-romantic, organic, or ‘impressionistic’ impulses. Immanence and abstraction attract both composers, but in Navickas’s case a more ‘humanistic’ variety of extramusical themes is characteristic, while Repečkaitė seems to conceive of composition in terms of shape, structure and pattern almost as inherent ends in themselves.

It is widely acknowledged now that a taxonomical approach to genres and other categories is neither unproblematic nor necessarily able to deliver the clarity it might once

---

<sup>77</sup> Asta Pakarklytė, ‘Black-and-white Post-Minimalism’, 29-33.

<sup>78</sup> Sumanth Gopinath, ‘A Composer Looks East: Steve Reich and Discourse on Non-Western Music’, *Glendora Review* 3/3-4 (2004), pp. 134–45.

have implicitly promised. However, observing the ways in which artists negotiate hegemonic and/or seemingly contradictory stylistic discourses, relate to each other's aesthetic ideas across generations, and at times navigate hard-to-shake-off tropes, can help to cast light on how musical institutions — understood here as discourse communities of established Lithuanian composers conducting their musical activities within a formalised sphere of influence and interrelation — operate, and the different possibilities that different environments may afford. This Chapter has focused on younger generations of composers, exploring not only their music but their thoughts about being, in various senses, Lithuanian composers. Navickas's melodic spectralism echoes the term 'tonal serialism' in its putatively paradoxical construction; it could also be seen to reflect the high proportion of eclectic crossover projects on the Lithuanian art music scene<sup>79</sup> — a phenomenon that in turn might be illuminated by Rūta Vitkauskaitė's thoughts on the difference between working as a composer in London and Lithuania respectively:

Since I myself am changing, my attitude also changes. Before it seemed to me that there is a certain professional level in Lithuania which once artists reach, they seem to stop. Perhaps because there isn't a great deal of competition or perhaps because of the relatively small number of concertgoers or simple reluctance. I remember that while living here what wore me out was the contemporary music scene in which I was active and which it seemed I had to create myself with my colleagues. This means that there wasn't a great demand and required our own efforts to get together an audience, for us to organise the events, compose the music, perform it and on top of that to applaud ourselves (*laughing*). From that point of view when I got to London I experienced culture shock while at the same time also being hugely fascinated. There are hundreds of professional and non-professional orchestras there, a whole host of events, concert music – of the highest level. I was also fascinated by London's underground culture in the development of which a great deal of work is put in. However, after living here for some time I came to understand that this constant competition not only stimulates creativity but also inhibits it. If you want to live in London, you have to fit into a certain category. England is well known for its conservatism, the safeguarding of traditions which even permeates contemporary art. Even in the newest experimental music genres it is very clear what the audience expects from the creators and their concerts. In striving to get into this scene you have to follow practices that have already been formed. I then came to the

---

<sup>79</sup> Linas Paulauskis, 'Many Musics', transl. Romas Kinka, *Lithuanian Music Link* no. 21 (2018) (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-21-january-december-2018/linas-paulauskis-many-musics/>, 07.12.20).

understanding that in this respect everything in Lithuania is somewhat simpler – there is a lot of freedom of thought and creators are not constrained.<sup>80</sup>

This portrayal of the Vilnius contemporary music scene as a comparatively freer and less restrictive space than its London counterpart is interesting for how it compares with both the by now extremely well-worn images of the strict ideological control of art under the earlier Soviet regime and comments made by other composers about more or less liberating experiences of making art music in Lithuania. Nakas's description of late Soviet Lithuanian artistic space as peculiarly and uniquely free, due to the co-existence of a critically weakened regime and the still 'non-economic' nature of the art world, fits with Vitkauskaitė's depiction of a contemporary creative environment which is defined by openness and an absence of pressure to conform. Baltakas, conversely, has felt that there persists some intangible motivation that produces a continuing preponderance of 'post-Mažulis' minimalisms. While Navickas did not necessarily agree with Baltakas's characterisation of 'the little house on the river [the Lithuanian Composers's Union]' as 'still very much a Soviet institution', 'deciding who is good and who is not', he did share thoughts on aspects of the contemporary situation that are not conducive to creative freedom if the latter is understood to encompass equality of access. He described a growing recognition of the structural nature of unequal opportunities as well as observing that, in Lithuania, the only 'official way to become a composer' is to attend the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, whether or not you are interested in academic, classical or art music:

I have thought about this a lot, you know, when living in France, because people do talk about inequalities a lot more in France than you know, for example, in Lithuania. And [...] then I realised [...] how I benefited from this system [...] So...you know, I did well, grade-wise, in the Academy, I had good relations with my professors — that are, you know, or used to be, the most well-renowned composers [...] in Lithuania. And then [...] eventually, my friends [...] ...somehow naturally... you know, we — we started getting...calls from the festivals, saying like 'oh would you like to write a piece for this and that'...you know, and obviously we said yes... [...] So this obviously is like, very *systemic*, right? There is a Composers' Union that we...like, as a group of friends, we just...you know, laughingly, went there, and just said, like, 'we should go there, we should have that status!' ...And then we went, and we got accepted. And we were like...so happy. And then, you know, the Composers' Union still does organise a lot of commissions. [...] and people that, maybe, receive less commissions, or less often, you know, they...obviously question...the criteria, how do you get...how do you get promoted, how do you get commissions? ...and, um...and I do not have

---

<sup>80</sup> Ugnius Babinskas, 'The Ritual Periphery of Academic Music'.

an answer to that. However, I have benefited from that system, because I *did* get promoted, I *did* get commissions from the Composers' Union and the festivals [...] ...and so, the challenge that generates, I believe, is that...what if you don't fit in that system, what if you are writing music when you haven't gone to the Academy of Music, which is the one and only...official way to become a composer, right? So [...] I just recently [...] met [...] this younger composer [...]. Her name is Monika Zenkevičiūtė, and she is a composer and also an electronic music artist, under the name Monikaze [...] And [...] she said herself, that [...] she went to the Academy, and she got a degree in composition, and [...] I don't know, it's kind of like — a validation experience. Like, you know — I'm a...an alternative electronic songwriter, or, I don't know how you call it, you can call it 'producer', you can call it 'composer'...but, you know, like [...] coming from that background, or like, when doing this at the same time as writing some music for orchestra [...] you don't have to...be labelled as someone that is 'outside' of the circle — you are still 'in'.<sup>81</sup>

There is of course no such thing as a straightforward dichotomy of 'freedom' and 'non-freedom' in the specific sense of the freedom to create art with absolutely no influence or limitations imposed by any external factors, and writers on Soviet music institutions acknowledge that the situation was by no means simple. But there are things to be said about what different kinds of activities and commitments a particular context might seem or have seemed to make more or less difficult for creative producers. A term commonly adopted in writing on music technology may offer a more nuanced way to describe the different possibilities and limitations that are afforded by different contexts. 'Affordances' describes what an object allows or suggests to a user. James Mooney expanded on the concept in 2010 to observe that different objects or technologies have different *spectra* of affordances, ranging from things that are relatively easy to do using the object in question (e.g. with a cup, to drink from or smash it), to things that are impossible to use it for (travelling into space).<sup>82</sup> Between the different political, economic and cultural climates that composers in this study have lived and worked through, there a number of different scenarios in which different creative and professional 'affordances' might have been more or less difficult; in the 1960s with the proliferation of 'unofficial' music certain affordances may have seemed comparatively frictionless for Balakauskas by comparison with earlier Stalinist and later Brezhnevian eras. For the machinists, writing an 'edgier', more industrial style of music in the context of a fairly conservative/romantic-leaning scene in the 1980s seemed like a somewhat controversial or rebellious move, like going against the grain. Similarly for

---

<sup>81</sup> Navickas interview, 2020.

<sup>82</sup> James Mooney, 'Frameworks and Affordances: understanding the tools of music-making', *Journal of Music, Technology and Education* 3(2/3), 2010, pp. 141-154: 145-146.



Baltakas around the independence period in the late 1980s to 1990s, the path of least resistance seemed to represent acquiescence to aesthetic trends that he had come to strongly dislike — to the extent that, unlike most of the machinist group, he left the country for many years to compose abroad — and as recently as 2017 he has suggested that the hegemony of the Lithuanian Composers' Union still makes some things less possible for some composers, even as he acknowledges that younger generations have vastly greater access to all kinds of music than he did as a student. Navickas and Vitkauskaitė have each spoken about the relative freedom and opportunity afforded by certain particular circumstances of Lithuanian post-communist cultural institutions, though Navickas has also identified 'systemic' inequalities of opportunity in addition to a fairly narrow set of career stepping stones that may be laid out in front of people who want to 'become a composer' in Lithuania.

It is more accurate to say that different things might be more or less easy or possible than other things for a creative artist in a given centralised socialist or neoliberal capitalist society respectively, rather than to say that one is more 'free' than the other. The heterogeneity of possibilities inherent in a spectrum of affordances is particularly significant as a counterpoint to the reductive idea, implicit in some sources discussed in Chapter 2, that mournful, folk-inspired, spiritual, euphonic minimalisms dominated the former Soviet bloc because no other language was as available, possible and relevant at this time. As with the affordances of a physical object, it is also critically important to note that the spectrum will differ for different users; people are not all universally afforded exactly the same actions or options with exactly the same levels of ease in any given situation. Writing on Balakauskas tends to highlight his career in politics and his particular skills in persuasion and negotiation, presumably making it comparatively easier for him to be accepted while writing more 'challenging' music than it would have been for others with less influence and social capital. Navickas's comments about how some people are readily accepted into the inner sanctum of the Composer's Union and others are not — and especially his observations about how a composition degree from LMTA is the only way to be acknowledged as a valid producer of music — speak to familiar lines of exclusion around educational privileges, which are of course largely socioeconomic in nature.

In any case, artistic freedom under any political economy is clearly more complicated than purely rigid, oppressive control or sudden, confusing and disorientating freedom. In our 2020 conversation Navickas also discussed an article by Pakarklytė, linking the very strong position of women composers in the contemporary Lithuanian art music scene (though markedly less so in jazz, electronic and popular music and in academic departments) to

specifically post-communist institutional circumstances.<sup>83</sup> Paulauskis highlights the plurality of contemporary Lithuanian art music, and this observation in general has become almost a ritual in itself in writing about contemporary music; introductory musicological texts have frequently defined twentieth-century music as primarily characterised by a multiplicity of musical ‘languages’. But in this context the existence of heterogeneities is additionally significant. This thesis has not only demonstrated that there have been a number of different modernist-leaning styles and approaches in contemporary Lithuanian art music — which is obvious enough as to not necessarily require demonstration, but for the fact that one particular paradigm of Baltic art music has dominated to the general exclusion of others. Beyond this, there are a number of interesting ways in which Lithuanian contemporary art musics have diverged from, resisted, accommodated, expanded, satirised, worked alongside and negotiated the highly dominant, lucrative and multiply politically meaningful hegemonic paradigm of euphonic art music — one that Lithuanian composers and musicologists discussed in this study have variously associated with scream-inducing ‘soup’; conservative ‘vanilla’; ‘the soil in which banality sprouts’; images of ritualistic silence, and a pseudo-national palette referred to as ‘Baltic... archaic... whatever’.

Though both informed by Balakauskas’s mentorship and sharing (unlike their teacher) interests in spectral music or timbre more generally, Repečkaitė and Navickas present quite different contributions to Lithuanian art music, and relate quite differently to the dissonant-paratonal, lattice-based, and repetitively rhythmic paradigm under exploration here. Harmonically, Repečkaitė’s work is perhaps the most distantly related repertoire discussed in this thesis – connecting conceptually to Mažulis but eschewing some of the qualities that allow his output to be received as hybrid, postmodern, minimalist-like, and holding popular appeal. Nevertheless, she maintains that her music reflects Lithuanian composition in terms of its structure — a cyclical orientation that calls to mind not only Balakauskas but also Baltakas (and more broadly, the post-minimalist traditions as well). Navickas feels that (euphonic) ‘Baltic’ qualities could be read into his work — but also that almost any national ‘association’ could be dredged up with enough conviction. His work is more paratonal than aggressively lattice-based, but his interests in minimalism also serve to maintain a connection with the major stylistic threads that extend through this investigation.

---

<sup>83</sup> Navickas interview, 2020; see Asta Pakarklytė, ‘Lithuanian Women Composers: From Minorities to Leaders in 30 Years’, *Lithuanian Music Link* no. 22, 2019 (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no22-january-december-2019/asta-pakarklyte-lithuanian-women-composers-minorities-leaders-30/>, 08.12.20).

## **8. Conclusions**

This thesis has established that there exists a strong, coherent, constructed image of Baltic contemporary art music, and that this more closely aligns with particular historical priorities and projects relating to Estonia than necessarily the wider Baltic region. I argue that the heterogeneity apparent in Lithuanian contemporary art music serves to cast light on the implausible coherence of dominant images of a euphonic, ecological, spiritual pan-Baltic culture, which, points of discursive overlap notwithstanding, are just as misrepresentative of reality in relation to the Estonian context as they are elsewhere. This study has identified multiple reasons for the obscuring nature of the euphonic palette, focusing on its conceptual alignment with the new incentive for post-Communist governments to engage in what Appel and Orenstein describe as ‘competitive signalling’ on a global economic stage,<sup>1</sup> as well as its links to twentieth-century ethno-futurist discourses and Cold War stereotypes, as discussed in Chapter 2. The imaginary barrier separating the late-Soviet and post-Soviet world from cultures of other economic systems has been variously described as a nylon curtain, a sieve, and a shabby, leaking bag<sup>2</sup>; without a myth of complete cultural isolationism, the seeming absence of modernism can not be believed to have stemmed from a lack of awareness of it. A perceived absence or underrepresentation of modernism in the context of the dominance of Baltic euphonic and ethno-futurist styles more plausibly signifies a heightened awareness of its many associations and a greater fluency and agility in navigating related discourses, not an innocent naïvety resulting from isolation in a hermetic and purely ideological cultural sphere. As such, the convenient fiction of the iron curtain openly allowed other representational fantasies to play out. Claims as obviously false as ‘these people know nothing yet of guile’<sup>3</sup> wear their political implications on their sleeve.

There is a balance to strike between acknowledgement of the particularities of the situation for composers who began their careers, or at least received their early education, while Lithuania was under Soviet control, and avoiding the somewhat sensational idea that cultural isolationism in the USSR was all-encompassing and created an absolute,

---

<sup>1</sup> Appel and Orenstein, ‘Why did Neoliberalism Triumph and Endure in the Post-Communist World?’, 316.

<sup>2</sup> György Péteri, ‘Nylon Curtain — Transnational and Transsystemic Tendencies in The Cultural Life Of State-Socialist Russia and East-Central Europe’ (2004), as cited in Rūta Stanevičiūtė, Danutė Petrauskaitė, Vita Gruodytė, ‘A Nylon Curtain: International Exchanges and Lithuanian Musician Networks in the Cold War Era’ (2018), summary by Ruta Stanevičiūtė (accessed online, [https://www.academia.edu/38449802/The\\_Nylon\\_Curtain](https://www.academia.edu/38449802/The_Nylon_Curtain), 03.12.21), 314; Sverdiolas, ‘The Honeycomb and the Sieve’, 233; Kęstutis Šapoka, interview with Šarūnas Nakas, 2011, as quoted in Vita Gruodytė, ‘Happening Instead of Rupture, or Rupture as Happening’, transl. Tomas Čiučelis, *Lithuanian Music Link* no. 18 (2015) (accessed online, [https://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-18-january-december-2015/happening/#\\_ftn5](https://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-18-january-december-2015/happening/#_ftn5), 16.12.20).

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Jackson, ‘Out of Latvia on a Snowball’, *The Sunday Telegraph*, February 26 1995 (accessed online at Stephen Jackson website, <https://stephenjacksonmusic.wordpress.com/2015/06/16/the-music-of-peteris-vaskis/>, 20.10.19).

otherworldly hermeticism. According to Nakas, Lithuanian music during the Soviet period was blocked, more or less wholesale, from getting out of Lithuania:

works by Lithuanian composers had no access to international markets of modern music during the entire period of the Soviet occupation. Exceptions were extremely rare: Lithuania was not considered a reliable country by the Soviet censors and thus was turned into a zone of severe isolation.<sup>4</sup>

Nakas further suggests that this situation may have contributed to the tendency for 'some Lithuanian avant-gardists' to 'gradually [revert] to' Soviet-endorsed, 'stereotyped' styles epitomised by Shostakovch and Prokofiev.<sup>5</sup> However, in terms of other musics getting *in* to Lithuania, the situation was seemingly more equivocal. Daunoravičienė describes the emergence of dodecaphonic composition in Lithuania as a cause for 'a great deal of euphoria' among Lithuanian composers, who saw in this approach 'a progressive Western system of composition allowing them to break free from various shapes of tonality, traditional forms and the favoured ideology of simplified Socialist Realism.'<sup>6</sup> According to Vytautas Laurušas, serial techniques became known in Lithuanian art music circles following a 1957 visit from composer and Warsaw Autumn Festival co-founder Tadeusz Baird; well-known Lithuanian writers and musicians like Vytautas Barkauskas, Vytautas Landsbergis and Algirdas Ambrazas meanwhile took to the cultural media, censorship notwithstanding, to share new notions they had encountered while abroad.<sup>7</sup>

In terms of the transmission of specific examples of then-innovative or experimental music in Soviet-controlled Lithuania, Daunoravičienė explains that,

due to Soviet censorship and the blocking of any information from the West, the scores of late Stravinsky, middle-period Messiaen, early Boulez, Stockhausen, George Rochberg, Karel Goeyvaerts, Luigi Nono, Henze and Brian Ferneyhough, composed on the basis of various avant-garde modifications of this technique [dodecaphony], were unknown in Lithuania.<sup>8</sup>

Nevertheless, Balakauskas in the mid 1980s is said to have 'considered Boulez "his Frenchman" and referred to *Le marteau sans maître* as an exciting discovery'<sup>9</sup>; the impossibility of completely sealing cultural barriers around Lithuania meant that individuals like Balakauskas, Barkauskas, Landsbergis, Ambrazas and Baird, who at times experienced the privilege of mobility, could spread ideas that, while they might not have represented the absolute newest of developments from other parts of Europe, certainly covered a broad

---

<sup>4</sup> Nakas, 'Minimalism in Lithuanian Music', 15.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Daunoravičienė, 'The Lithuanian Path to Modernism in Music', 53.

<sup>7</sup> Stanevičiūtė, 'Modernisation of Lithuanian Music', 22.

<sup>8</sup> Daunoravičienė, 'Lithuanian Path to Modernism', 54.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*

sweep of innovative contemporary techniques. Nakas relates that when Bronius Kutavičius heard Louis Andriessen's *De Staat* he was 'strongly reminded' of traditional sutartinės.<sup>10</sup> *De Staat* was completed in 1976, while Kutavičius's iconic *Last Pagan Rites* dates from 1978 – this by no means suggests that the latter work was necessarily inspired by the former, but perhaps further muddies the waters of the popular idea that this and other neo-folklorist movements (such as that pertaining to *regilaul* in Estonia) represented some kind of essential, unmediated connection to cultural heritage. Daunoravičienė describes the eclectic amalgamations of contemporary art music techniques popular in 1960s Lithuania – a creative climate that laid the groundwork for the styles discussed in this thesis – explaining that being 'well acquainted with Polish sonorism and aleatoricism, and faced with the spread of collage and minimalism, Lithuanian composers most often used mixed combinations of the dodecaphonic technique and aleatoricism, sonorism, pointillism, and later – repetitiveness.'<sup>11</sup>

Each of the composers discussed in this thesis has drawn on, engaged with or reacted to varied combinations of existing styles and ideas both from the wider USSR and beyond, in addition to the, for many though not all, influential ambient background of minimalisms, both North American and European. Balakauškas named Bach as a significant influence, in addition to Schoenberg, Debussy and Boulez. Valančiūtė blended post-minimalist and neoclassical elements, while Mažulis's influential experiments bore imprints of the influence of Nancarrow and Scelsi, Renaissance canon and computer music. Tomas Kutavičius named Jaco Pastorius, Ravel and Lully as inspirational figures if not as direct influences on his wider compositional approach, while Merkelys has been linked to German Expressionism as well as minimalism; Baltakas's music seems to reflect a spontaneity and clarity of definition also present respectively in work by Eötvös and Rihm, rejecting the more sentimental extremes of neo-folklorism and evincing a certain dry, unlyrical quality that may perhaps stem from the backdrop of Russian modernism in late-twentieth-century Lithuanian art music. Repečkaitė cites Grisey and medieval music and art, while Navickas shares an (apparently atypically 'Lithuanian') interest in timbre with Repečkaitė, but leans more towards Bang On A Can or Fluxus-style postmodernism, multimedia works and experimental styles, expressing an early fascination with minimalism and a particular admiration for Reich's music.

This research has shown that modernist ideas and stylistic traits are characteristic of many examples of Lithuanian contemporary art music. The study has demonstrated that the disparities between this reality and dominant, homogeneous euphonic templates can be attributed not only to reductive trends in reception, but also to Estonian power-holders'

---

<sup>10</sup> Nakas, 'Minimalism in Lithuanian Music', 17.

<sup>11</sup> Daunoravičienė, 'Lithuanian Path to Modernism', 55.

deliberate construction of a particular identity, and to historical geopolitical differences across the wider Baltic region. This study offers new facets to interpretive frameworks for euphonic 'spiritual minimalist' musics, which have previously suggested that these genres are symptomatic of cultural trauma, spirituality, or some authentic expression of national identity. The thesis contributes in-depth discussions of Lithuanian composers whose work has been underrepresented in Anglophone musicology, in part for the reasons discussed here. Also contributed is the proposition that notable differences in the degrees of dissonance common to many Lithuanian and Estonian contemporary classical musics may have roots in the styles and features that were interpreted as defining in respective national folk revival movements.

There have been many different approaches to modernism in Lithuanian art music, though there remains a tendency for the modernist-leaning styles to be obscured by the more successful euphonic ones. There is comparatively more significance afforded to diverse, albeit mediated, local modernist traditions in internationally visible Lithuanian music historiography than in canonising discourses of Estonian or Latvian music history. Possible reasons for this disparity, as explored in this study, include dissonance in contemporary art music being seemingly more acceptable, or rather, fitting more comfortably with narratives of cultural identity, in twentieth-century Lithuania because of the significance attributed to dissonant polymodal *sutartinės* in folk revivals, while Estonia's monophonic *regilaul* does not so readily suggest audible similarities to modernist harmonic languages — and therefore is less discursively useful in creating Soviet-friendly justifications for extended departures from consonance.

This thesis has loosely been organised around recurring collections of musical traits, from which emerges an alternative paradigm (or paradigms) of Lithuanian art music which represents neither the misty-eyed euphonic 'soup' that frustrated a young Baltakas nor the painfully fashionable or 'uncompromising' experimental modernisms that Tomas Kutavičius professed to find somewhat alienating. Throughout this study discussions about music have returned to dissonant paratonicity; a lattice-based orientation in which the grammatisation of (equal-tempered) pitch and rhythm seem to sit very close to the surface of the music (or even, in the case of Mažulis, are prominently emphasised); and a driving rhythmic repetitiveness or non-linear inclination that evokes certain U.S. minimalist composers but often tends towards a drier, more 'academic' tone than these cosmopolitan 'western' styles, the latter typically being more inspired by pop, rock and global musics. Although these musical characteristics can be extrapolated and compared across the works discussed, they by no means necessarily demonstrate shared intentions between composers. A wide variety of different motivations or explanations (some seemingly contradictory) for dissonant paratonicity, repetition/non-linearity, and/or a 'block-like', unlyrical or grid-based approach

have circulated over time, and several might co-exist in relation to one piece of music. These include: the influence of U.S. minimalism; the influence of *sutartinės*; an exhaustion or disillusionment with the local brand of (neo)romantic-nationalist and neo-folklorist composition; the comparatively intellectual, abstract or academic nature of Lithuanian minimalisms; the background influence of Shostakovich, Prokofiev and late Stravinsky rather than a perhaps more lyrical or expressionist-leaning west European avant-garde; the rationalisations of *Dodekatonika* (and their possible relationship to potential ideological loopholes); the broader appeal of generative art or immanence in composition; the influence of jazz; the influence of Balakauskas, Mažulis, or Bronius Kutavičius; the desire for directness and communication; or, following Pakarklytė, the grinding aesthetic boredom of existing in a sea of near-identical apartment blocks, uniforms, cars, fridges, tinned foods, advertisements, and busts of Lenin.

Another key issue discussed is the radical postmodern re-branding of early-2000s Estonia (and the equally strong anti-Soviet/anti-Russian sentiment in independent Latvia) compared to Lithuania, ostensibly in part due to the much lower rate of ethnic Russian immigration to Lithuania during the Soviet period. The fervour of Estonia's rejection of Soviet-era organisation, compared with more heterogeneous processes in Lithuania (and to an extent in Latvia) can be seen to have resulted in a comparatively greater retention of (Lithuanian-led) Soviet-era networks and institutional values in Lithuania, at least during the first years of the transition period, as discussed in Chapter 2. It could be argued that a starker shift to economic and cultural neoliberalism in Estonia might create a professional art music environment more conducive to commercially successful, postmodern, identity-building, and widely popular euphonic musics, while the institutionally-endorsed intellectualisms of composers like Balakauskas might continue to thrive more readily in an environment where some have suggested there is still something like an institutional 'in-crowd' rather than a putative free-market free-for-all. Baltakas claimed that the Lithuanian Composer's Union is 'still kind of a Soviet institution'<sup>12</sup>. Controversial as this claim might be, it is plausible that what Nakas called an 'era of non-economic relations'<sup>13</sup> in Lithuanian composition of the 1980s might have produced longer-lasting ripples of influence in a country where institutions changed more slowly and less radically after independence. A slower and less wholesale transition to market fundamentalism might lead to a contemporary canon more obviously curated by smaller influential groups and to a greater visibility for musics that do not necessarily represent the most widely popular styles. However, to truly compare contemporary canons would be a different project. The comparison in this study is not directly between an Estonian contemporary canon and a Lithuanian one, but between a

---

<sup>12</sup> Baltakas interview, 2017.

<sup>13</sup> Šapoka, interview with Nakas, as quoted in Gruodytė, 'Happening Instead of Rupture'.

powerful, highly visible, and politically-significant paradigm for 'Baltic art music', and some of the many prominent examples of Lithuanian art music discourse which contradict, demonstrate alternatives to, and cast new light on this highly constructed paradigm. In any case, the difference highlighted here is a slight, albeit meaningful, one. Although secondary successful styles, like the edgier and more dissonant 'post-Mažulis' minimalisms, represent a notable departure from the archetypal euphonic aesthetic, Baltakas has asserted that these elusive, inexorable pressures of the market, or 'society', or public expectation, also produce a tendency towards heavily recycling well-received trends in Lithuania.<sup>14</sup>

On the other side of the coin from the Estonian government's relentless pursuit of capitalist belonging in the post-Soviet era is the persistence of associations between modernism and the imperial/colonial west. Estonia's postmodern identity can be seen, consciously or not, to have been laid on a bedrock of twentieth-century discourse centred around an ancient Finno-Ugric identity that has both been construed as a colonial subject and exploited as a basis for white supremacism and right-wing extremism. Post-Communist Estonia's political priorities overlap with Kaplinski's depictions of an Estonian and Finno-Ugric worldview valuing the unforced and non-intervention, and allowing a 'self-organising' world to run its 'natural' course<sup>15</sup> — a perfect fit for a hands-off, anti-welfare, pro-corporate government. Meanwhile, among the building blocks of Lithuania's historical memory there are still cornerstones from the time when the country engaged in imperial expansionist activities. Though some scholars have argued that this is largely overlooked in modern cultural memory, it is nevertheless relevant that Estonia's ambivalent ethno-futurisms have been based on sidestepping centuries of oppression, looking to reconstruct a distant pagan past beyond which Estonians have been historically painted as 'the underdogs',<sup>16</sup> while modern Lithuanian identity building has inevitably drawn to some extent on stories of the kings, dukes, armies, conquests and treasures of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which controlled neighbouring territories to varying extents for around four centuries. Modernism has often been framed as an imperial/colonial European cultural language. It is therefore likely to be relevant, in unpicking the seemingly stronger foothold of modernist music in Lithuanian cultural-historical discourse, that Lithuania's historical memory bank includes its own longstanding imperial control of other nations as well as subjugation under a foreign state. Arguments that modernism as an aesthetic language was perceived as culturally irrelevant in Soviet and Eastern European contexts where spiritual minimalist styles have flourished are not necessarily drawn from thin air, but could also be construed as exoticising.

---

<sup>14</sup> Baltakas interview, 2017.

<sup>15</sup> Salumets, *Unforced Flourishing*, 24.

<sup>16</sup> Kala, 'Estonia from the 13th to 16th Centuries', 49.



They are made more plausible when understood in relation to political and economic choices that can be contrasted with the slightly different choices of close neighbours.

In the same way as there are links between the radical nature of Estonia's anti-Soviet, anti-Russian, anti-welfare free market reforms and the rise of far-right extremism in the country, there may also be links between these phenomena and the peculiar blankness of the postmodern euphonic styles. *Tabula Rasa*, often translated idiomatically as 'clean slate', connotes something blank or erased; C. Namwali Serpell describes whiteness as a 'blank space',<sup>17</sup> discursively speaking — an assumed default which attempts to obscure its own arbitrary, exclusionary, and violent nature by obscuring its own historical, social and political specificity. There are connections between insidiously innocent or invisible whiteness, the false claims to neutrality of neoliberal organisation, and the postmodern, often spuriously apolitical or de-historicised, white-racialised folk-fantasy lingering in the background of both Brand Estonia and of the astronomically successful outputs of composers like Pärt, Tormis, Vasks and Ešenvalds. There is a degree of complexity to the relationship between colonialism and the Baltic States. Soviet Estonia has been described as postcolonial (though some dispute this comparison, as discussed in Chapter 2). And yet, in the seeming over-identification or equivocation, seen already in Kaplinski's claims that Estonians were like indigenous peoples of North America, projections of dominant Estonian (white-racialised, now economically global-Northern and officially European) culture may perform a kind of 'move to innocence', like those described by Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang.<sup>18</sup> The reimagined, idealised, folkloric whiteness of Brand Estonia and euphonic minimalism appears to step over the shameful associations of European industrial modernity, arriving at an innocent postmodern condition, newly positioned to embrace the global market with hands clean of the historical and modern colonial crimes of other European nations. But the wealth and infrastructure of modern Europe is inseparable from the exploitation of colonised and oppressed peoples. Estonia's hands in 1991 may have been comparatively clean in terms of nineteenth- and twentieth-century colonial violences; Europe's as a whole were not. Here is a partial key to the disturbing coherence and unsettling blankness of the postmodern euphonic palette. It is not possible to benefit from modern European, Anglo-American, global-northern prosperity or the social, cultural and financial capital associated with whiteness, without benefitting from wealth amassed through colonialism and the systematic oppression of poor and working class people and people of colour. Estonia may not have directly taken part in some of the most historically devastating crimes of global-northern modernism, but the neoliberal stage on which it arrived at the turn of the century was and is

---

<sup>17</sup> Namwali Serpell, 'Vacuity', 215.

<sup>18</sup> Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, 'Decolonization is not a metaphor', *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1/1 (2012), pp. 1-40: 10-19.

fundamentally constituted on these very violences, as are contemporary constructions of whiteness. It is not possible to 'have' postmodernism without the ghost of modernism, as Groys has suggested was the case in relation to post-Soviet art; modernism's guilty shadow haunts postmodernism's false blankness still more closely the more postmodernism protests its own innocent newness.

### **8.1 'Nordic with a twist'**

The idea of a limited regional showing of, or a general disinterest in, modernism – which impression emerges from several of the examples of writing about euphonic Baltic styles discussed in Chapter 2 – could result in a highly problematic projection of lack. The association of modernism with sophistication and so-called development is relevant to the overwhelmingly *postmodern* bent of the reception and marketing of euphonic minimalist styles in the post-Soviet context. At the same time, the assumption that modernism or modernity is some kind of necessary phase is also problematic. However, the Baltic States categorically did experience modernisms and modernities, both in the context of oppressive foreign rule and during the first period of independence. Moreover, Brand Estonia's apparent rhetorical rejection of certain modernist paradigms (possibly as a Soviet imposition) could be seen as a powerful and positive (or a cynical and business-minded) position. As such, it stands that widespread external acceptance of, or failure to challenge, representations that imply a cultural absence of modernism could be seen as evidence of an illustrative readiness on the part of consumers and commentators of the former west to believe that regions once designated 'eastern' must be somehow less advanced.

In turn, this readiness could be construed in terms of the construction of whiteness. It is widely accepted that ethnically-Caucasian Irish and Italian people were not considered to be part of the privileged pantheon of whiteness inside of the last few centuries. The concept of whiteness is fluid and changeable. In *White: Essays on Race and Culture*, Richard Dyer identifies Anglo-American/Northern European whiteness as hegemonic and acknowledges that some groups are 'more securely white than others',<sup>19</sup> also noting that 'Southern/Eastern Europeans' may be included only 'grudgingly'<sup>20</sup> in this designation. Estonia is more Northern geographically than Lithuania, and shares cultural and linguistic roots with 'Nordic' Finland. Joining the Eurozone and being officially recategorised in 2018 as Northern European countries<sup>21</sup> represented hugely significant symbols of independence from Soviet occupation. In addition, these steps could be seen as securing a stronger

---

<sup>19</sup> Richard Dyer, *White: Essays on Race and Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006 [1997]), 4.

<sup>20</sup> Dyer, *White*, 12-13.

<sup>21</sup> 'UN classifies Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia as Northern Europe', *Kyiv Post*, January 9 2017 (accessed online, <https://www.kyivpost.com/world/un-classifies-latvia-lithuania-estonia-northern-europe.html?cn-reloaded=1>, 25.10.19).

foothold in hegemonic whiteness, with its attendant socioeconomic privileges, in a global context. Catrin Lundström and Benjamin R. Teitelbaum write '[t]o be white is to be Nordic; to be Nordic is to be white. These are associations centuries in the making'.<sup>22</sup>

This assertion is a reminder that whiteness is not a biological identity but a social invention,<sup>23</sup> and that not all demographics within the category of ethnically-Caucasian people have always been considered to be as white as other white-racialised people. Since the fall of the putatively raceless Soviet Union,<sup>24</sup> there has been a massive influx in white supremacism and right-wing extremism in some formerly-Soviet regions. The post-independence era has seen the distortion of ethno-futurist ideologies, that once held hope and promise for occupied Baltic nations, into neo-fascism. Most prominently, in Estonia, the ultra-right EKRE party has gained disturbing ground,<sup>25</sup> their racist agenda a grotesque permutation of the pro-heritage, anti-occupation movements that saw Kaplinski identifying the Estonian struggle with colonised peoples across the globe.<sup>26</sup> The post-Soviet marginalisation of ethnic Russians is accompanied by a wider hostility towards migrants, refugees, LGBTQIA+ people, women, and people of colour.<sup>27</sup> The relevance of ideologies of race, nation and ethnicity in the transition from an openly ideological communist regime to putatively value-free liberal capitalism should not be overlooked in deference to claims of neutrality, and the ways in which whiteness is constructed are central to this.

The reconstructed whiteness of Brand Estonia leans towards the now-established whiteness of 'Nordic' cultural construction<sup>28</sup> and away from the threatened identity of 'Eastern European'. The rise of right-wing extremist groups in Estonia in recent years is one product of a brutal economic program relying almost solely on nationalist rhetoric to maintain social order in the face of drastic cuts to welfare spending<sup>29</sup> Appel and Orenstein question the continuing adherence to these ideologies long after it was known that, in addition to bringing intolerable hardship on people, neoliberalism carries the risk of exacerbating populism and xenophobia.<sup>30</sup> As this thesis has argued, the aesthetic of euphonic Baltic music is in many ways compatible with this enthusiastic neoliberal turn. While art and culture are only fragments of deeper systems that reproduce ideologies and inequalities, whiteness

---

<sup>22</sup> Catrin Lundström and Benjamin R. Teitelbaum, 'Nordic Whiteness: An Introduction', *Scandinavian Studies*, 89/2 (2017), pp.151-158.

<sup>23</sup> See Theodore Allen, *The Invention of the White Race Volume 1: Racial Oppression and Social Control* (London and New York: Verso, 2002 [1994]).

<sup>24</sup> Meredith Roman, 'Racism in a "Raceless" Society: The Soviet Press and Representations of American Racial Violence at Stalingrad in 1930', *International Labor and Working-Class History* No. 71 (2007), pp. 185-203.

<sup>25</sup> Walker, 'Estonia's far right in power, 2019.

<sup>26</sup> Salumets, *Unforced Flourishing*, 141-2.

<sup>27</sup> Walker, 'Estonia's far right'.

<sup>28</sup> Australian composer Percy Grainger's racist beliefs manifested in an obsession with Nordic cultures, seen as the 'whitest' of white-racialised people. John Bird, *Percy Grainger* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999 [1976]), xxi; 5; 15.

<sup>29</sup> Bohle and Greskovits, *Capitalist Diversity*, 123.

<sup>30</sup> Appel and Orenstein, 'Why did Neoliberalism Triumph and Endure in the post-Communist World?'

as a source of cultural capital, and nationalism as an incentive for cohesion and morale, should be critically deconstructed in even their most seemingly innocuous manifestations.

The non-modernity of Brand Estonia and euphonic spiritual minimalist palettes could be seen as an erasure of Soviet legacies — a reconstruction of cultural identity that has no regard for imposed communist modernity and has conceptually stepped over that blank space into digital, ecological, neoliberal postmodernity. Brand Estonia exemplifies the marked disinterest in history that Jameson associates with postmodernism, in this case a more active desire to look away from and avoid associations with particular histories.<sup>31</sup> There are many potential reasons for this. The wish to erase a painful trauma and threat to cultural heritage is a clear motivation, as is the pressing need to become economic contenders on a new international level. A possible related aim could be the desire to secure a more influential position by rebranding and reinforcing the hegemony of the autochthonous national culture in terms of the imagined, but still tangibly and globally privileged, social identity of whiteness.

In contrast to prevailing narratives of suppressed or denied musical modernism in the Soviet sphere, and expanding on work by scholars like Daunoravičienė, Medić and Schmelz, this thesis highlighted a significant showing of modernism in early-to-mid-twentieth-century Lithuania. Chapter 3 discussed the music and ideas of Osvaldas Balakauskas, simultaneously ambiguous, moderate, mediated, and received as radical. Born two years later than Pärt, and along with Bronius Kutavičius one of the most influential composers of his generation, Balakauskas's experiences were similar in many ways but differed in ones that contributed to his narrativisation as a rational, uncompromising modernist. Balakauskas's conceptualisation of the immanent dominant and tonic relation — combined with a higher level of dissonance being tolerated in existing art musics due to the perceived legitimacy of *sutartinės* as a source — resulted in a distinctive compositional language that managed to fulfil enough criteria to be received as boundary-pushing and unique while retaining proximity to the traditionalism of resolution-oriented diatonic harmony. Notably, this particular angle on tension-based, tonal-adjacent post-tonal harmonic writing represents an alternative paratonicity to the consonant, friction-free, non-dialectical stasis often associated with euphonic minimalisms. Chapter 4 highlighted that not only had modernism, formalism and alternatives to folk sources or socialist-realist justifications already been strongly represented by figures like Kačinskas and Balakauskas by the time euphonic music exploded in popularity in the late twentieth century, but one group of composers was perceived as rebelling against hegemonic euphonic conventions after this dominance had been established. Even within the small group credited with popularising this broad style,

---

<sup>31</sup> Fredric Jameson, 'Postmodernism: Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism'.

and in spite of the massive influence of one or two figures, there was a diversity of approaches, priorities and aesthetic interests among the machinists, as this Chapter shows. Both Mažulis's futuristic, hyper-complex, frictionless, utopian sounds and the creakingly industrial, glamorously decaying tapestries of Valančiūtė's work represent alternative paradigms of Baltic post-minimalism under the smaller umbrella of Lithuanian machinist composers.

Chapter 5 takes up the thread introduced by Pakarklytė of an 'end of history' in Lithuanian art music after the machinists, whereupon subsequent composers are typically considered as individuals. Two such composers, born at almost the same time as the machinists of Chapter 4, Merkelys and Tomas Kutavičius's music shows some common stylistic fingerprints while their ways of thinking about composition are markedly different. Broadening the variety of rhetorical framings of music that is decidedly non-euphonic (dissonant, angular, timbrally inorganic, driving, rhythmic) in some comparable ways to Balakauskas and the machinists, these works contribute to the picture of non-euphonic and modernist-leaning styles into more recent years, observing how elements of surrounding discourses might still inevitably create links to older canonic mythologies of Lithuanian art music.

Still, even after the dialectical course of Lithuanian art music history is deemed to have trailed off, internal conflicts with entrenched stylistic norms continued for some Chapter 6 discusses Baltakas's dislike of the heavy profundity and homogeneous consistency (the 'soup') of dominant euphonic music in the 1990s and beyond. The Chapter discusses his departure and exploration of a consciously antagonistic, anti-euphonic, complex style that differed from what he calls 'Mažulis-like minimalism' and the detailed constructivism of Balakauskas while sharing a number of characteristics with these composers as well as with Merkelys and Tomas Kutavičius: a paratonal or tonal-adjacent atonality which differs from the consonant stasis of euphonicism, a tendency towards edgy and angular rhythmic repetitiveness, and a non-linear orientation decoupled from the conceptual language of spiritual minimalism. Baltakas's sound could be associated with neo-modernism, while his approach to composition emphasises intuition over constructivism — but the composer ultimately asserts that labels like modernist and post-modernist, in his view, are just 'safety jackets' and are ultimately meaningless. Continuing the theme of departing both from canonical mythologies and from Lithuania, Chapter 7 explores the experiences of two further emigré composers, of the youngest generation discussed in this thesis. The music and thoughts of Repečkaitė and Navickas also express a degree of separateness from hegemonic euphonic styles, but one less marked or antagonistic than the reactions of Baltakas and the machinists. Key themes of this Chapter include a sense of having left behind ideas about genre and national identity for a more contemporary, global perspective,

yet still encountering certain expectations; a continuity of ideas from Lithuanian art music heritage, particularly the pedagogical influence of Balakauskas; an interest in timbre that has been judged as not characteristically 'Lithuanian'; and a distinctive contemporary idiom that, not unlike much earlier manifestations of a 'third space' in unofficial Soviet music, neither aggressively rejects nor adopts the dominant paradigm.

As discussed in Chapter 2, implications that modernism's perceived cultural irrelevance for an occupied Soviet context led to it being markedly underrepresented are ambivalent. While this argument is often reductively overstated, it is not absolutely without basis. In many ways Lithuania's modernisms have been mediated (as they would in any context, since a completely pure and fully radical expression unaffected by any social factor can not exist), and it is still the case that criticism or rejection of modernism is an important and meaningful orientation in relation to postcolonial epistemologies.<sup>32</sup> There is no suggestion here that modernism as described in this thesis or elsewhere is a normative good, as this is a problematic and implicitly colonial position. In the course of trying to push back against prevailing imagery that depicts an underrepresentation of modernism often implicitly framed in terms of lack, there is no intention to suggest that (although some commentators have certainly used them in demeaning ways) the themes, ideas or ways of seeing and being that coalesce around the euphonic paradigm are inherently more or less valuable than another. While identifying and exploring a range of modernist approaches is central to this thesis, there is no argument that modernism is better than alternatives or necessarily inherently valuable. The goal of this thesis is to resist a homogenising narrative and to show that alternative, heterogenous art-musical discourses are very much present. The fact that modernism is strongly represented in Lithuanian art music has no bearing on the respective significance or meaningfulness (cultural, historical, intellectual or otherwise) of Lithuanian, Estonian or Latvian art musics; instead, it is simply imperative to confront and deconstruct a hegemonic representational paradigm which is neither accurate nor politically neutral.

---

<sup>32</sup> Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books Ltd, 2012 [1999]): 30; 47; 62. Jaanus, 'Monumental Time'.



## Bibliography

### Scores

Balakauskas, Osvaldas. *Bop Art* (1995) (digital copy provided courtesy of Lithuanian Music Information Centre).

Balakauskas, Osvaldas. *Ludus Modorum* (1982) (digital copy provided courtesy of Lithuanian Music Information Centre).

Balakauskas, Osvaldas. *Rain for Cracow* (1991) (digital copy provided courtesy of Lithuanian Music Information Centre).

Balakauskas, Osvaldas. *Rex Re* (2000) (digital copy provided courtesy of Lithuanian Music Information Centre).

Baltakas, Vykintas. *Nichtstück* (1996) (digital copy provided by the composer).

Baltakas, Vykintas. *Pasaka* (Vienna: Universal Edition, 2013 [1997]).

Baltakas, Vykintas. *Smokey Arnold* (2015) (digital copy provided by the composer).

Kutavičius, Tomas. *A Glow-worm for Maria Morawska* (2015) (digital copy provided by the composer).

Kutavičius, Tomas. *Ritus Rhythmus* (2018) (digital copy provided by the composer).

Mažulis, Rytis. *Canon Mensurabilis* (2000) (digital copy provided courtesy of Lithuanian Music Information Centre).

Mažulis, Rytis. *Twittering Machine* (Vilnius: Lithuanian Music Information and Publishing Centre, 2007 [1986]). Merkelys, Remigijus. *MiKonst* (2000) (digital copy provided courtesy of Lithuanian Music Information Centre).

Navickas, Albertas. *blanche t'a vu* (2006) (digital copy provided by the composer).



Navickas, Albertas. *memory lines* (2017) (digital copy provided by the composer).

Repečkaitė, Justina. *Chartres* (2012) (digital copy provided by the composer).

Repečkaitė, Justina. *Cosmatesque* (2017) (digital copy provided by the composer).

Valančiūtė, Nomeda. *Fragment from the Hospital's Park* (1998) (digital copy provided courtesy of Lithuanian Music Information Centre).

Valančiūtė, Nomeda. *Narcissus* (1986) (digital copy provided courtesy of Lithuanian Music Information Centre).

## **Interviews**

Baltakas, Vykintas. Interview conducted in Brussels, December 17 2017.

Kutavičius, Tomas. Interview conducted in Vilnius, October 24 2018, supporting translation by Vilma Kutavičiūtė.

Repečkaitė, Justina. Interview conducted via email, 2019.

Navickas, Albertas. Interview conducted via phone, 2020.

## **Discography**

Balakauskas, Osvaldas. *Rex Re*. Carsten Hustedt (flute), Ingrida Armonaitė (violin), Audronė Pšibilskienė (viola), Ute Stoecklin (piano). *Vėl: Lithuanian Chamber Music 1991-2001*. Guild, 2004. GMCD 7238.

Balakauskas, Osvaldas. *Ludus Modorum*. St. Christopher Chamber Orchestra conducted by Donatas Katkus. Soloist Edmund Kulikauskas (cello). *Balakauskas: Concerto Brio for violin and chamber orchestra / Ludus modorum / Piano Concertino*. Chandos, 2000. BIS-CD-1058.

- Balakauskas, Osvaldas. *Cascades-1*. Birutė Vainiūnaitė (piano). *Lithuanian Music in Context I: Lessons of the Avant-Garde*. Music Information Centre Lithuania, 2013 [2011].
- Balakauskas, Osvaldas. *Spengla-Ūla*. St. Christopher Chamber Orchestra conducted by Donatas Katkus. *Lithuanian Music in Context II: Landscapes of Minimalism*. Music Information Centre Lithuania, 2013 [2011].
- Balakauskas, Osvaldas. *Rain for Cracow*. L'Ensemble: Rusnė Mataitytė (violin) and Aidas Puodžiukas (piano). *Horizons*. Lietuvos Ansamblių Tinklas, 2015.
- Balakauskas, Osvaldas. *Bop Art*. David Geringas (cello), Petras Geniušas (piano), Vladimir Tarasov (drums). *Retrospective. David Geringas plays Osvaldas Balakauskas*. Profil Medien GmbH, 2013.
- Baltakas, Vykintas. *Pasaka*. Benjamin Kobler (piano). *b(ell tree) / Portrait*. KAIROS Records, 2016. EAN Code: 9120040735043.
- Baltakas, Vykintas. *Sinfonia*. Lithuanian Ensemble Network conducted by Vykintas Baltakas. *b(ell tree) / Portrait*. KAIROS Records, 2016. EAN Code: 9120040735043.
- Baltakas, Vykintas. *Smokey Arnold*. Het Collectief: Toon Fret (flute), Julien Hervé (clarinet), Wibert Aerts (violin), Martijn Vink (cello), Thomas Dieltjens (piano). *Ourobouros*. KAIROS Records, 2020. Catalogue No.: 0015045KAI; EAN Code: 9120040732134.
- Kutavičius, Tomas. *Theia mania*. Daumantas Kirilauskas (piano), Lithuanian State Symphony Orchestra conducted by Mārtiņš Ozoliņš. *Nepriklausomas Veiksmas / Independent Action*. 2018. DKCD 009.
- Kutavičius, Tomas. *A Glow Worm For Maria Morawska*. Daumantas Kirilauskas (piano). *Nepriklausomas Veiksmas / Independent Action*. 2018. DKCD 009.
- Mažulis, Rytis. *Twittering Machine*. Rytis Mažulis (synthesizer). *Lithuanian Music in Context II: Landscapes of Minimalism*. Music Information Centre Lithuania, 2013 [2011].
- Mažulis, Rytis. *Canon mensurabilis*. Ieva Sipaitytė (violin), Robertas Bliškevičius (viola), Mindaugas Bačkus (cello), Sergejus Okruško (piano), Julius Černius (clarinet), Valentinas Gelgotas (flute). *Form Is Emptiness*. Megadisc Classics, 2007. MDC 7800.
- Merkelys, Remigijus. *FlaVio*. Audronė Pšibilskienė (viola), Ingrida Armonaitė (violin), Carsten Hustedt (flute). *Vėl: Lithuanian Chamber Music 1991-2001*. Guild, 2004. GMCD 7238.
- Merkelys, Remigijus. *MiKonst*. Vilnius String Quartet, Rokas Zubovas (piano). *M.K. Čiurlionis 125*. Bomba Records, 2000. BBCD 138.

- Navickas, Albertas. *Blanche t'a vu*. Eglė Sirvydytė (voice), Ona Jonaitytė, Simona Vaitkevičiūtė, Justinas Mačys, Ūla Čaplikaitė (flutes). *Anthology of Lithuanian Art Music in the 21st Century*. Music Information Centre Lithuania, 2017. MICL CD093-094.
- Repečkaitė, Justina. *Chartres*. St. Christopher Chamber Orchestra conducted by Donatas Katkus. *Zoom In 10: New Music from Lithuania*. Music Information Centre Lithuania, 2014.
- Valančiūtė, Nomeda. *Narcissus*. Stasys Aglinskas (prepared piano) and Dainius Sverdiolas (harpsichord). *Lithuanian Music in Context II: Landscapes of Minimalism*. Music Information Centre Lithuania, 2013 [2011].
- Valančiūtė, Nomeda. *Fragment From The Hospital Park*. Ieva Sipaitytė (voice, violin), Eglė Jurašūnaitė (voice, violin), Robertas Bliškevičius (voice, viola), Darius Stabinskas (voice, cello). *Chordos. Music for String Quartet*. Music Information Centre Lithuania, 2014. LMIPCCD082-083.

### **Texts and AV sources**

- Abraham, Gerald. *Eight Soviet Composers* (London: Oxford University Press, 2007 [1943]).
- Allen, Theodore. *The Invention of the White Race Volume 1: Racial Oppression and Social Control* (London and New York: Verso, 2002 [1994]).
- Allison, John. 'Hilliard Ensemble, Salisbury Cathedral, review: "too much easy listening"'. *The Telegraph*, May 28 2014. (accessed online, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/music/classicalconcertreviews/10860634/Hilliard-Ensemble-Salisbury-Cathedral-review-too-much-easy-listening.html>, 26.10.19).
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 2006 [1983]).
- Anderson, Julian. 'A Provisional History of Spectral Music', *Contemporary Music Review* 19/2 (2000), pp. 7-22.
- Anderson, Martin and Tormis, Veljo. "'We Should Know Who We Are': Veljo Tormis in Conversation', *TEMPO*, New Series, no. 211 (2000) pp.24-27.
- Appel, Hilary and Orenstein, Mitchell A. 'Why did Neoliberalism Triumph and Endure in the Post-Communist World?', *Comparative Politics* 48/3 (2016), pp. 313-331.
- Arloff, Steve. 'Review: *Balys DVARIONAS: Complete works for violin and piano and Baltic and Beyond*', *MusicWebInternational*, nd., (accessed online, [http://musicweb-international.com/classrev/2017/Jun/Dvarionas\\_violin\\_8573673.htm](http://musicweb-international.com/classrev/2017/Jun/Dvarionas_violin_8573673.htm), 26.10.19).

- Babinskas, Ugnius. transl. Romas Kinka. 'Academic Informals: To Perform Music is to Fly. An Interview with Vykintas Baltakas and Liudas Mockūnas'. *Lithuanian Music Link* no. 20, 2017, Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <http://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-20-january-december-2017/ugnius-babinskas-academic-informals-vykintas-baltakas-liudas-mockunas/>, 22.02.19).
- Ugnius Babinskas, 'The Ritual Periphery of Academic Music: An Interview with Rūta Vitkauskaitė' (transl. Romas Kinka), *Lithuanian Music Link No. 18* (2016) (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-19-january-december-2016/ugnius-babinskas-interview-with-ruta-vitkauskaite/>, 04.12.20).
- Bajarkevičius, Tautvydas. 'Contemporary Music, Sound Art and Media in Lithuania: From a historical perspective to the present', *Sound Exchange* (accessed online, [http://www.soundexchange.eu/#lithuania\\_en?id=40](http://www.soundexchange.eu/#lithuania_en?id=40), 23.09.19).
- Baksys Richardson, Milda. 'Reverence and Resistance in Lithuanian Wayside Shrines', *Perspectives In Vernacular Architecture* 10 (2005), pp. 249-267.
- Balakauskas, Osvaldas, *Muzika ir mintys (Music and Thoughts)* (Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 2000).
- Bamberger, W.C. *Of Fret Rattle & Underwater Skylabs: Essays on Music and Musicians* (Maryland: Wildside Press LLC, 2013).
- Barnett, Rob. 'Review: Santa Ratniece, Saline', *MusicWeb International* (accessed online, [http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2017/Sep/Ratniece\\_saline\\_LMIC024.htm](http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2017/Sep/Ratniece_saline_LMIC024.htm), 07.10.21).
- Baublinskienė, Beate. 'Balakauskas' Requiem released by Naxos', *Lithuanian Music Link No. 10*, 2005 (accessed online, <http://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-10-april-september-2005/balakauskas-requiem-released-by-naxos/>, 23.08.18)
- Beissinger, Mark. 'People Power Tactics in the Baltic States, 1987-91', in *Civil Resistance and Power Politics: The Experience of Non-violent Action from Gandhi to the Present*, ed. Adam Roberts and Timothy Garton Ash (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 231-246.
- Bekus, Nelly. *Struggle over Identity: The Official and The Alternative "Belarusianness"* (Budapest: Central European University Press: 2010).
- Bird, John. *Percy Grainger* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999 [1976]).
- Bohle, Dorothee, and Greskovits, Béla. *Capitalist Diversity on Europe's Periphery* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2012).

- Bookchin, Murray. 'Social Ecology versus Deep Ecology', first published in *Green Perspectives* (1987), (accessed online, [http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist\\_Archives/bookchin/socecovdeepeco.html](http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/bookchin/socecovdeepeco.html), 26.10.19).
- Bordwell, David. *Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991 [1989]).
- Boyes, Georgina. *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* (Leeds: No Masters Co-operative, 2010 [1993]).
- Brown, Mark. 'A brave but flawed attempt to dramatise Arvo Part — Tabula Rasa Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh, review'. *The Telegraph*, Nov 10 2017. (accessed online, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/theatre/what-to-see/brave-flawed-attempt-dramatise-arvo-part-tabula-rasatraverse/>, 26.10.19).
- Brunning, John. 'Five pieces guaranteed to get you into the incredible music of Arvo Pärt'. *Classic FM*, Sep 11 2015 (accessed online, <https://www.classicfm.com/composers/part/best-pieces/>, 25.05.21).
- Caddick, Jamie and Anderson, James. 'Arvo Pärt 80th Birthday Celebration at St George's in Bristol review', *365bristol.com*, Oct 15 2015 (accessed online, <http://365bristol.com/review/arvo-p%C3%83-rt-80th-birthday/337/>, 26.10.19).
- Charnysh, Volha and Finkel, Evgeny. 'Rewriting History in Eastern Europe: Poland's New Holocaust Law and the Politics of the Past', *Foreign Affairs*, 14 February 2018 (accessed online, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/hungary/2018-02-14/rewriting-history-eastern-europe>, 18.10.19).
- Cheskin, Ammon. 'Identity and Integration of Russian Speakers in the Baltic States: A Framework for Analysis', *Ethnopolitics* 14 (2015), pp. 72-93.
- Chioni Moore, David. 'Is the Post- in Postcolonial the Post- in Post-Soviet? Towards a Global Postcolonial Critique', in *Baltic Postcolonialism*, ed. Violeta Kelertas (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006).
- Cizmic, Maria. *Performing Pain: Music and Trauma in Eastern Europe* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press: 2012).
- Clements, Andrew. 'Tickmayer: Eight Hymns; Franck: Piano Quintet; Kancheli: Silent Prayer – review', *Guardian*, 4 Nov 2010 (accessed online, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2010/nov/04/tickmayer-eight-hymns-franck-piano-quintet-kancheli-silent-prayer-review>, 16.12.20).
- Cowan, Rob. 'Review: Pärt Für Alina'. *Gramophone*, Dec 1999 (accessed online, <https://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/p%C3%A4rt-alina>, 26.10.19).
- Cowan, Rob. 'Review: Pärt Tabula Rasa'. *Gramophone*, Jan 2011 (accessed online, <https://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/p%C3%A4rt-tabula-rasa-0>, 26.10.19).
- Daitz, Mimi. *Ancient Song Recovered: The Life and Music of Veljo Tormis* (New York:

- Pendragon Press, 2004).
- Daunoravičienė, Gražina. 'Compositional System of Osvaldas Balakauskas: an attempt to restore the theoretical discourse', *Musicological Annual* 54/2 (2018), pp. 45-95.
- Daunoravičienė, Gražina. 'Exiled modernism: Lithuanian Music Through the Second World War', in *Baltic Musics/Baltic Musicologies: The Landscape since 1991*, ed. Kevin C. Karnes and Joachim Braun (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 111-134.
- Daunoravičienė, Gražina. *Exploration of the Modernistic Identity of Lithuanian Music* (Vilnius: Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, 2016), 642.
- Daunoravičienė, Gražina. 'Osvaldas Balakauskas – Lithuanian Music's Maverick and a Dissenting Voice in Kiev', transl. Romas Kinka, *Lithuanian Music Link* no. 20 (2017) (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-20-january-december-2017/grazina-daunoraviciene-osvaldas-balakauskas-in-kiev/>, 30.12.20).
- Daunoravičienė, Gražina. 'Rytis Mažulis', Gaida Festival 2005 programme (accessed online, <https://doczz.net/doc/1307643/gaidaaktualios-muzikos-festivalis-vilnius>, 16.12.20).
- Daunoravičienė, Gražina. 'Sound architecture of Rytis Mažulis microstructural canons (from 100 to the 3,448275862 cents)', *Menotyra* 1/30, (2003), 57-68 (accessed online, <http://www.elibrary.lt/resursai/LMA/Menotyra/M-57.pdf>, 23.09.19).
- Daunoravičienė, Gražina. Notes to *Twittering Machine* (Rytis Mažulis) score (Vilnius: Lithuanian Music Information and Publishing Centre, 2007 [1986]).
- Davis, Ben. 'Chartres review by Ben Davis on Sight Listen blog', Justina Repečkaitė website, September 24 2014 (accessed online, <http://www.justinarepeckaite.eu/press/chartres-review-by-ben-davis-on-sight-listen-blog/>, 23.10.19).
- Davis, Colin. 'Hauntology, spectres, and phantoms', in: *French Studies*, 59 (3), 2005, pp. 373-379.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Specters of Marx*. transl. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 2006 [1993]).
- Dies, David. 'Defining "Spiritual Minimalism"'. *Ashgate Research Companion to Minimalist and Postminimalist Music*, ed. Kyle Gann, Kyle Potter and Pwyll ap Siôn. (New York: Routledge, 2013).
- Droba, Krzysztof. 'The History and the Present Day of Lithuanian Music (from Čiurlionis to Landsbergis)', *Revista de Musicología* 16/6 (1993), pp. 3684-3691.
- Dyer, Richard. *White: Essays on Race and Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006 [1997]).
- Eberhardt Bate, Heidi. *The Measures of Men: Virtue and the Arts in the Civic Imagery of*

- Sixteenth-century Nuremburg* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).
- Eksteins, Modris. *Walking Since Daybreak: A Story of Eastern Europe, World War II, and the Heart of Our Century* (New York: Mariner Books, 2000).
- Engelhardt, Jeffers. 'Review: Pēteris Vasks', *Notes* 58/4 (2002) pp. 915-920.
- Essinger, James. *Jacquard's Web: How a hand loom led to the birth of the information age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
- Fabian, Johannes. *Time and the Other* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014 [1978]).
- Fairclough, Pauline. *Dmitri Shostakovich* (London: Reaktion Books, 2019).
- Fairclough, Pauline. 'Such Freedom, if Only Musical: Unofficial Soviet Music during the Thaw (review)', *Notes* 66/3 (2010), pp. 561-563.
- Fanning, David. 'Review: Baltic Voices Vol. 1', *Gramophone*, 2002 (accessed online, <https://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/baltic-voices-vol-1>, 26.10.19).
- Fanning David. 'Review: Baltic Voices Vol. 2', *Gramophone*, 2004 (accessed online, <https://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/baltic-voices-2>, 26.10.19).
- Fay, Laurel E. *Shostakovich: A Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- Fenech, Gerald. 'CD Review: Erkki-Sven Tüür — Exodus', *Classical Net* (accessed online, <http://www.classical.net/music/recs/reviews/e/ecm01830a.php>, 07.01.21).
- Festival Programme, GAIDA 2017 (accessed online, [http://www.muzikosantena.lt/bukletai/gaida/Gaida\\_2017\\_bukletas.pdf](http://www.muzikosantena.lt/bukletai/gaida/Gaida_2017_bukletas.pdf), 23.10.19), 124.
- Fink, Robert. *Repeating Ourselves: American Minimal Music as Cultural Practice* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005).
- Fisher, Mark. 'What is hauntology?', *Film Quarterly*, 66/1 (2012), pp. 16-24.
- Fitch, Fabrice. 'Ešenvalds Northern Lights and other choral works', *Gramophone* (accessed online, <https://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/e%C5%A1envalds-northern-lights-and-other-choral-works>, 23.01.21).
- Fox, Christopher. 'Woven: The Music of Egidija Medekšaitė', *Tempo* 73/288 (2019), pp. 47-58.
- Frasher, Spencer; Hall, Michael; Hildreth, Jeremy and Sorgi, Mia. Report: 'A Brand for the Nation of Latvia', Said Business School, University of Oxford, September 1 2003 (accessed online as published on Latvijas Institūts website, [http://li.lv/upload/Final\\_Pilot\\_Branding\\_Report.pdf](http://li.lv/upload/Final_Pilot_Branding_Report.pdf), 20.10.19)
- Friedman, Susan Stanford. 'Definitional Excursions: The Meanings of Modern/Modernity/Modernism', *Modernism/modernity* 8/3, 2001 (accessed online, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/23422>, 26.10.19).

- Frolova-Walker, Marina. “National in Form, Socialist in Content”: Musical Nation-Building in the Soviet Republics’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 51/2 (1998), pp. 331-371.
- Gaidamavičiūtė, Rūta. ‘Spengla-Ūla’, Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/find-works/1195/#audio-library>, 30.12.20).
- Gann, Kyle. ‘Minimal Music, Maximal Impact’, *NewMusicBox*, 1 Nov 2001 (<https://nmbx.newmusicusa.org/minimal-music-maximal-impact/2/>, accessed online 31.08.20).
- Gopinath, Sumanth. ‘A Composer Looks East: Steve Reich and Discourse on Non-Western Music’, *Glendora Review* 3/3-4 (2004), pp. 134–45.
- Gough, Rupert. ‘Pēteris Plakidis’, Hyperion (accessed online, <https://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/c.asp?c=C3994>, 26.10.19).
- Gough, Rupert. ‘Vytautas Miškinis — Choral Music’, Hyperion (accessed online, [https://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/dc.asp?dc=D\\_CDA67818](https://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/dc.asp?dc=D_CDA67818), 31.08.20).
- Graeber, David. *The Utopia of Rules: On Technology, Stupidity, and the Secret Joys of Bureaucracy* (Brooklyn: Melville House, 2015).
- Groys, Boris. ‘Difference between Western postmodernism and Eastern postsocialism’, Lecture at Garage Museum Moscow, 21 March 2015 (accessed online, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I7LDLCS4ibM&t=1s>, 19.10.19).
- Gruodytė, Vita. ‘Happening Instead of Rupture, or Rupture as Happening’, transl. Tomas Čiučelis, *Lithuanian Music Link No. 18*, 2015, Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-18-january-december-2015/happening/>, 21.10.19).
- Gruodytė, Vita. ‘Modernism and National Identity: The Peculiarities of Serialism in Lithuania’, *Lithuanian Music in Context, vol I: Lessons of the Avant-Garde* (Vilnius: Lithuanian Music Information Centre, 2011).
- Guess, Teresa J. ‘The Social Construction of Whiteness: Racism by Intent, Racism by Consequence’, *Critical Sociology* 32/4 (2006), pp. 649-673.
- Guglielmo, Jennifer and Salerno, Salvatore (eds.), *Are Italians White? How Race is Made in America* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003).
- Hall, Stuart. ‘The Spectacle of the Other’, in *Representation, Second Edition*, ed. Stuart Hall, Jessica Evans and Sean Nixon (Milton Keynes: Open University, 2013 [1997]).
- Hall, Stuart. ‘The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power’, in *Formations of Modernity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Bram Gieben (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), pp. 275-332.



- Hansen, Suzy. 'Unlearning the myth of American innocence', *Guardian*, 8 Aug 2017 (accessed online, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/aug/08/unlearning-the-myth-of-american-innocence>, 06.01.2021).
- Hassan, Ihab. 'Privations of Postmodernism: Faulkner as Exemplar', in *Faulkner and Postmodernism: Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha*, ed. John N. Duvall and Ann J. Abadie (Jackson: Mississippi University Press, 1999), pp. 1-18.
- Hasty, Christopher. *Meter as Rhythm — 20th Anniversary Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020).
- Heine, Erik. 'Games, Simplicity and Trees: an analysis of Arvo Pärt's *Arbos*', *Analysing the Music of Living Composers (and Others)*, ed. Jack Boss, Brad Osborn, Tim S. Pack and Stephen Rodgers (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013).
- Hewett, Ivan. 'Arvo Part: personal music that is truly out of this world'. *The Telegraph*, April 18 2012. (accessed online, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/music/classicalmusic/9212215/Arvo-Part-personal-music-that-is-truly-out-of-this-world.html>, 26.10.19).
- Hillier, Paul. *Arvo Pärt* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).
- Hillis, W. Daniel. *The Pattern on the Stone: The Simple Ideas That Make Computers Work* (New York: Basic Books, 1998).
- Hugill, Robert. 'Review: Untold riches - music from Estonia & the Baltic at the Oxford Lieder Festival', *PlanetHugill*, October 18 2018 (accessed online, [http://www.planethugill.com/2018/10/untold-riches-music-from-estonia-baltic\\_18.html](http://www.planethugill.com/2018/10/untold-riches-music-from-estonia-baltic_18.html), 26.10.19).
- Humal, Mart. 'On Modernism in Estonian Music, 1900-1940', *Lithuanian Musicology* 16 (2015), pp. 16-23.
- Huizenga, Tom. 'The Silence and Awe of Arvo Pärt', NPR Music website, June 2 2014 (accessed online at <https://www.npr.org/sections/deceptivecadence/2014/06/02/316322238/the-silence-and-awe-of-arvo-p-rt?t=1571406195540>, 18.10.19).
- Hyndle-Hussein, Joanna and Kutysz, Miryna. 'Russian-speakers in Latvia and Estonia', *Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich*, August 15 2004 (accessed online, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-studies/2004-08-15/russian-speakers-latvia-and-estonia>, 19.10.19).
- Ignatiev, Noel. *How the Irish Became White* (New York and Oxford: Routledge, 2009 [1995])
- Ilves, Toomas Hendrik. 'Estonia as a Nordic Country', 1999 speech, Republic of Estonia Ministry of Foreign Affairs website (accessed online, <https://vm.ee/en/news/estonia-nordic-country>, 18.10.19).
- Jaanus, Maire. 'Estonia's Time and Monumental Time', in *Baltic Postcolonialism*, ed.

- Violeta Kelertas (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006), pp. 203-232.
- Jackson, Gabriel. 'Evening by Eriks Ešēnvalds', 2011, as published on Hyperion website (accessed online, [https://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/dw.asp?dc=W13369\\_GBAJY1179605](https://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/dw.asp?dc=W13369_GBAJY1179605), 26.10.19).
- Jackson, Stephen. 'Out of Latvia on a snowball'. *Sunday Telegraph*, February 26 1995 (accessed online, as published on Stephen Jackson website, <https://londondigitalart.files.wordpress.com/2014/09/peteris-vasks-1-sunday-tel.jpg>, 25.10.19).
- Jameson, Fredric. *Postmodernism: Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991 [1984]).
- Jameson, Fredric. *Valences of the Dialectic* (London: Verso Books, 2009).
- Janatjeva, Veronika. 'Rytis Mažulis: Can Music Work Without Music?', *Lithuanian Music Link No. 5*, 2002-2003, Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-5-october-2002-march-2003/rytis-mazulis-can-music-work-without-music/>, 23.09.19).
- Jankauskienė, Inga. 'The role of text in meaning formation', in *Musical Semiotics in Growth*, ed. Eero Tarasti, Paul Forsell, Richard Littlefield (Imatra and Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996).
- Jansen, Sue Curry. 'Designer Nations: Neo-liberal nation branding — Brand Estonia', *Social Identities* 14/1 (2008), pp. 121-142.
- Jirgens, Karl E. 'Fusions of Discourse: Postcolonial/Postmodern Horizons in Baltic Culture', in *Baltic Postcolonialism*, ed. Violeta Kelertas (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2006).
- Jirgens, Karl E. 'Labyrinths of Meaning in Aleksandrs Pelēcis' *Siberia Book* and Agate Nesaule's *Woman in Amber: A Postmodern/Postcolonial Reading*' in *Baltic Postcolonialism*, ed. Violeta Kelertas (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006), pp. 359-386.
- Jonāne, Jūlija. 'View on Sacred Minimalism and music by Pēteris Vasks as incarnation of theological ideas', *Menotyra* 23/3 (2016) pp. 215-227.
- Kaarma, Evelin. 'Estonia as a Target Country for Foreign Direct Investment: Attractive Aspects for Investors', Bachelor Thesis, Tallinn University of Technology (2017).
- Kala, Tiina. 'Estonia from the 13th to 16th Centuries', in *Estonia: Identity and Independence*, ed. Jean-Jacques Subrenat, transl. David Cousins, Eric Dickens, Alexander Harding, Richard C. Waterhouse (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2004).
- Kaplinski, Jaan. 'Heritage and Heirs'. In Daitz, Mimi. *Ancient Song Recovered: The Life and Music of Veljo Tormis* (New York: Pendragon Press, 2004).

- Kaplinski, Jaan. 'The snow's melting', transl. Jaan Kaplinski and Fiona Sampson, Estonian Literature Centre, nd. (accessed online, <http://www.estlit.ee/elis/?cmd=writer&id=46378&txt=20046>, 26.10.19).
- Kasekamp, Andres. *A History of the Baltic States, Second Edition* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018 [2010]).
- Katkus, Donatas. '100 Years of Vytautas Bacevičius: A Lonely & Ambitious Visionary', *Lithuanian Music Link No. 10*, 2005, Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <http://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-10-april-september-2005/100-years-of-vytautas-bacevicius-a-lonely-ambitious-visionary/>, 23.10.19).
- Katkus, Donatas. 'The mesmerizing sound world of Osvaldas Balakauskas', *Lithuanian Music Link No. 2* (2001), Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-2-april-september-2001/the-mesmerizing-sound-world-of-osvaldas-balakauskas/>, 22.10.19).
- Kazlauskaitė, Ramunė and Janatjeva, Veronika. 'Remigijus Merkelys: Fiery music sparked by rational impulses', *Lithuanian Music Link No. 6*, 2003, Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <http://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-6-april-september-2003/remigijus-merkelys-fiery-music-sparked-by-rational-impulses/>, 26.10.19).
- Kirch, Aksel; Kirch, Marika; Tuisk, Tarmo. 'Russians in the Baltic States: To be or not to be?', *Journal of Baltic Studies* 24/2 (1993), pp. 173-188.
- Kowalczyk, Michał. 'Are Baltic States still Baltic Tigers?', *Obserwator Finansowy*, July 31 2017 (accessed online, <https://financialobserver.eu/baltics/are-baltic-states-still-baltic-tigers/>, 20.10.19).
- Kozin, Allan. "The Mystical Enigma that is Arvo Pärt". *New York Times*, March 26 1989 (accessed online, <https://www.nytimes.com/1989/03/26/arts/recordings-the-mystical-enigma-that-is-arvo-part.html>, 26.10.19)
- Kramer, Jonathan. *The Time of Music: New Meanings, New Temporalities, New Listening Strategies* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1988).
- Krausas, Veronika. 'Vykintas Baltakas: biography', Vykintas Baltakas website (accessed online, <http://www.baltakas.net/biography/>, 24.10.19).
- Kreuger, Anders. 'Ethno-futurism: Leaning on the Past, Working for the Future', *Afterall* 43 (2017), pp. 116-133.
- Kudiņš, Jānis. 'Modernism as a Marginal Phenomenon in the Context of National Musical Culture: Some Local Historical Experiences in Latvia between the Two World Wars', *Lithuanian Musicology* 16 (2015), pp. 40-51.

- Lankauskas, Gediminas. *The Land of Weddings and Rain: Nation and Modernity in Post-Socialist Lithuania* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: Toronto University Press, 2015).
- Laurson, Jens F. 'Erkki-Sven Tüür's Whistling Desert-Fowl', *Classics Today* (accessed online, <https://www.classicstoday.com/review/erkki-sven-tuurs-whistling-desert-fowl/>, 07.01.21).
- Levi, Erik. 'A political football: Shostakovich reception in Germany', in *The Cambridge Companion to Shostakovich*, ed. Pauline and David Fanning (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
- Lieven, Anatol. *The Baltic Revolution: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and the Path to Independence* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997 [1993]).
- Lippus, Urve; Rimmel, Mart; Ross, Jaan; Sarv, Jaan and Semlek, Jaan. *Towards a Monographical Analysis of Some Folk Song Arrangements*, abridged and revised by Lippus. (Tallinn: Academy of Sciences of the Estonian SSR, Department of Social Sciences: Preprint KKI-6, 1976).
- Lippus, Urve. 'Modernist Trends in Estonian Musicology in the 1970s—1980s and the Study of Folk Melodies', in *Baltic Music/Baltic Musicologies*, ed. Kevin C. Karnes and Joachim Braun (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 78-95.
- Lobanova, Marina. *Musical Style and Genre: History and Modernity*, transl. Kate Cook, Amsterdam (OPA: Harwood Academic Publishers, 2000).
- Lubow, Arthur. 'The Sound of Spirit', *New York Times*, October 15 2010 (accessed online, <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/17/magazine/17part-t.html>, 26.10.19).
- Lundström, Catrin and Teitelbaum, Benjamin R. 'Nordic Whiteness: An Introduction', *Scandinavian Studies*, 89/2 (2017), pp.151-158.
- Lunn, Ben. 'Blog post of pure reason', *Baltic Musical Gems*, July 2016 (accessed online, <http://balticgems.blogspot.com/2016/07/blog-post-of-pure-reason.html>, 23.09.19).
- Lunn, Ben. 'Interview — Santa Buss', *Baltic Musical Gems*, 27 May 2017 (accessed online, <http://balticgems.blogspot.com/2017/05/interview-santa-buss.html>, 07.01.21).
- Lunn, Ben. 'Justina Repečkaitė's profile by Ben Lunn', Repečkaitė website, February 22 2018 (accessed online, <http://www.justinarepeckaitė.eu/press/justina-rapeckaites-profile-by-ben-lunn/>, 23.10.19).
- Lunn, Ben. 'Juzeliūnas, the seed of a modern Lithuanian music', Masters thesis, Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre (Vilnius, 2017).
- Maes, Laura; Raes, Godfried-Willem; Rogers, Troy. 'The Man and Machine Robot Orchestra at Logos', *Computer Music Journal* 35/4 (2011), pp. 28-48
- Mansbach, S.A. *Modern Art in Eastern Europe: From the Baltic to the Balkans, ca. 1980-1939* (Cambridge and New York: New York University Press, 1999).

- Markwick, Roger D. *Rewriting History in Soviet Russia: The Politics of Revisionist Historiography, 1956-1974* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).
- Martinelli, Dario. 'Communicating and Playing Independence: The role of Antis in the Lithuanian Singing Revolution', *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, 50(1/2), 2019, pp. 297-318.
- May, Chris. 'Live Review: Arvo Pärt – A Sacred Journey (Sydney Opera House)', *Limelight*, April 9 2013. (accessed online as republished on Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir website, <https://www.epcc.ee/en/2013/04/live-review-arvo-part-a-sacred-journey-sydney-opera-house/>, 26.10.19).
- May, Todd. *Nonviolent Resistance: A Philosophical Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015).
- Mažiulis, Vytautas J. 'Baltic Languages' *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (accessed online, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Baltic-languages>, 26.10.19).
- Mažulis, Rytis. 'Composing Microtonal Melody', *Muzikos komponavimo principai XV: melodijos fenomenas*, Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre Scientific Journals, 2015 (accessed online, <http://xn--urnalai-cxb.lmta.lt/wp-content/uploads/2015/Muzikos-komponavimo-principai-XV-Ma%C5%BEulis.pdf> 23.09.19)
- McGinn, Claire. 'Jazz, instinct and meaning: Tomas Kutavičius and contemporary Lithuanian music', *Deep Baltic*, June 25 2019 (accessed online, <https://deepbaltic.com/2019/06/25/jazz-instinct-and-meaning-tomas-kutavicius-and-contemporary-lithuanian-music/>, 18.02.20).
- McGinn, Claire. 'The "bland invention" of Veljo Tormis: notions of complicity and resistance in art music of the ESSR', *Music, Individuals and Contexts: Dialectical Interactions* (conference proceedings), ed. Nadia Amendola, Alessandro and Cosentino Giacomo Sciommeri (Rome: Società Editrice di Musicologia, 2019), pp. 349-358.
- McGrath, Rachel. 'Young Eastern Europeans Living In UK "Facing More Racism Since Brexit Vote"', *Huffington Post*, August 22 2019 (accessed online, [https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/school-bullying-racism-eastern-european-uk\\_5d5e54e1e4b0dfcbd4887d30](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/school-bullying-racism-eastern-european-uk_5d5e54e1e4b0dfcbd4887d30), 19.10.19).
- Medekšaitė, Egidija. 'Mapping Textile Patterns into Sonic Experience', PhD thesis, Durham University, 2012 (accessed online, <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/11527/>, 23.10.19).
- Medić, Ivana. 'Moderated Modernism in Russian Music After 1953', *Rethinking Musical Modernism — Proceedings of the international conference held from October 11 to 13, 2007* (Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2008)
- Miłosz, Czesław. *The Captive Mind* (London: Penguin Classics, 2001 [1953]).

- Misiunas, Romuald J. 'The Baltic States: Independence and the 20th Century', *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (accessed online, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Baltic-states/Independent-statehood>, 18.10.19).
- Molleson, Kate. 'The last thing you'll ever hear: what is the world's best deathbed music?', *The Guardian*, November 8 2017 (accessed online, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2017/nov/08/best-deathbed-music-tabula-rasa-arvo-part>, 26.10.19).
- Moody, Ivan. 'Baltic Choral Music', *Gramophone*, Vol. 97, August 2019.
- Mooney, James. 'Frameworks and Affordances: understanding the tools of music-making', *Journal of Music, Technology and Education* 3(2/3), 2010, pp. 141-154
- Moseley, Roger. *Keys to Play: Music as a Ludic Medium from Apollo to Nintendo* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016).
- Nakas, Šarunas. 'Juozas Gruodis', Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/composers/gruodis/#bio>, 07.01.21).
- Nakas, Šarunas. 'Minimalism in Lithuanian Music', transl. Vida Urbonavičius, Veronika Janatjeva. *Lithuanian Music in Context, Vol II: Landscapes of Minimalism* (Vilnius: Lithuanian Music Information and Publishing Centre, 2011).
- Nakas, Šarunas. 'Rytis Mažulis', Lithuanian Music Information Centre website (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/composers/mazulis/>, 23.09.19).
- Nakas, Šarunas. 'What is the Lithuanian Brand of Minimalism?', *Lithuanian Music Link no. 8*, 2004, Lithuanian Music Information Centre website (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-8-april-september-2004/what-is-the-lithuanian-brand-of-minimalism/>, 21.10.19).
- Nakienė, Austė. 'On Instrumental Origins of Lithuanian Polymodal "Sutartinės"', *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 44, 1/2 (2003), pp. 159-168.
- Navickas, Albertas. 'Curriculum Vitae', Albertas Navickas website (accessed online, [http://albertasnavickas.lt/CV\\_eng.pdf](http://albertasnavickas.lt/CV_eng.pdf), 25.10.19).
- Navickas, Albertas. 'Retro-Listening', *Lithuanian Music in Context, vol II: Landscapes of Minimalism* (Vilnius: Lithuanian Music Information Centre, 2011).
- Navickas, Albertas. 'Recombinant Teleology as the Paradigm of Repetitive Composition', *Lithuanian Musicology* 13, 2012, Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <http://xn--urnalai-cxb.lmta.lt/wp-content/uploads/2012/lietuvos-muzikologija-13-06-navickas.pdf>, 25.10.19).
- Neil, Calum. 'Breaking the Text: an Introduction to Lacanian discourse analysis', *Theory & Psychology* 23/3 (2013), pp. 334-350.

- Nepil, Hannah. 'Tavener, Pärt and Adams, Kings Place, London — 'Mystical and visceral''. *Financial Times*, November 30 2015 (accessed online, <https://www.ft.com/content/68454008-974f-11e5-9228-87e603d47bdc>, 26.10.19).
- Norkus, Zenonas. *An Unproclaimed Empire: The Grand Duchy of Lithuania*, transl. Albina Strunga. (New York and London: Routledge, 2018).
- Orav, Toomas Aarand. 'A tale of two Estonias', *Baltic Times*, 28 Mar 2002 (accessed online, <https://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/6206/>, 06.01.2021).
- Paidere, Ruta. 'The Dilemma of a Latvian Composer', *Unearthing the Music* (accessed online, <https://unearthingthemusic.eu/posts/the-dilemma-of-a-latvian-composer/>, 29.01.21).
- Pakarklytė, Asta. 'Albertas Navickas', Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/composers/navickas/>, 25.10.19).
- Pakarklytė, Asta. 'Black-and-white Post-Minimalism, or the Lithuanian Spleen', transl. Lina Michelkevičė, in *Landscapes of Minimalism*, 29-33.
- Pakarklytė, Asta. 'Lithuanian Women Composers: From Minorities to Leaders in 30 Years', *Lithuanian Music Link no. 22*, 2019 (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no22-january-december-2019/asta-pakarklyte-lithuanian-women-composers-minorities-leaders-30/>, 08.12.20).
- Pakarklytė, Asta. 'New [Re]Generation of Lithuanian Contemporary Music', *Lithuanian Music Link No. 17*, 2009-2010, Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-17-october-2009-march-2010/theme-new-regeneration-of-lithuanian-contemporary-music/>, 25.10.19).
- Pakarklytė, Asta. 'Nomedas Valančiūtė: "Nebėjau būti banali" — Kompozitoriai prieš 20 metų ir dabar', *Literatūra ir menas*, January 30 2004 (accessed online, [http://eia.libis.lt:8080/archyvas/viesas/20111128031607/http://www.culture.lt/lmenas/?leid\\_id=2986&kas=straipsnis&st\\_id=4031](http://eia.libis.lt:8080/archyvas/viesas/20111128031607/http://www.culture.lt/lmenas/?leid_id=2986&kas=straipsnis&st_id=4031), 21.10.19).
- Pakarklytė, Asta. 'Osvaldas Balakauskas' Symphonic Tetra', *Lithuanian Music Link No. 15* (2007-8), Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-15-october-2007-march-2008/osvaldas-balakauskas-symphonic-tetra/>, 22.10.19).
- Papp-Váry, Árpád Ferenc. 'A Successful Example of Complex Country Branding: The "E-Estonia" Positioning Concept and its Relation to the Presidency of the Council of the EU', *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, European and Regional Studies*, 14 (2018), pp. 87-115.
- Parulskienė, Daiva. 'Integrity of Man and Music. In memoriam Julius Juzeliūnas', *Lithuanian Music Link no. 3* (2001-2) (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/>

- discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-3-october-2001-march-2002/integrity-of-man-and-music-in-memori-am-julius-juzeliunas/, 07.01.21).
- Pascal, Blaise. *The Thoughts, Letters and Opuscles of Blaise Pascal*, transl. O.W. Wight, ed. O.W. Wight (New York: Derby and Jackson, 1859), 170.
- Paulauskis, Linas. 'Many Musics', transl. Romas Kinka, *Lithuanian Music Link No. 21*, 2018, Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-21-january-december-2018/linas-paulauskis-many-musics/>, 25.10.19).
- Paulauskis, Linas. 'Osvaldas Balakauskas: an Enthusiast Modernist in the Times of Post-modernism', Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-12-april-september-2006/feature-osvaldas-balakauskas-an-enthusiast-modernist-in-the-times-of-post-modernism/>, 19.10.19).
- Petrov, Ana. 'Are We Still Evolutionists? The Reception of Max Weber's Theory of Music Development', in *Critical Music Historiography: Probing Canons, Ideologies and Institutions*, ed. Vesa Kursela and Markus Mantere (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2015), pp. 197-212.
- Plakans, Andrejs. *A Concise History of the Baltic States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
- Platt, Kevin. 'The Post-Soviet is Over: On Reading the Ruins', *Republics of Letters: A Journal for the Study of Knowledge, Politics, and the Arts* 1/1 (2009) (accessed online, [https://arcade.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/article\\_pdfs/roflv01i01\\_Platt\\_jm081909\\_0.pdf](https://arcade.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/article_pdfs/roflv01i01_Platt_jm081909_0.pdf), 30.10.19).
- Povilionienė, Rima and Katinaitė, Jūratė (eds). *Music that Changed Time: The Lithuanian Composer Bronius Kutavičius and the Baltic Outburst of Creativity After 1970* (Vilnius: Lithuanian Composers' Union, 2014).
- Purs, Aldis and Plakans, Andrejs. *Historical Dictionary of Latvia, Third Edition* (Lanham and London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).
- Purs, Aldis. *Baltic Facades: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania since 1945* (London: Reaktion Books, 2010).
- Pyzik, Agata. 'What's wrong with being "East" anyway?', *The Guardian*, June 20 2014 (accessed online, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/20/lithuania-latvia-estonia-baltics-guardian-new-east>, 19.10.19).
- Quinn, John. 'Review: Songs of the Baltic Sea', *MusicWeb International* (accessed online, <http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2012/Apr12/Baltic%20voices%20DCD34052.htm>, 23.01.21).



- Radauskas, Henrikas. *Žiemos daina: Eilėraščiai* (Chicago: Saulius, 1955). As reproduced on Tekstai website (accessed online, <http://www.tekstai.lt/buvo/tekstai/radausk/eilerasc.htm#ligonines>, 21.12.20).
- Rahn, John. 'Repetition,' *Contemporary Music Review* 7/2, 1993; published online 2009 (accessed online, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07494469300640031>, 26.10.19).
- Ramonaitė, Ainė and Kavaliauskaitė, Jūratė. 'Who led the "Singing Revolution" across Lithuania? A typology of the pioneers of the Sajūdis movement', transl. Isabelle Chandavoine-Urbaitis and John Angell, *Ethnologie Française* 170/2 (2018), pp. 305-318.
- Reinvere, Jüri. 'Veljo Tormis obituary', *Guardian*, February 12 2017 (accessed online, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2017/feb/12/veljo-tormis-obituary>, 26.10.19).
- Remnick, David. 'Lithuania the Little Independence Movement that Could', *Washington Post*, 6 Aug 1989 (accessed online, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1989/08/06/lithuania-the-little-independence-movement-that-could/36d07767-ef36-4d0a-a4a9-ffe2b23791a4/>, 06.01.2021).
- Repečkaitė, Justina. 'Music', Justina Repečkaitė website (accessed online, <http://www.justinarepeckaite.eu/music/>, 23.01.21).
- Repečkaitė, Justina. 'Toro', SoundCloud, June 7 2015 (accessed online, <http://www.justinarepeckaite.eu/media/toro/>, 23.10.19).
- Rickards, Guy. 'Review: Plakidis Orchestral Works', *Gramophone*, 2007 (accessed online, <https://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/plakidis-orchestral-works>, 26.10.19).
- Rickards, Guy. 'Sumera To Reach Yesterday', *Gramophone* (accessed online, <https://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/sumera-to-reach-yesterday>, 07.01.21).
- Roman, Meredith. 'Racism in a "Raceless" Society: The Soviet Press and Representations of American Racial Violence at Stalingrad in 1930', *International Labor and Working-Class History* No. 71 (2007), pp. 185-203.
- Rosenfeld, Alla and Dodge, Norton T. (eds.), *Art of the Baltics: The Struggle for Freedom of Artistic Expression Under the Soviets, 1945-1991* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press/Wilsted & Taylor: 2002).
- Ross, Alex. 'Consolations: The Uncanny Voice of Arvo Pärt', *New Yorker*, December 2 2002 (accessed online, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2002/12/02/consolations>, 20.10.19).
- Rowell, S.C. *Lithuania Ascending: A Pagan Empire Within East-Central Europe* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000 [1994]).
- Rutherford-Johnson, Tim. *Music after the Fall: Modern Composition and Culture since 1989* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017).

- Salumets, Thomas. 'Conflicted Consciousness: Jaan Kaplinski and the Legacy of Intra-European Postcolonialism in Estonia', in *Baltic Postcolonialism* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006), pp. 429-450.
- Salumets, Thomas. *Unforced Flourishing: Understanding Jaan Kaplinski* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014).
- Schmelz, Peter J. *Such Freedom, If Only Musical: Unofficial Soviet Music during the Thaw* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).
- Schweitzer, Vivien. 'CD Review: Arvo Pärt's Fourth Symphony', *New York Times*, October 8 2010 (accessed online, <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/10/arts/music/10arvo.html>, 26.10.19).
- Serpell, C. Namwali. *Seven Modes of Uncertainty* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014).
- Service, Tom. 'Review: Nash Ensemble, BBC Singers', *The Guardian*, October 6 2003 (accessed online, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2003/oct/06/classicalmusicandopera2>, 26.10.19).
- Shepherd, John; Horn, David; Laing, Dave; Oliver, Paul and Wicke, Peter (eds). *Continuum Encyclopedia of Popular Music of the World Vol. II* (London and New York: Continuum, 2003).
- Šmidchens, Guntis. 'National Heroic Narratives in the Baltics as a Source for Nonviolent Political Action', *Slavic Review* 66(3) 2007, pp. 484-508.
- Šmidchens, Guntis. *The Power of Song: Nonviolent National Culture in the Baltic Singing Revolution* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2014).
- Smith, David. 'Interview — Pēteris Vasks', *Presto Classical* (accessed online, <https://www.prestomusic.com/classical/articles/2543--interview-p-teris-vasks>, 23.01.21).
- Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books Ltd, 2012 [1999]).§
- Smith, Rowena. "Tabula Rasa review – ambitious staged work suffused with Arvo Pärt's mystical music", *Guardian*, November 10 2017 (accessed online, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2017/nov/10/tabula-rasa-review-arvo-part-traverse-theatre>, 26.10.19).
- Stanevičiūtė, Rūta. 'A Nylon Curtain: International Exchanges and Lithuanian Musician Networks in the Cold War Era [summary]' (accessed online, [https://www.academia.edu/38449802/The\\_Nylon\\_Curtain](https://www.academia.edu/38449802/The_Nylon_Curtain), 03.12.21).
- Stanevičiūtė, Rūta. 'Modernisation of Lithuanian Music during Cold War Era: Early Trajectories and Their Reception', *Lithuanian Music In Context, vol. I: Lessons of the Avant-Garde* (Lithuanian Music Information Centre: Vilnius, 2011).

- Strmiska, Michael F. 'Paganism-Inspired Folk Music, Folk Music-Inspired Paganism and New Cultural Fusions in Lithuania and Latvia' in *Handbook of New Religions and Cultural Production*, ed. Carole M. Cusack and Alex Norman (Leiden: Brill, 2012).
- Sverdiolas, Arūnas. 'The Sieve and the Honeycomb: Features of Contemporary Lithuanian Cultural Time and Space', in *Baltic Postcolonialism*, ed Violeta Kelertas. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006). pp. 233-250.
- Swed, Mark. 'Review: A mystic in La La Land -- Arvo Pärt's "Los Angeles" Symphony', *Los Angeles Times*, January 11 2009 (accessed online, <https://latimesblogs.latimes.com/culturemonster/2009/01/review-a-mystic.html>, 26.10.19).
- Tambur, Silver. 'Arvo Pärt is the world's most performed living composer eighth year running', Estonian World website, January 8 2019 (accessed online, <https://estonianworld.com/culture/arvo-part-is-the-worlds-most-performed-living-composer-eighth-year-running/>, 18.10.19).
- Tamm, Marek and Kull, Kalevi. 'Toward a reterritorialization of cultural theory: Estonian theory from Baer via Uexküll to Lotman', *History of the Human Sciences*, 29/1, (2016). pp. 75-98.
- Taruskin, Richard. *On Russian Music* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009).
- Thomas, Christopher. 'Review: Osvaldas Balakauskas: concertos for violin, cello, piano, oboe & harpsichord', *Musicweb International* (accessed online, <http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2001/apr01/Balakauskas.htm>, 30.12.20).
- Tormis Veljo. 'Some problems with that regilaul', lecture for 2007 RING conference at the Viljandi Culture Academy (accessed online, [http://www.tormis.ee/Some\\_problems\\_with\\_that\\_regilaul.pdf](http://www.tormis.ee/Some_problems_with_that_regilaul.pdf), 26.10.19).
- Torvinen, Juha. and Välimäki, Susanna. 'Nordic Drone: Pedal points and static textures as musical imagery of the northerly environment', in *The Nature of Nordic Music*, ed. Tim Howell (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2020), pp. 173-192.
- Tuck, Eve and Yang, K. Wayne. 'Decolonization is not a metaphor', *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1/1 (2012), pp. 1-40.
- Tuhiwai Smith, Linda. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books Ltd, 2012 [1999]).
- Tuttle, Raymond. 'Review: Veljo Tormis, *Litany to Thunder*', *ClassicalNet*, 2000 (accessed online, <http://www.classical.net/music/recs/reviews/e/ecm01687a.php>, 26.10.19).
- Urbaitis, Mindaugas and Nakas, Šarūnas. 'THEME. New Postminimalist music in Lithuania'. *Lithuanian Music Link No. 12*, 2006, Lithuanian Music Information Centre

(accessed online, <http://www.mic.lt/en/discourses/lithuanian-music-link/no-12-april-september-2006/theme-new-postminimalist-music-in-lithuania/>,

26.10.19).

Urbietytė-Urmonienė, Vaida. 'Interview with Justina Repeckaite: "I had a sincere confidence in my piece"', as published in English on Repečkaitė website, October 12 2013 (accessed online, <http://www.justinarepeckaite.eu/press/interview-with-justina-repeckaite-i-had-a-sincere-confidence-in-my-piece/>, 23.10.19), originally published in Lithuanian in *Literatūra ir menas*.

Utyra, Evaldas. 'Atleidžiamas "Vilniaus festivalių" vadovas R. Merkelys', *DELFI*, January 15 2009 (accessed online, <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/atleidziamas-vilniaus-festivaliu-vadovas-r-merkelys.d?id=20097835>, 23.10.19).

Van Elsuwege, Peter. *From Soviet Republics to EU Member States: A Legal and Political Assessment of the Baltic States Accession to the EU* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff, 2008).

Varga, Bálint. 'The Courage of Composers and the Tyranny of Taste: Reflections on New Music', 2016, Vykintas Baltakas website (accessed online, [http://www.baltakas.net/texts/2016\\_Varga\\_courage/](http://www.baltakas.net/texts/2016_Varga_courage/), 22.01.21).

Veisbergs, Andrejs. 'Nazi and Soviet Dysphemism and Euphemism in Latvian', in *Baltic Postcolonialism* ed. Violeta Kelertas (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006), pp. 139-164.

Vernier, David. 'Review: Baltic Voices Vol. 3', *Classics Today*, 2005 (accessed online, <https://www.classicstoday.com/review/review-12039/>, 26.10.19).

Vizulis, Izidors. *The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939: The Baltic Case* (New York: Praeger, 1990).

Volkov, Solomon. *Testimony: The Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich* (London: Faber and Faber, 1987 [1979]).

Walker, Shaun. 'Racism, sexism, Nazi economics: Estonia's far right in power', *The Guardian*, May 21 2019 (accessed online, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/may/21/racism-sexism-nazi-economics-estonia-far-right-in-power-ekre>, 19.10.19).

Whittall, Arnold. 'Individualism and accessibility: the moderate mainstream, 1945–75', *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Anthony Pople (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

Wigley, Samuel. 'Is it time to give Pärt a rest?', *The Guardian*, May 29 2008 (accessed online, <https://www.theguardian.com/film/filmblog/2008/may/29/timetogivepartarest>, 26.10.19).

Williams, Raymond. 'Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory', *New Left*

- Review 1/82* (1973) (accessed online, <https://newleftreview.org/issues/i82/articles/raymond-williams-base-and-superstructure-in-marxist-cultural-theory>, 06.01.2021).
- Wishart, Trevor. *On Sonic Art* (Amsterdam: Harwood, 1996).
- Wittener Tage Für Neue Kammermusik 2018 Programme, WDR 3 (accessed online, [https://www.kulturforum-witten.de/uploads/tx\\_cikofilelist/Programmflyer\\_2018.pdf](https://www.kulturforum-witten.de/uploads/tx_cikofilelist/Programmflyer_2018.pdf), 25.10.19).
- 'Aachen pavement cosmatesque', Wikimedia Commons (accessed online, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aachen\\_Pavement\\_cosmatesque\\_24092016\\_1.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aachen_Pavement_cosmatesque_24092016_1.jpg), 07.12.20).
- 'About Helena Tulse — A Short Biography', Helena Tulse website (accessed online, <http://helenatulse.ee/about.html>, 07.01.21).
- 'Albertas Navickas, PhD', UCSF Profiles, University of California, San Francisco (accessed online, <https://profiles.ucsf.edu/albertas.navickas>, 25.10.19).
- 'Andris Dzenītis', Latvian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.lmic.lv/en/composers/andris-dzenitis-304#!/>, 23.10.19).
- 'Biography', Justina Repečkaitė website (accessed online, <http://www.justinarepeckaite.eu/biography/>, 23.10.19).
- 'Biography', Romualds Grīnblats website (accessed online, <https://www.romualdgrinblat.com/biography>, 26.01.21).
- 'Biography', Vykintas Baltakas website (accessed online, <http://www.baltakas.net/biography/>, 16.11.20).
- 'Biography — Lepo Sumera', Estonian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.emic.ee/?sisu=heliloojad&mid=58&id=90&lang=eng&action=view&method=biograafia>, 07.01.21).
- 'Bronius Kutavičius', Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/composers/kutavicius/#bio>, 21.10.19).
- 'Contemporary Music Festival "Gaida" 2018', *LT Life*, October 21 2018 (accessed online, <https://ltlife.lt/lt-life-english/contemporary-music-festival-gaida-2018/>, 19.10.19).
- 'Design', Brand Estonia (accessed online, <https://brand.estonia.ee/design/>, 20.10.19).
- 'Dubra, Rihards (1964)', *Musica Baltica* (accessed online, <https://www.musicabaltica.com/en/composers-and-authors/dubra-rihards/>, 07.01.21).
- 'ECM review: Veljo Tormis, *Litany to Thunder*'. November 13 2012 (accessed online, <https://ecmreviews.com/tag/veljo-tormis/>, 26.10.19).

- 'Eesti Stiil — Estonia Style'. Enterprise Estonia, 2002. (accessed online, <https://arhiiv.pixel.ee/eas/eesti-brand/2002-2008/2002-eesti-brand-welcome-to-estonia.pdf>, 18.10.19).
- 'Egidija Medekšaitė', Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/composers/medeksaite/>, 23.10.19).
- 'Eriks Ešenvalds by Portland State University Chamber Choir', Barnes & Noble (accessed online, <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/eriks-esenvalds-translations-portland-state-university-chamber-choir/34633661>, 23.01.21).
- 'Erkki-Sven Tüür', Estonian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.emic.ee/?sisu=heliloojad&mid=58&id=95&lang=eng&action=view&method=biograafia>, 07.01.21).
- 'Final Chapter of Rytis Mažulis at the Megadisc Classics Catalogues', Lithuanian Music Information Centre, August 2007 (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/news/2007/08/20/final-Chapter-of-rytis-mazulis-at-the-megadisc-cla/>, 23.09.19).
- 'Finno-Ugric Languages', *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (accessed online, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Finno-Ugric-languages>, 26.10.19).
- 'Full List of Compositions', Rūta Vitkauskaitė website (accessed online, <https://rutavitkauskaite.weebly.com/all-works.html>, 25.10.19).
- 'Gaida 2019', Vilnius Festivals website (accessed online, <https://www.vilniusfestivals.lt/gaida-2019-2/>, 19.10.19).
- 'Ģederts Ramans', Latvian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.lmic.lv/en/composers/gederts-ramans-2731#work>, 26.01.21).
- 'Generative Art', Tate (accessed online, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/g/generative-art>, 06.10.20).
- 'Grand duchy of Lithuania', *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (accessed online, <https://www.britannica.com/place/grand-duchy-of-Lithuania>, 19.10.19).
- 'Grażyna Bacewicz', Polish Music Centre (accessed online, <https://polishmusic.usc.edu/research/composers/grazyna-bacewicz/>, 23.10.19).
- 'Heino Eller', Estonian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.emic.ee/heino-eller>, 20.10.19).
- 'Helena Tulve', Estonian Composers Union (accessed online, <http://www.helilooja.ee/en/members/helena-tulve/>, 07.01.21).
- 'Helena Tulve', Estonian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.emic.ee/?sisu=heliloojad&mid=58&id=101&lang=eng&action=view&method=biograafia>, 07.01.21).

'Home', Andris Dzenītis website (accessed online, <https://dzenitis.webs.com>, 07.01.21).

'Imagery', Brand Estonia (accessed online, <https://brand.estonia.ee/design/imagery/>, 20.10.19).

'Jeronimas Kačinskas', Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/composers/kacinskas/#bio>, 22.10.19).

'Justina Repečkaitė', Lithuanian Music Information Centre website (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/composers/repeckaite/>, 03.12.20).

'Lepo Sumera', Estonian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.emic.ee/lepo-sumera>, 07.01.21).

'Lepo Sumera', World Music Days (accessed online, <https://www.worldmusicdays2019.ee/en/bio/lepo-sumera/>, 07.01.21).

'Lithuanian Composers' Union', Lietuvos Kompozitorių Sąjunga (LCU) website (accessed online, <http://www.lks.lt/index.php?page=en>, 27.09.18).

'Mart Saar', Estonian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.emic.ee/mart-saar-est>, 20.10.19).

'Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis', Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/composers/ciurlionis/#bio>, 07.01.21).

'Nomedas Valančiūtė', Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/composers/valanciute/>, 21.10.19).

'Osvaldas Balakauskas', Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/composers/balakauskas/#bio>, 22.10.19).

'Osvaldas Balakauskas', NAXOS website (accessed online, [https://www.naxos.com/person/Osvaldas\\_Balakauskas/27302.htm](https://www.naxos.com/person/Osvaldas_Balakauskas/27302.htm), 23.08.18).

'Parallel 7ths in Jazz', Harmony.org.uk website, (accessed online, [https://www.harmony.org.uk/book/voice\\_leading/sevenths\\_in\\_jazz.htm](https://www.harmony.org.uk/book/voice_leading/sevenths_in_jazz.htm);; 14.09.20).

'Pasaka (1995-97), for piano and electronics', Vykintas Baltakas website (accessed online, <http://www.baltakas.net/work/pasaka>, 16.11.20.)

'Pēteris Plakidis: Orchestral Works', *Toccata Classics* (accessed online, <https://toccataclassics.com/product/plakidis-music-for-string-orchestra/>, 26.10.19).

'Pēteris Vasks', *Ondine* (accessed online, <https://www.ondine.net/?lid=en&cid=4.2&oid=583>, 07.01.21).

'Premiere of string quartet "Unbenannt-2"', Repečkaitė website (accessed online, <http://www.justinarepeckaite.eu/news/premiere-of-string-quartet-unbenannt-2/>, 19.10.20).

'Press Reviews', Dzenītis website (accessed online, <https://dzenitis.webs.com/pressreviews.htm>, 07.01.21).

- 'Remigijus Merkelys', Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/composers/merkelys/#bio>, 23.10.19).
- 'Rytis Mažulis', Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/composers/mazulis/#bio>, 15.12.20).
- 'Rytis Mažulis. "Twittering Machine"', *Bernardinai*, November 28, 2005 (accessed online, <http://www.bernardinai.lt/straipsnis/2005-11-28-rytis-mazulis-twittering-machine/12508>, 23.09.19).
- 'Sandwriting', Vyckintas Baltakas website (accessed online, <http://www.baltakas.net/work/sandwriting>, 16.11.20).
- 'Smokey Arnold', Vyckintas Baltakas website (accessed online, <http://www.baltakas.net/work/smokey-arnold>, 16.11.20).
- 'Svanholm Singers – Veljo Tormis: Works for men's voices' *Tocatta Classics* (accessed online, <https://toccataclassics.com/product/tormis-works-for-mens-voices/>, 26.10.19).
- 'The Modern Music of Lithuania: Past & Present', Lithuanian Music Information Centre. (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/history/>, 23.09.19).
- 'Tomas Kutavičius', Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/composers/kutaviciustomas/>, 25.10.19).
- 'UN classifies Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia as Northern Europe', *Kyiv Post*, January 9 2017 (accessed online, <https://www.kyivpost.com/world/un-classifies-latvia-lithuania-estonia-northern-europe.html?cn-reloaded=1>, 25.10.19).
- 'Vilnius Festivals', Vilnius Festivals website (accessed online, <https://www.vilniusfestivals.lt/en/>, 19.10.19).
- 'Visuality', Oxford Reference (accessed online, <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803120057418>, 19.10.20).
- 'Vytautas Bacevičius', Lithuanian Music Information Centre (accessed online, <https://www.mic.lt/en/database/classical/composers/bacevicius/>, 22.10.19).
- 'Wind instruments', Folk Instruments LT (accessed online, <http://www.folkinstruments.lt/eng/puciamieji.htm#daudyte>, 26.10.19).