IS SORRY REALLY THE HARDEST WORD? GUILT, FORGIVENESS, AND RECONCILIATION IN CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

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ABSTRACT

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Ariana S. Phillips-Hutton

Guilt, forgiveness, and reconciliation are fundamental themes in human musical life, and this thesis investigates how people articulate these experiences through musical performance in contemporary genres. I argue that by participating in performances, individuals enact social narratives that create and reinforce wider ideals of music's roles in society.

I assess the interpenetrations of music and guilt, forgiveness, and reconciliation through a number of case studies spanning different genres preceded by a brief introduction to my methodology. My analysis of Arnold Schoenberg's *A Survivor from Warsaw* illustrates the themes (guilt, confession and memorialisation) and approach I adopt in the three main case studies. My examination of William Fitzsimmons's indie folk album *The Sparrow and the Crow*, investigates how ideals of authenticity, self-revelation, and persona structure our understanding of the relationship between performer and audience in confessional indie music. Analyses of two contemporary choral settings of Psalm 51 by Arvo Pärt and James MacMillan examine the confessional relationship between human beings and God. I suggest that by transubstantiating the sacramental traditions of confession in pieces designed for the concert hall, these composers navigate the boundary between the aesthetic and the sacramental. Lastly, I contrast two pieces connected to reconciliation efforts in Australia and South Africa: I argue that the unified narrative of healing in Kerry Fletcher's "Sorry Song" becomes a performative communal apology, whilst the fragmented, multi-vocal narrative of Philip Miller's *REwind: A Cantata for Voice, Tape and Testimony* illustrates how

reconciliation may be achieved through constructing a collective history that acknowledges the multiplicity of testimony in post-apartheid society.

I conclude that these pieces provide a means for people to enact narratives of guilt, forgiveness, and reconciliation and point towards new areas of study on the multivalent relationship between contemporary music and memory.

Declaration

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except where specifically indicated in the text. It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted, in part or whole for a degree, diploma, or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution.

In accordance with the Department of Music guidelines, this thesis does not exceed 80,000 words.

Signed:_____

Date:_____

Ariana Sarah Phillips-Hutton, BMus, MMus
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For my mother, who first introduced me to music

Now, we come to discover that the moments of agony
(Whether, or not, due to misunderstanding,
Having hoped for the wrong things or dreaded the wrong things,
Is not in question) are likewise permanent
With such permanence as time has. We appreciate this better
In the agony of others, nearly experienced,
Involving ourselves, than in our own.
For our own past is covered by the currents of action,
But the torment of others remains an experience
Unqualified, unworn by subsequent attrition.
People change, and smile: but the agony abides.
Time the destroyer is time the preserver.

—T.S. Eliot, "The Dry Salvages", l. 105–116

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I once wrote that the PhD was a breeding-ground for neurosis. I still believe that to be true to some extent, though the damaging effects of such neuroses appear somewhat diminished from the position of having submitted this thesis. My foremost weapons in the combatting of these have been the relationships, both intellectual and personal, that I have developed over the course of my PhD and I thus have many people to thank for their assistance in the undertaking of this ostensibly solitary research.

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Nicholas Cook, for his unfailing interest in and support of my work and his generosity in sharing the fruits of his immense knowledge. His advice and guidance has been invaluable; moreover, his blisteringly quick email response time has provided a formidable benchmark for any of my future professor-student interactions.

Secondly, I would like to thank my examiners, Professor Nicola Dibben and Professor Mervyn Cooke, for the time and effort they dedicated to reading this thesis. Their kind and thoughtful comments have shaped my thinking in the final stages of this project and their eagle eyes have greatly reduced the number of errors found in these pages.

Thirdly, I am beholden to a number of individuals and institutions for their support, including to The Cambridge Trust for their financial support of my research. Amongst others, I am especially grateful to Philip Miller and Liza Key for their provision of materials related to *REwind: A Cantata for Voice, Tape, and Testimony*, and to David Wiseman and Charlotte Maseremule for information regarding translations.

Finally, there are debts so deep that they could never be repaid. Thank you to my friends and colleagues who have been sounding boards, writing partners, editors, and fellow travellers across the topography of academic life: "summits of happiness and success, flat stretches of boring routine, and valleys

of frustration and failure" (Bill Watterson, "Calvin and Hobbes"). Thank you to my parents, who have encouraged and supported me throughout my life, to my grandparents, whose generosity and commitment to my education has been unswerving, and to my siblings, who have provided much-needed listening ears and companionship. A special word of thanks is due to Carissa Phillips-Garrett for sharing our weekly Skype chats that wove the celebrations and struggles of our respective PhDs into discussions that ranged from the state of humanity to family news. Last, but not least amongst these myriads of debts is that which I owe to my husband, Alex, who has been unstinting in his belief in me through good times and bad. To all of you, named and unnamed, I am ever grateful.

> Changing ourselves. Surely that must be what we're after when we look at pictures and watch movies and listen to music? It sounds more Californian than it really is.
>
> —Brian Eno, "Miraculous Cures and the Canonization of Basquiat"

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1 INTRODUCTION

> All of my creation is an effort to weave a web of connection with the world; I am always weaving it because it was once broken.
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> —Anaïs Nin, diary, Winter 1942[1]

On Christmas Day, 1989, Leonard Bernstein conducted the second of two historic performances of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in the Berlin *Schauspielhaus* marking the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of the city and, implicitly, the country. The symbolism of the occasion could hardly have been more pronounced, particularly as Bernstein substituted the word "Freiheit [freedom]" for Schiller's original "Freude [joy]" in the last movement. Yet, even in the case of a performance whose significance seems clear, the question remains: what are we doing when we engage with music? In his seminal book *Music: A Very Short Introduction*, Nicholas Cook suggests one answer for this question, writing: "Music doesn't just happen, it is what we make it, and what we make of it. People think through music, decide who they are through it, express themselves through it. ... It is less a 'something' than a

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[1] Anaïs Nin, *The Diary of Anaïs Nin: Volume 3, 1939–1944*, ed. Gunther Stuhlmann (San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1969), 231.

way of knowing the world, a way of being ourselves."[2] Amongst other things, Bernstein's Beethoven offered an opportunity for his audience to be themselves within a world in which new-found freedom would mean that "Alle Menschen werden Brüder [all men will become brothers]". Even though this particular vision has not been realised, given the deeply intertwined nature of music and human society it is unsurprising to discover that many of the same subjects that dominate social life are also found in music.

"Music is something we do with and for other people."[3] The social ramifications of music are at the forefront of the opening salvo of *Musical Communication* by Dorothy Miell, Raymond MacDonald, and David J. Hargreaves. From these ten short words several key points for my argument may be extracted. First, that 'music' may be understood concretely as an activity such as that implied by Christopher Small's term 'musicking'. In the face of definitions of music as "sounding object" and the linguistic conflation of 'music' and a particular instantiation of music (as in a score, recording, or even performance), this is an important distinction. Second, that human beings make purposeful use of music. Throughout history, we have made music in order to communicate to other members of society, to put ourselves in touch with a divine force or higher power, to provide entertainment for ourselves and others, to bind together different individuals or groups, to ease the monotony of work, to mourn the dead, to woo lovers, to offer propitiation, and so on throughout all facets of life. Finally, musical activity is intrinsically social, involving layers of relationships that are created and maintained between individuals and groups. From within a general framework that interprets music as a culturally significant activity through which both individuals and groups enact social narratives, I attempt to answer the

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[2] Nicholas Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), vi–vii.

[3] Dorothy Miell, Raymond MacDonald and David J. Hargreaves, eds., *Musical Communication* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1.

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fundamental question of what we are doing when we engage with themes of guilt, forgiveness, and reconciliation within music.

I approach this question via a series of case studies spanning a variety of contemporary music genres. I explore some of the ways in which the relationship between music performance and the experiences of guilt, forgiveness, and reconciliation extends our understanding of how individuals and societies choose to narrate their lived experience through music. As a means of introducing both the field and my methodology within it, this chapter is devoted to setting out the relevant developments within musicological and other scholarly literature and explicating how the approach I develop can be applied through a brief analysis of Arnold Schoenberg's *A Survivor from Warsaw*.

The study of music as a culturally significant activity that enacts social narratives is one claimed by multiple different areas within the study of music. Perhaps the most familiar is ethnomusicology, one of whose founding fathers, Alan Merriam, offered the memorable definition of ethnomusicology as "the study of music in culture". Later he expanded this as the interface between "conceptualization about music, behaviour in relation to music, and music sound itself".[4] The commitment to the social nature of music within ethnomusicology is further articulated in the work of Steven Feld, who advocated "sound structure as social structure", with the additional implication that social life is itself sonically structured.[5] This emphasis stems in part from ethnomusicology's roots in anthropology, but although ethnomusicologists may have been among most consistent advocates for the importance of music's cultural and social character, they are not the only scholars of music to be so concerned. In recognition of weakening disciplinary

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[4] Alan Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 6, 32.

[5] Steven Feld, "Sound Structure as Social Structure", *Ethnomusicology* 28, no. 3 (Sept. 1984): 383–409.

boundaries between musicology and ethnomusicology, Cook declared in 2001 that "we are all (ethno)musicologists now".[6] Many scholars reference Claude Palisca's pronouncement that "the musicologist is concerned with music that exists, whether as an oral or a written tradition, and with everything that can shed light on its human context", but how this idealised image of the musicologist is translated into musicological praxis has proven difficult to define.[7] Despite the attractive conceptual breadth of such an all-encompassing (ethno)musicology, a sense lingers that the overlap between musicology and ethnomusicology is still incomplete.

The increasing critical and interpretive cast within musicology has led to the addition of the prefix 'cultural' in some quarters, and the close relationship between 'cultural musicology' and ethnomusicology is evident in their intertwined histories. Although the expression 'cultural musicology' appeared in an essay written by Fidelis Smith in 1959, its first application of note in the scholarly world was Gilbert Chase's 1972 proposal that cultural musicology could be an acceptable replacement for the term ethnomusicology, which he thought too restrictive; thirty years later, Lawrence Kramer suggested that it could be re-purposed as a new name for the "fast-ageing 'new musicology'".[8] Neither usage has quite caught on, even though the general approach of cultural musicology, described in an attack on ethnomusicology by Birgit Abels as a holistic understanding of music that is informed not only by historical, systematic, and ethno-musicologies, but also by cultural anthropology and cultural studies, is of interest to many who

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[6] Nicholas Cook, "We Are All (Ethno)musicologists Now", in *The New (Ethno)musicologies*, ed. Harry Stobart (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2008): 48–70.

[7] Claude V. Palisca, "American Scholarship in Western Music", in *Musicology*, ed. Frank LL Harrison, Mantle Hood and Claude V. Palisca (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), 116.

[8] Fidelis Smith, "The Place of Music in a Franciscan Vocation and Apostolate", *Franciscan Studies* 19 (1959): 164; Gilbert Chase, "American Musicology and the Social Sciences", in *Perspectives in Musicology*, ed. Barry S. Brook, Edward O.D. Downes, Sherman van Solkema (New York: W.W. Norton, 1972), 220; Lawrence Kramer, "Musicology and Meaning", *The Musical Times* 114, no. 1883 (Summer 2003): 6.

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might otherwise consider themselves as historical, systematic, or ethnomusicologists.[9] This expansive cross-disciplinary approach to music has chafed some scholars, particularly those who see particular methods (for instance, fieldwork in ethnomusicology) as crucial distinctions, and influential figures from Joseph Kerman to Adam Krims have expressed doubts about the value of a musicology that seems to lack a robust, unifying methodological framework.[10]

In an attempt to elucidate just such a framework for 'cultural musicology' (this time conceived as a sub-discipline of musicology rather than a replacement for ethnomusicology) Wim van der Meer offers a three-pronged approach based around the ideas of transdisciplinarity, in which a variety of disciplines are believed to interact; encounter, by which he means the live experience of music; and the assertion that theoretical concepts should be considered tools for understanding and interpretation.[11] While van der Meer's points are individually suggestive, it is difficult to see how an approach predicated on the flexibility implied by 'transdisciplinarity' could be profitably fleshed out as a definitive statement, and indeed, van der Meer and his co-author Rebecca Erickson acknowledge that their description remains an "open set" of variables. In contrast, Andy Bennett's stress on the relationship between cultural studies, sociology, and musicology is illuminating in the context of this field. Bennett emphasizes cultural musicology's kinship with other areas of study which have appended the designation 'cultural' to the core discipline, suggesting that such a demarcation "means culture is recast as a reflexive *process* encapsulating elements of [socio-economic forces] but

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[9] Birgit Abels, inaugural lecture, University of Göttingen, June 2011, cited in Wim van der Meer and Rebecca Erickson, "Resonating Cultural Musicology: Sources, Streams and Issues", Cultural Musicology iZine [http://culturalmusicology.org] (2013).

[10] See Joseph Kerman, *Contemplating Music: Challenges to Musicology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985) and Adam Krims, *Urban Geography* (New York: Routledge, 2007) for more on this.

[11] Wim van der Meer and Rebecca Erickson, "Resonating Cultural Musicology: Sources, Streams and Issues", Cultural Musicology iZine [http://culturalmusicology.org] (2013).

considering their significance within a framework of lifestyle projects constructed by active agents through everyday practices of cultural consumption."[12] Bennett's "lifestyle projects" encompass the collective cultural practices and aesthetic sensibilities that individuals use to mark out their collective identities, thereby tying cultural musicology closely to concepts of identity formation as deployed in cultural studies and sociology. Nevertheless, the means by which a cultural musicologist might investigate the significance of these collective practices include elements borrowed from various disciplines, including ethnography, reception studies, and empirical or textual analysis, which grant cultural musicology some of the same flexibility that is a hallmark of ethnomusicology.

As the previous paragraphs suggest, disciplinary terminology is constantly changing. More recently, a 'relational musicology' has emerged, which takes cultural musicology's emphasis on the ways individuals construct a culture through music a step further. The term relational is frequently associated with Georgina Born, who suggests that a relational analysis involves describing the "topologies of unities and differences, continuities and discontinuities" that define, in her examples, the Institute for Research and Coordination in Acoustics/Music (IRCAM), or "the historic relations between art, popular, and vernacular musics".[13] Such a turn within musicology offers a challenge to historical conceptual boundaries by incorporating insights from anthropology, social theory, and history in order to achieve a truly interdisciplinary approach to music. While her advocacy for an anthropologically-centred method comprising an "expanded analytics of the social and cultural in music"[14] is a welcome development, Born's focus on the

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[12] Andy Bennett, "Popular Music, Cultural Memory and Everyday Aesthetics", in *Philosophical and Cultural Theories of Music*, ed. Eduardo De la Fuente and Peter Murphy (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 243.

[13] Georgina Born, "For a Relational Musicology: Music and Interdisciplinarity, Beyond the Practice Turn", *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 135, no. 2 (2010): 223–224.

[14] Ibid., 231.

challenge this presents to traditional musicology seems overly occupied with re-configuring disciplinary boundaries.

Other authors have construed relational musicology differently, with Mark Slobin suggesting that a relational approach to music is concerned with the multiplicity of "the musical interplay—the cultural counterpoint—between individual, community, small group, state and industry",[15] and can hence be summarised in the term 'interactivity'. One of the distinctive features of Slobin's argument is his interest in the musical construction of identity, and in particular "how complex and meaningful the interplay of personal choice and group activity can be to both individuals and to society".[16] This links his work to Bennett's foregrounding of identity formation as a key aspect of cultural studies in any field. Slobin's commitment to exploring how individuals and groups interact is a key feature in my conception of the emphases of an actively relational musicology.

In an essay entitled "Anatomy of the Encounter: Intercultural Analysis as Relational Musicology", Nicholas Cook picks up on these ideas and extends his own take on what relational musicology comprises, focusing on the aesthetic significance of "the key role that music plays in the mobilizing of social relationships".[17] In this essay, Cook is concerned specifically with the creation of "socialities" and intersubjectivity in music performance, a communal perspective he contrasts with the Romantic- and Modern-era privileging of the individual subject's perspective. Following the work of Alfred Schutz, Cook claims:

> The real-time negotiation of just-so parametrical values … that
> goes on between musical performers and that is replicated less

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[15] Mark Slobin, "Micromusics of the West: A Comparative Approach", *Ethnomusicology* 36 (1992): 4.

[16] Ibid., 21.

[17] Nicholas Cook, "Anatomy of the Encounter", in *Critical Musicological Reflections: Essays in Honour of Derek B Scott*, ed. Stan Hawkins (Surrey, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2012), 195.

> tangibly among all participants in a musical event, is an enacting of intersubjectivity and social relationship in which each is dependent on the other ... [s]een this way, music becomes not just a metaphor but a metonym of social interaction.[18]

In the same publication, Cook suggests that relational musicology is "a means for addressing key personal, social and cultural work that is accomplished by music in today's world" that examines the processes of meaning production in addition to musical products.[19] Like Cook, I am intrigued by how musical performance creates and maintains relationships in the contemporary world, though in this project the centre of my attention is on the connections between performer and audience (both terms are broadly conceived) rather than strictly amongst performers on a stage.

The metatheory of the various musicologies I have listed above reveals an abiding concern with self-definition countered by an increasingly broad range of subjects and approaches in the study of music. While the boundaries that seem to divide one branch of study from another are of limited use for this project, I have included them here as a means of situating my own approach within the panoply of scholarly work that exists on this subject. One of the attractions of working within a broadly-conceived musicology (cultural, relational, ethno- or otherwise) is the freedom to move between topics and approaches as appropriate. This flexibility and expansiveness is especially useful in projects such as mine which are thematically united, but which address music that is generically or chronologically dispersed. Although this project resonates with the work of a number of different thinkers, I do not seek to apply any one theory to music as cultural practice but rather begin with music making as a social practice before tracing the interpretive line back to various theoretical approaches. Thus, in approaching a case study, I may borrow from performance studies, sociological approaches, and music-

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[18] Ibid., 195–196.

[19] Ibid.

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theoretical analysis without producing a fully-fledged analysis that is contained within any of those fields. This allows me to address a variety of concerns with the help of a well-stocked methodological toolbox. Keeping in mind the anthropologist Clifford Geertz's notion of convergent data, I bring "descriptions, measures, observations ... which are at once diverse, even rather miscellaneous both as to type and degree of precision and generality ... into a mutually reinforcing network."[20] My conclusions, then, emerge from the intersections of scholarly positions both within and without music studies. In the sections that follow I discuss a number of these interpretive tools as structuring elements, including ideas of performance, the construction of meaning, the influence of mediation, and the framing effect of genre.

1.1 A performative turn

Following what has been labelled the 'performative turn' within musicology, my analysis takes the formulation of music as performance as a foundational concept. The privileging of performance results in part from the conviction that music is a temporal art and as such can only be fully experienced moment by moment through the medium of listening. Implicit in this is the assertion that to speak of a 'work' of music as divisible from its instantiation involves a certain distortion of experience. It also recognises (as have many others) that speaking of music in the conventional manner as works or pieces mediated by scores creates some difficulties. For instance, Lydia Goehr has argued persuasively that the concept of the musical work is historically contingent and emergent, which should caution against its wholesale adoption to describe the different musics under discussion in this thesis.[21] Moreover, as

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[20] Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 156.

[21] See Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 1994), 89–119.

Stan Godlovitch contends, even in genres where the historical concept regulates our understanding, the works that scores are said to represent "massively underdetermine their performances".[22] Performance is, in Cook's concise definition, "an art of telling detail—detail that falls between the notes of musical texts and the words of literary ones".[23] The lack of commensurability between the written and aural realms is intuitively understood in the sense that the score of a piece of Western art music is considered drastically incomplete as a visual analogue to a sounding art, infamous pronouncements about the desirability of performance without performers by figures such as Schoenberg and Stravinsky notwithstanding. At the same time, a simple denial that musical works exist would lie uneasily with the sense that one experiences music as a performance *of* something—of a piece of music that possesses a greater or lesser solidity in terms of its structural characteristics.

The problems that arise from the division between performance, work, and score have driven scholars to find other terms to describe the object of a performance, whether it is Peter Kivy's "performance (product)", Ingrid Monson's "musical texts", or Cook's own suggestion of the score as a musical "script".[24] These terms sidestep some of the accumulated metaphysical baggage of 'work' as outlined by Goehr, while the idea of the score as script has the additional benefit of providing a close link to the theatrical world of performance studies as well as conveying the reminder that a performance is something enacted by performers, thereby directing our attention back to the social character of all performance. Despite the advantages of this alternative

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[22] Stan Godlovitch, quoted in Lydia Goehr, "The Perfect Performance of Music and the Perfect Musical Performance", *New Formations* 27 (1996): 3.

[23] Nicholas Cook, *Beyond the Score: Music as Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 3.

[24] Peter Kivy, *Authenticities: Philosophical Reflections on Musical Performance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 115; Ingrid Monson, *Saying Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 186; Nicholas Cook, "Between Process and Product: Music and/as Performance", *Music Theory Online* 7 (April 2001): §15.

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terminology, in the arguments that follow I regularly use the word 'work' to describe the abstract entity on which a collection of performance events is based; nevertheless, this use of 'work' is couched within an approach that asserts the primacy of the act of musical performance.

The idea of music as performance provides a useful segue into the idea of music as performative. The concept of performativity originates in the speech act theory of the Oxford philosopher of language J. L. Austin, who sought a method for distinguishing between indicative sentences that describe a state or impart a fact (termed constative speech) and other types of sentences which seem to do neither of these things. He called these non-statement sentences 'performative utterances' in order to indicate "that the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action" rather than being "just saying something".[25] A performative utterance, or "illocutionary act" is thus a speech act that shapes reality by acting upon the world, for instance in constructing an identity or effecting a change of state. Austin's examples of such utterances include the statement "I now pronounce you husband and wife" in a marriage ceremony and the characteristic "I give and bequeath *x* to *y*" found in wills.[26] As these suggest, a variety of speech types can be considered performative, including declarations, threats, requests, and (most importantly for my purposes) apologies. Many of the speech acts I discuss in this project fall under Austin's definition of performative utterance as either apologies or as acts of forgiveness. Confessional speech, which is another significant thread, is both performative and constative in that it implies the presence of both a performative self who makes the confession, and a constative self who is being confessed about. This doubling of persona makes the analysis of confessional speech particularly intriguing and I will explore it in greater depth in the next chapter.

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[25] J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, ed. J.O. Urmson and Marina Sbisá, 2nd edition (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), 6–7.

[26] Ibid., 5.

Austin argued that performative statements cannot be evaluated as either true or false, but rather constitute an action that can be viewed as happy or unhappy, depending on whether or not the statement and the conditions under which it is uttered are appropriate. These 'felicity conditions' vary according to the type of speech act under consideration; nevertheless, Austin lists several generalised constraints of which the most pertinent are the appropriateness of the participants and circumstances, the correct and complete execution of the procedure, and the sincerity of the speaker. If an utterance fails to comply with a felicity condition it is said to be 'infelicitous'; specifically, if it violates one of the first two conditions, the act the speech is supposed to effect is said to be void. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why Lady Diana Spencer's mistake in repeating her husband-to-be Prince Charles's names during her marriage vows caused such a stir![27] If instead the speech act is judged to violate the condition of sincerity, it is said to be in bad faith, which introduces a measure of ambiguity in evaluating performative speech: for instance, reasonable people may well disagree about whether or not an apology is sincere. By evaluating a speech act according to these conditions it is possible to make a judgement on its success as a performative utterance.

Given that I am concerned not only with how language accomplishes things in everyday speech, but also with how language is used within the specialised format of a staged performance, the strict application of performative theory may seem ill-advised. Austin himself deliberately excludes explicitly performed speech from his framework:

> [A] performative utterance will, for example, be *in a peculiar way* hollow or void if said by an actor on the stage, or if introduced in a poem, or spoken in a soliloquy. This applies in a similar manner to any and every utterance—a sea-change in special circumstances. Language in such circumstances is in special ways—intelligibly—used not seriously, but ways *parasitic* upon

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[27] The visibly nervous Diana reversed the order of Prince Charles's first two names, claiming she would take "Philip Charles Arthur George" to be her husband rather than "Charles Philip Arthur George".

its normal use—ways which fall under the doctrine of the *etiolations* of language.[28]

What Austin refers to here as non-serious usage is related to what Erving Goffman later refers to as a frame[29], and although Austin sets such uses aside for the purposes of exploring everyday language in *How to Do Things with Words*, the rejection is not as complete as it may initially appear. He holds out the possibility that such language may be incorporated within a more general theory of performativity. By combining the basic principles of Austin's performativity with Goffman's frameworks (a concept to which I will shortly return), I advance the argument that even specialised language can be thought of as performative within particular contextual frames.

Austin's assertion that language is an important means of doing something has been picked up by a number of philosophers and theorists, among them John R. Searle and Judith Butler. The latter is best known within musicology for expanding the idea of performative speech to include speech about ourselves as performative acts. Butler's 1990 publication of *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* introduced the idea of gender performativity to academic discourse. Her argument that gendered behaviour—whether enacted through the medium of verbal or non-verbal action—does not merely express a pre-existing gender identity but actually constitutes it, contributed to the surge of interest in feminist and queer readings of musical performance that continues to influence the course of musicology today. The contention that gender is an enacted or—more pointedly—embodied performance has implications for understanding the performance of identity more broadly conceived. Butler's interest in the social construction of gender can be tied to parallel developments in theatre studies, particularly the work of Richard Schechner and Victor Turner, the former of

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[28] Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 21–22.

[29] See Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*, 1974 rpt. (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1986).

whom defines performance as "twice-behaved behaviour" in order to emphasise the way in which all social actions are constituted by previous actions.[30] Beyond the specifics of gender or the enclosed space of the theatre, the structuring of identity through mutually-reinforcing networks of action and discourse has been promulgated by Stuart Hall, who considers identity as "the meeting point, the point of *suture*" between the processes that construct individual subjectivities and those that attempt to "hail us into place as the social subjects of particular discourses." By placing identities at the centre of these conflicting forces, Hall situates them as "points of temporary attachment to the subject positions discursive practices construct for us."[31] Although a full theorisation of identity lies beyond the scope of this project, I position music as a key means by which people define themselves and accordingly reference the social performance of various identities regularly.

1.2 A conceptual toolbox

I have included this relatively lengthy explication of the role and nature of performance because of its centrality to my overall approach. In the following short sections I lay out several areas of investigation that inform my analysis of the case studies in the chapters that follow. Due to the differences in provenance and performance format of each work, my methodology is tailored to each case accordingly; however, at the core of my approach is a unified yet supple methodology in which analysis of the musical structure, by which I mean the relationships between the sonic and textual materials that make up an individual piece, is put into dialogue with elements derived from history, anthropology, psychology, sociology and philosophy. Taken together, these

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[30] Richard Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 36.

[31] Stuart Hall, "Introduction: Who Needs Identity?" in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: Sage Publications, 1996), 5–6.

elements give rise to a holistic interpretive approach founded on situating a given performance within its multiple contexts and assessing the attendant relationships. Therefore, I am interested in music not only as sound and activity, but also, to borrow terminology from Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin, as part of a constellation of cultural practices and performative contexts that are intrinsically meaningful.

1.2.1 Knowledge and practice in the archive and the repertoire

The tension between music as performance, as work, and as score that I elucidate above reappears in the consideration of different methods of knowledge transmission I discuss in the following chapters. Diana Taylor has characterised the problem as a dichotomy between what she calls the archive and the repertoire, a distinction which can be roughly equated to knowledge exchanged via "documents, maps, literary texts, letters, archaeological remains, bones, videos, films, CDs, all those items supposedly resistant to change" and knowledge produced through "gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing—in short, all those acts usually thought of as ephemeral, nonreproducible knowledge".[32] When it comes to music, the archive contains all the material that accretes to musical performance: performance records, programme notes, critical reviews, and so on. The repertoire, on the other hand, is more or less synonymous with live performance, or what Taylor calls an "embodied memory", which, "because it is live, exceeds the archive's ability to capture it."[33] Lying in between the archive and the repertoire are scores, recordings, and videos of performances, which under Taylor's definition are intrinsically archival, but which link the archive to the irreproducible (or perhaps irretrievable) live experience by representing the repertoire. Although

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[32] Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 19, 20.

[33] Ibid.

I agree with Taylor that the fullness of the experience of live music-making cannot be captured or recreated by archival means, I find her categorization of items as either repertoire or archive too restrictive; thus, for the purposes of this thesis I use the term performance to cover both the live playing of music and the recordings (both audio and visual) that disseminate that performance.

Owing to both the great interest in the subject of the archive among philosophers and theorists of history and culture and the generally historical orientation of musicology, the archive has often been uppermost in scholarly treatments of musical phenomena. Taylor's argument that the repertoire should be given more prominence reflects the importance of music as an experienced phenomenon. I take the significance of music as repertoire seriously, but my analysis considers music as a practice that expresses an admixture of archival and repertory knowledge, thereby acknowledging the interdependence of content and presentation created in performance. In the chapters that follow, I attempt to broaden the basis of knowledge for my arguments by expanding the kinds of archival sources I draw upon and by paying close attention to how musicians and their audiences enact this knowledge.

One locus for this increase in sources is in my treatment of language. Although all of the works I examine include sung text in addition to instrumental music, my concern with the relationship between music and words runs deeper than the problem of balancing lyrical and sonic analysis. Amongst the essential components of my argument are the web of relationships enacted through the music we perform and listen to and the words we use to describe this music, to understand its effects, and to communicate its meaning to others. Thus, the words I am interested in here are not only the ones contained in scores, but also those used in programme notes, on album covers, and by all participants in any given musical performance. Due to the increasing significance of online musical distribution and discourse, this project draws on a variety of digital sources such as YouTube, Amazon, and blog sites in addition to more traditional sources. For instance, in chapter two, I use comments and reviews left by listeners to

William Fitzsimmons on YouTube, 8tracks.com, and last.fm to illustrate features of his persona, while in chapter three I include a selection of Amazon reviews by listeners to Arvo Pärt and James MacMillan. I treat these sources as traces of listener experience expressed through the medium of online interaction. The language they use is performative in that it not only reflects an individual's particular understanding of an experience, but also becomes a part of how that individual and others might construct an experience as meaningful. These are then incorporated into a musical paratext that continues to influence later reception. Thus, despite their often-ephemeral character, these sources tap into a well of listener experience that traditional sources on reception may overlook.

The use of digital resources such as online comments enriches our sense of how listeners participate in creating meaning in musical performance, yet in these chapters they are intended to be illustrative rather than comprehensive. Given that written responses come most often from those listeners who are invested in a particular artist, readers should bear in mind the inevitably selective nature of the overall comment pool. Likewise, although I collected and manually transcribed sources in order to gain an impression of their overall character, I focus on those comments or reviews that are more detailed than average or that express strong opinions. Even though I situate these responses in a wider context, this method nevertheless emphasizes the experiences of listeners who identify strongly with the artist or the music in question. For these reasons, I balance this archival approach to digital language with full explorations of the gestural, emotive, and enacted contexts of language as it appears in performance.

1.2.2 Tea or coffee? Meaning and affordance

This project engages closely with hermeneutic questions regarding music performance, and as such a few words on the construction of musical meaning within this project are appropriate. Although few authors state it in such bald terms, both cultural and relational musicology are fundamentally concerned

with investigating questions of meaning. The how and what (not to mention the if) of music's meaning has long been a vexing subject, but by replacing the idea that meaning inheres in a given work with the idea that musical meaning is something created at the nexus of work, performance, and audience (with additional input from abstract entities such as culture), cultural musicologists skirt around some of the thorniest issues that have plagued the subject.

One key element in my formation of musical meaning is James J. Gibson's concept of affordance, introduced to musicological discourse by Eric Clarke. Gibson notes in his book *The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems*, "I have coined [affordances] as a substitute for values, a term which carries an old burden of philosophical meaning. I mean simply what things furnish, for good or ill. What they afford the observer, after all, depends on their properties."[34] As an illustration of multivalent meaning Gibson offers the example of a chair, which due to its (archetypal) shape and size might be said to furnish sitting on by humans. Although this may be the chair's primary affordance, there are other possibilities of afforded meaning in the relationship between humans and chairs, including standing on top of, throwing, or (depending on the individual chair's composition) burning, among others. Alternatively, what a chair cannot afford a human in any real sense are activities such as eating or running. Furthermore, a quick glance at another household object reveals that at least some of an object's affordances are socially constructed: a teacup and a coffee mug share similar cylindrical shapes and beverage-containing functions, yet some people will distinguish between those that are primarily for tea and those that are primarily for coffee, while others will use similarly-shaped objects for other purposes entirely. Although these are both examples of physical objects, Gibson sees no meaningful distinction between these samples of material culture and objects, such as music, which are often thought of as non-material, arguing, "symbols

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[34] James J. Gibson, *The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966), 285.

are taken to be profoundly different than things. But … no symbol exists except as it is realized in sound, projected light, mechanical contact, or the like. All knowledge rests on sensitivity."[35] Gibsonian affordance insists on taking objects seriously as conveyors of meaning, but also recognises that this meaning can vary substantially according to the needs of the perceiver or agent; in other words, meaning is found in the relation between object and subject.

In the case of music, the social construction of meaning implies that there exists a range of affordances—or semiotic potential— from which different meanings may be selected on the basis of cultural norms, performance variations, or individual tendencies. Webs of meaning are thereby created by the audience's assimilation of perceived signs in a musical performance into their past experience. In this context, as Cook suggests, meaning can be thought of as "emergent … not reproduced in but created through the act of performance."[36] Following on from this, meaning is also relational in that it is constructed through individual interpretation and therefore contingent upon circumstances. These individual networks of meaning are constantly in flux, but this is not to say that meaning is arbitrary: rather, there exists what Cook refers to as "articulation" or a "sense of play" between music and meaning.[37] This articulation not only prevents a lockstep relationship between musical structures and meanings but allows us to interrogate the relationships between things and an experiencing subject more generally, and to investigate the why and how of meaning construction.

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[35] Ibid., 26.

[36] Nicholas Cook, "Theorizing Musical Meaning", in *Music, Performance, Meaning: Selected Essays*, Ashgate Contemporary Thinkers on Critical Musicology (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007), 223.

[37] Ibid.

1.2.3 Betwixt and between: music and mediation

The insistence on meaning as afforded by musical structure, emergent in performance, and constructed within relational contexts generates a consistent concern with revealing the effect of mediation on our construction of meaning in music performance. Following Keith Negus, I use the term mediation in a variety of contexts. The foundational meaning of mediation as the intermediary act, or the act of coming in-between, has particular resonance in my discussion of sacred music and ritual confession in chapter three, but throughout this project I also draw on the concept of mediation as a means of transmission, or the agency that comes in between reality and social knowledge. Negus's assertion that all objects are mediated by social relationships is also foundational to my approach. Under this concept of mediation he includes not only the practices of all the people who intervene as an object is produced, distributed, and consumed, but also 1) the way media technology is used in the distribution of sound, word, and image, 2) how power and influence is exercised through such mediated relationships, and 3) the impact this has on the creation/reception of artwork. The value of theories of mediation is to prevent the reduction of a musical performance or cultural product to a single, simple reflection of something else. The meaning of a work cannot be understood solely as a mirror of its creator even in the case of a single popular song written, sung, recorded, and performed by an individual. The complexity of cultural processes requires that "music is created, circulated, recognized and responded to according to a range of conceptual assumptions and analytical activities that are grounded in quite particular social relationships, political processes and cultural activities."[38]

One particular subset of mediation is the idea of a performative frame. Deriving from Erving Goffman's analysis, a frame provides a structure for answering the question: what is it that is going on here? Performance studies has popularized the concept of a performance as taking place within a frame,

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[38] Keith Negus, *Popular Music in Theory* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1996), 4.

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which suggests that the events of a performance are governed by a socially defined set of principles that have been internalized by individuals 'in the know'. A change in frame (or, as some might say, a change in context) can result in a changed interpretation of the event, or what Goffman terms "keying": "the set of conventions by which a given activity … is transformed into something patterned on this activity but seen by the participants to be something quite else."[39] The theatre provides a relatively straightforward example of how the same actions are interpreted differently when presented onstage rather than in everyday life—though we would do well to remember that this is itself a learned distinction. Frames may be manifested in particular spaces or modes of performative behaviour, but even when a frame is not immediately apparent, it nonetheless conditions the audience response to a performance. This is not to suggest that a musical performance can only be understood in one context; some of the most contested questions of meaning in this thesis arise from performances which seem to exist within multiple frames, or which resist such neat categorizations.

1.2.4 Kinds, types, and sorts: genre

One of the most common performative framing devices is genre. The discriminations that we make as we listen to music are both complex and astonishingly quick: studies have demonstrated that a snippet of sound lasting only a small fraction of a second is sufficient for many people to identify genres or even to determine a fragment's emotional valence.[40] Saying that this recognition often takes place below the level (or speed) of conscious thought is not to suggest that this is somehow an innate property of sound, for

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[39] Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*, 1974 rpt. (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1986), 43–44.

[40] See *inter alia*, Sandra T. Mace et al., "Genre Identification Of Very Brief Musical Excerpts", *Psychology of Music* 40, no. 1 (January 2012): 112–128; Robert O. Gjerdingen and David Perrott, "Scanning the Dial: The Rapid Recognition of Music Genres", *Journal of New Music Research* 37, no. 2 (June 2008): 93–100.

whether we term the means by which we distinguish between kinds of music cognitive types (Umberto Eco), prototypes (George Lakoff), *habitus* (Pierre Bourdieu), or schemata (Daniel Levitin), they are dependent on learned behaviour. In other words, these distinctions are based on collections of music characteristics (rhythm, instrumentation, presence and type of vocals, etc.) that are culturally significant. Though this decision-making process may be subconscious, the conceptions these categories bring with them are hardly innocent. The kind of music we perceive ourselves to be experiencing conditions our responses, including the overt disciplining of the body seen on the one hand in the hush that falls over a classical music audience when the house lights are lowered and on the other in the semi-spontaneous standing, clapping, and cheering that frequently accompanies the same dimming of the lights at a concert of popular music.

The concept of musical genre has been subject to many attempts at definition, from Franco Fabbri's admirably compact idea of genre as "a set of music events regulated by conventions accepted by a community"[41] to Howard S. Becker's and Pierre Bourdieu's considerations of genre as a description of "a manner of expression that governs artists' work, their peer groups, and the audiences for their work."[42] Meanwhile, Georgina Born has suggested that genres are radically contingent processes that come out of the continually evolving engagement between aesthetic and social formations.[43] In the context of popular music, where genre has been a matter of considerable investigation, Philip Auslander offers a further connection between genre and performance practice in his argument that "musical genres and subgenres define the most

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[41] Franco Fabbri, "How Genres are Born, Change, Die: Conventions, Communities and Diachronic Processes", in *Critical Musicological Reflections: Essays in Honour of Derek B. Scott*, ed. Stan Hawkins (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2012), 188.

[42] See Jennifer C. Lena and Richard A. Peterson, "Classification as Culture: Types and Trajectories of Music Genres", *American Sociological Review* 73, no. 5 (Oct. 2008): 697.

[43] Georgina Born, "Mediation Theory", in *The Routledge Reader on the Sociology of Music*, ed. John Shepherd and Kyle Devine (New York: Routledge, 2015), 364.

basic and important sets of conventions and expectations within which musicians and their audiences function". As such, genres "are crucially important to performers in constructing their performance personae and to audiences in interpreting and responding to them."[44] These definitions share the recognition that genres carry social meanings inside them, both in terms of musical conventions and patterns of behaviour. Moreover, these meanings are not static but change over time alongside social changes.

The construction of genre is picked up by Fabian Holt, for whom a music genre is not only "a type of category", but is also a "fundamental structuring force" that is "bound up with categorical difference" and serves to contextualize music-making and organise its discourses. Holt recognizes that the structural divisions embodied in genre designations are used not only to differentiate between sonic traditions, but between different groups of people and types of behaviour. Therefore, he claims that genre "is not only 'in the music,' but also in the minds and bodies of particular groups of people who share certain conventions", meaning that "it has implications for how, where, and with whom people make and experience music".[45] Although Holt's focus is on genre in popular music, it is nonetheless crucial to understanding music in other contexts, for, as Robert Hatten writes, "once a genre is recognized or provisionally invoked, it guides the listener in the interpretation of particular features ... that can help flesh out a dramatic or expressive scenario."[46] Questions of the framing functions of musical genres appear consistently throughout the case studies in this project, particularly in the sustained discussion of the ramifications of a confessional indie aesthetic in chapter two.

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[44] Philip Auslander, "Performance Analysis and Popular Music: A Manifesto", *Contemporary Theatre Review* 14, no. 1 (2004): 10.

[45] Fabian Holt, *Genre in Popular Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 2–3.

[46] Robert Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), 87.

1.3 Guilt, forgiveness, and reconciliation in music

The bulk of this thesis is structured as a series of case studies, each covering one or more works of music from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. I have chosen a set of pieces heterogeneous in chronological spacing (dates of composition range from the late 1940s through the first decade of the twenty-first century), genre (they cover both art and popular musics), and geographical ties (composers hail from North America, Europe, Africa, and Australia). Initially, the connections linking disparate musical productions— an indie folk album by an American singer-songwriter, two examples of European choral music, a popular song from Australia, and a multimedia cantata from South Africa—may seem tenuous, but a shared involvement in questions of acknowledging guilt and offering reconciliation ties these works together. As situated cultural activities, each one offers a means of exploring guilt, forgiveness, and reconciliation in specific cultural contexts. Furthermore, although the context of every work is distinct, each of these works is relational in the sense of delving into the issues surrounding human relationships, whether these are concrete connections between individuals or groups, or more abstract, as in the relationships between humans and the past or individuals and God.

Social relationships are integral to the survival of humanity, but as flexible connectors between individuals they are susceptible to strain and rupture. If our music both expresses and orders our social relations it follows that music may also reflect our social experiences both good and bad. I claim that music allows listeners to articulate their experiences of these moments of rupture and the corresponding efforts at restoration—processes that I group together under the rubric of guilt, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Our common language for these situations borrows heavily from Judeo-Christian religious concepts so that when we speak of confession of guilt, forgiveness, or reconciliation we are—consciously or unconsciously—aligning our discussion with religious concerns. Whilst I acknowledge the religious connotations of

this language, I believe that these concepts are not limited to that sphere. Indeed, experiences of this kind are pervasive in everyday interactions.

Despite being fundamental to human life, however, they have received little attention as discrete topics within musicological literature. This may be in part due to the challenge this combination raises to the separation of ethics and aesthetics advocated by authors such as Peter Kivy.[47] This separation is given poetic form by W.H. Auden in his poem "The Composer":

> You alone, alone, imaginary song,
> Are unable to say an existence is wrong,
> And pour out your forgiveness like a wine.[48]

Despite the appeal of Auden's non-judgemental art, the closeting of song is artificial at best, as not only arguments over music as a social good but also the ever-growing literature exploring the relationship between music and conflict or empirical studies of music and the moral emotions attest to the widespread conviction that music has moral force. Although I do not make a normative argument regarding the relationship between ethics and aesthetics in this project, I hold to what Damian Cox and Michael Levine call "the very mildly interesting view" of the relationship between music and ethics, that is to say:

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[47] See for example Peter Kivy, "Musical Morality", in *Antithetical Arts: On the Ancient Quarrel between Literature and Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 215–234. Kivy writes, "[that] which enables [philosophical, religious, and possibly literary texts] to possess epistemic moral force, is that they are all capable of expressing complex propositions extensively, and in a systematic way. [...] if that is true, it bodes ill for the epistemic moral force of absolute music, for the obvious reason that absolute music is either totally impotent to express propositions of any kind; or if it can express propositions at all, can do so only at the most primitive, banal level." (222). In addition to disagreeing with Kivy's contention that epistemic moral force is necessarily derived from complex propositions, I agree with Damian Cox and Michael Levine in questioning both Kivy's claims about the lack of moral force in absolute music, and the allowance for its existence only in the textual component of a narrative work. Though the musical texture may not be sufficient for conveying moral thought, it is a necessary component to any such conveyance through musical performance.

[48] W. H. Auden, "The Composer", *Collected Shorter Poems 1927–1957* (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), 125, l. 12–14.

> Although there is no necessary connection between listening to
> or appreciating music and one's moral character, the contingent
> connections are many and various. Music can make one a
> morally better person, but it does not have to. Neither is anyone
> a better person merely by virtue of appreciating or
> understanding certain kinds of music.[49]

The acknowledgement of the potential for music to act on moral character is widely accepted; nevertheless, the exploration of particular moral concepts such as guilt or forgiveness remains rare in musicology. Due to the relative lack of direct literature addressing specifically musical guilt, forgiveness, or reconciliation, I rely on relating a number of works from other disciplines to the study of music.

First in the dock is *guilt*. Despite its ubiquity, guilt has not always been a popular subject of investigation: in 1994, Roy Baumeister lamented social psychology's neglect of the concept outside of the realms of legal and sexual guilts.[50] The lack of attention has been less notable in fields such as anthropology, wherein studies of guilt and its counterpart shame have been regular features, or indeed in moral philosophy and ethics. A key text in the latter fields is Bernard Williams's *Shame and Necessity* in which he contrasts shame, as a failure to live up to an internal self-image, with guilt, which arises from transgressing a socially-normative moral code. Williams's argument posits that both shame and guilt are subtle emotions that structure human behaviour. If, as Williams suggests, shame is deeply concerned with how one sees oneself, guilt is a more outward-looking experience, depending on "empathic awareness and response to someone's distress, as well as on awareness of being the cause of that distress."[51] The different impulses

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[49] Damian Cox and Michael Levine, "Music and Ethics: The Very Mildly Interesting View", in *Oxford Handbooks Online* (Feb 2016).

[50] Roy F. Baumeister, Arlene M. Stillwell, and Todd F. Heatherton, "Guilt: An Interpersonal Approach", *Psychological Bulletin* 115, no. 2 (1994): 243–267.

[51] Varda Konstam, Miriam Chernoff, and Sara Deveney, "Toward Forgiveness: The Role of Shame, Guilt, Anger, and Empathy", *Counseling and Values* 46 (Oct. 2001): 27.

governing shame and guilt have been explored in more recent empirical studies that demonstrate a significant correlation between guilt-proneness and forgiveness as features of an individual's character, with Varda Konstam, Miriam Chernoff, and Sara Deveney finding that "guilt, in contrast to shame, served to engage individuals in a process supportive of resolution of conflict and forgiveness."[52] The externalized and interpersonal character of guilt further indicates that it may be more prevalent than shame in situations involving multiple people.

Jerrold Levinson is one of the few philosophers writing on music also to address guilt in a broad sense; however, like the authors mentioned previously, he sees it primarily as a counterpart to shame. In the essay "On Shame in General and Shame in Music" he specifically differentiates shame, which "involves a feeling that one's behaviour is unworthy of one as a human being, that it reflects badly on one's character" from guilt, which "involves a feeling that one's behaviour was wrong, harmful, regrettable."[53] The two are clearly interrelated, but Levinson argues that shame is both a more intense and a more intimate emotion than guilt, which may be one of the reasons that he suggests it is a more viable area of musical exploration. Levinson's argument in favour of shame is compelling, but he is primarily concerned with music as a means of subjective expression, whereas I evaluate music as a medium of interpersonal social action. Moreover, the relational nature of guilt means that it, rather than shame, motivates the feelings of remorse and

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[52] See *inter alia* Roy F. Baumeister, Arlene M. Stillwell, and Todd F. Heatherton, "Guilt: An Interpersonal Approach", *Psychological Bulletin* 115, no. 2 (1994): 243–267; June Price Tangney, "Moral Affect: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 61 (1991): 598–607; June Price Tangney, "Shame and Guilt in Interpersonal Relationships", in *Self-Conscious Emotions: Shame, Guilt, Embarrassment, and Pride*, ed. June Price Tangney and Kurt W. Fischer, 114–139 (New York: Guilford Press, 1995); June Price Tangney et al., "Assessing Individual Differences in the Propensity to Forgive", paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Boston (1999); Varda Konstam, Miriam Chernoff, and Sara Deveney, "Toward Forgiveness: The Role of Shame, Guilt, Anger, and Empathy", *Counseling and Values* 46 (Oct. 2001): 26–39; Konstam, Chernoff, and Deveney, "Toward Forgiveness", 33.

[53] Jerrold Levinson, *Musical Concepts: Essays in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 90.

requests for forgiveness and reconciliation that I investigate here. In this context, guilt's conceptual breadth, and the resulting flexibility of interpretation it offers, ensure that guilt, rather than shame, remains my primary conceptual touchstone. I suggest that the content of the works in question, in combination with performance conventions and cultural context, shape our experience of them as expressive of particular enacted emotions— including guilt.

Like guilt, *forgiveness* has long been the subject of intensive philosophical and religious study, but it has only recently begun to infiltrate other fields. Within the Anglophone world of cultural studies, interest in forgiveness as a philosophical concept received a spur with the translation in 2001 of two essays by Jacques Derrida, entitled "On Forgiveness" and "To Forgive: the Unforgivable and the Imprescriptable", the latter of which was on the work of Russian Jewish moral philosopher Vladimir Jankélévitch. This was followed up in 2005 by Andrew Kelley's translation of Jankélévitch's monograph *On Forgiveness*. Despite the fact that Jankélévitch wrote extensively on music and philosophy throughout his career and is now recognised as a significant figure in both spheres, his ideas about forgiveness have not previously been applied to music. His work was little-known in musicology before the dynamic intervention of Carolyn Abbate, whose 2003 English translation of Jankélévitch's *Music and the Ineffable*, along with her companion article "Music—Drastic or Gnostic?", introduced Jankélévitch's ideas to the wider musicological discourse.[54] Jankélévitch's thought on music is a rich seam, and his dual insistence on music as a thing to be done and experienced, not talked about, and on the infinitude of possible things to say of music resonates with the positions taken up by many authors I mention earlier; however, in spite of the call by Stephen Rings to "reconcile

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[54] Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Music and the Ineffable,* trans. Carolyn Abbate (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Carolyn Abbate, "Music—Drastic or Gnostic?" *Critical Inquiry* 30, no. 3 (Spring 2004): 505–536.

[Jankélévitch's] musical philosophy with his ethical thought,"[55] little musicological work has attempted to bridge the gap between the two. In one recent effort, Michael Gallope locates a possibility for connecting Jankélévitch's aesthetic and ethical thought through the concept of fidelity, by which he means aligning our descriptive language as closely as possible with the (ultimately unspeakable) thing-in-itself. Through "ethically (and dialectically) joining metaphysical principles with empirical particulars", scholars can shed light on the connections between the aesthetic and the ethical.[56] When applied to music, this suggests that a combination of empirical evidence and interpretation can faithfully (though not completely) reflect what is frequently taken to be music's ineffability in ethical matters. I further suggest that the language of music—in terms of both the texts and sounds which compose it and the discourses that surround it—can demonstrate fidelity between the ethical propositions of guilt, forgiveness, or reconciliation and the ways in which music is enacted.

Away from the intersection of music and continental philosophy, writers in other fields, including psychologists Everett Worthington and Michael McCullough and theologian Miroslav Volf, have offered their own definitions of forgiveness, largely centering on a change of heart on the part of the victim.[57] The resurgence of interest in forgiveness as an abstract concept is paralleled by psychological studies of forgiveness, which began to appear in the mid-1980s and investigated its role in the resolution of negative emotions

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[55] Steven Rings, in Michael Gallope et al., "Colloquy: Vladimir Jankélévitch's Philosophy of Music", *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 65, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 223.

[56] Michael Gallope, in Michael Gallope et al., "Colloquy: Vladimir Jankélévitch's Philosophy of Music", *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 65, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 238.

[57] Cf. "Forgiveness is a process (or the result of a process) that involves a change in emotion and attitude regarding an offender." American Psychological Association, *Forgiveness: A Sampling of Research Results*, (2006), 5, and "We define seeking forgiveness as a motivation to accept moral responsibility and to attempt interpersonal reparation following relational injury in which one is morally culpable." Steven J. Sandage et al., "Seeking Forgiveness: Theoretical Context and an Initial Empirical Study", *Journal of Psychology* 28, no. 1 (2000): 22.

such as fear, anger, and anxiety.[58] Meanwhile, relevant research into music's place within counselling examines the nature and processes of forgiveness, particularly as it relates to those who have experienced trauma.[59] Nevertheless, in spite of this flurry of intellectual activity in related fields and the continuing thematization of forgiveness in popular music (where Elton John's "Sorry Seems to be the Hardest Word" is joined by Bryan Adams's "Please Forgive Me" and Justin Bieber's "Sorry", amongst a host of others), forgiveness as a musical topic is usually relegated to literature that deals directly with therapeutic or psychological aspects of music-making. Even in these fields, it is more commonly approached from the perspective of the benefits and potential dangers to the victim inherent in the process of forgiving wrongs, rather than the perspective of the perpetrator seeking forgiveness. Without dwelling on the precise nature of forgiveness, my exploration of music and forgiveness in this project takes into account both the requesting and granting of forgiveness.

Reconciliation is closely linked to forgiveness, even though disagreement persists on the proper relationship between the two.[60] Ervin Staub proposes that they are best seen as intertwined phenomena, writing that, "some degree of forgiveness, of letting go of fear and anger, may be required for reconciliation to begin. In continuing relationships, it is likely

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[58] Mary S. Cerney, "'If only...' Remorse in Grief Therapy", *Psychotherapy Patient* 5 (1988): 235–248; Richard P. Fitzgibbons, "The Cognitive and Emotional Uses of Forgiveness in the Treatment of Anger", *Psychotherapy* 23 (1986): 629–633; Susan R. Freedman and Robert D. Enright, "Forgiveness as an Intervention Goal with Incest Survivors", *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 64 (1996): 983–992.

[59] Roy T. Denton and Michael W. Martin, "Defining Forgiveness: An Empirical Exploration of Process and Role", *American Journal of Family Therapy* 26 (1998): 175–184; Charles A. Romig and Glenn Veenstra, "Forgiveness and Psychosocial Development: Implications for Clinical Practice", *Counseling and Values* 42 (1998): 185–199.

[60] See Susan Freedman, "Forgiveness and Reconciliation: The Importance of Understanding How They Differ", *Counseling and Values* 42 (1998): 200–216; Martha Minow, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), 9–24.

that reconciliation has to proceed before deep forgiveness can occur."[61] Staub goes on to offer his definition of reconciliation as "mutual acceptance by groups of each other. [Reconciliation] means that victims and perpetrators, or members of hostile groups, do not see the past as defining the future ... [and that they] come to see the humanity of one another, accept each other, and see the possibility of a constructive relationship."[62] Theologian Miroslav Volf focuses on the impact of the narration of past, present, and future on forgiveness and reconciliation. He includes memory as a catalyst in his conception of the relationship between forgiveness and reconciliation by suggesting that remembering rightly (by which he means remembering both truthfully and hopefully) is necessary for genuine forgiveness and reconciliation.[63] As these writers suggest, it is in reconciliation that the interpersonal character of the narratives of guilt, forgiveness, and reconciliation comes most strongly to the fore.

Unlike music and either guilt or forgiveness, music's relationship to reconciliation has been subject to substantial investigation thanks to the influence of conflict transformation studies. The use of music in reconciliation efforts has been examined by a number of scholars with resulting explorations of music in post-conflict zones in Northern Ireland, South Africa, Australia, or Palestine sitting alongside studies of Christian congregational music and racial tensions in the United States.[64] Many of these studies begin from the belief

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[61] Ervin Staub, "Constructive Rather than Harmful Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Ways to Promote Them after Genocide and Mass Killing", in *Handbook of Forgiveness*, ed. Everett L. Worthington, Jr. (New York: Routledge, 2005), 445.

[62] Ibid., 444.

[63] Miroslav Volf, *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdman's, 2006), 202.

[64] See *inter alia* Nasser al-Taee, "Voices of Peace and the Legacy of Reconciliation: Popular Music, Nationalism, and the Quest for Peace in the Middle East", *Popular Music* 21, no. 1 (Jan 2002): 41–61; Lizelle Bisschof and Stefanie van de Peer, eds., *Art and Trauma in Africa: Representations of Reconciliation in Music, Visual Art, Literature and Film* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013); William J. Danaher, Jr., "Music That Will Bring Back The Dead? Resurrection, Reconciliation, and Restorative Justice in Post-Apartheid South Africa", *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 38, no. 1 (March 2010): 115–141; Walter J. Hollenweger, "Music in the Service of

that music allows individuals to interact in ways that promote interpersonal understanding and reconciliation, although usually with the caveat that, in the words of Bruce Johnson and Martin Cloonan, "every time music is used to demarcate the territory of self or community, it is incipiently being used to invade, marginalize or obliterate that of other individuals or groups".[65] I investigate the interrelation of reconciliation and conflict transformation in the context of musical performance in more detail later on, but this brief overview sets out the relevant parameters for the chapters that follow.

These three themes—guilt, forgiveness, and reconciliation—circulate in overlapping parabolas within my research. At some points in the following chapters they serve to illuminate the close connections between the works I study and at others they reveal the pieces' different emphases. Moving in tandem with these central concerns are a series of closely related areas, including confession, trauma, identity, and the nature of musical memory. This constellation of concepts demonstrates the density of interlocking features that unite my case studies.

In order to explore one such interface—namely, that between guilt, confession, and memory—more fully, I trace the impact of these concepts through Arnold Schoenberg's seminal exploration of the Holocaust: his 1947 composition *A Survivor from Warsaw*. I have chosen *Survivor* as an exemplar because its position as one of the earliest musical works to engage with the aesthetic and ethical fallout of the Holocaust (itself a profound limit point of recent ethical discourse) provides a valuable perspective on the tangled relationship between trauma, guilt, and memory. Furthermore, its prominence

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Reconciliation", *Theology* 92, no. 748 (July 1989): 276–286; Milmon F. Harrison, "'ERACE-ing' the Color Line: Racial Reconciliation in the Christian Music Industry", *Journal of Media and Religion* 4 (2005): 27–44; Katelyn Barney, "'Sing Loud, Break Through the Silence': Musical Responses to the National Apology to the Stolen Generations", *Perfect Beat* 13, no. 1 (2012): 69–94; David A. McDonald, *My Voice is My Weapon: Music, Nationalism and the Poetics of Palestinian Resistance* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013).

[65] Bruce Johnson and Martin Cloonan, *Dark Side of the Tune: Popular Music and Violence* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2008), 4.

in the literature dealing with these issues suggests that it continues to be a productive site of interpretation. Finally, as the earliest piece I discuss in this project *Survivor* also demarcates the intellectual ground criss-crossed in the other case studies. Schoenberg's harrowing depiction of an individual whose present experience is bounded by intrusive memories of a traumatic past illustrates some of the emotive possibilities these themes evoke within music.

1.4 The Imperative of Memory and the Guilt of the Survivor

In 1947, the Austrian-American composer Arnold Schoenberg wrote a cantata for narrator, men's chorus, and orchestra entitled *A Survivor from Warsaw* (Op. 46). Unusually for one of Schoenberg' works, *Survivor* was premiered in Albuquerque, New Mexico on 4 November 1948 by the amateur Albuquerque Civic Orchestra and a chorus directed by Kurt Frederick.[66] The European premiere occurred shortly thereafter, and since then *Survivor* has become a regular feature of contemporary classical concerts. As the composer wrote, the piece is based on "reports which I have received directly or indirectly" and it features an unidentified narrator who speaks directly, if haltingly, to the audience about his experiences as a wartime prisoner.[67] Despite the title's implication, there seems to be no direct connection between the story and any specific account of the Warsaw Ghetto, and Camille Crittenden posits that the text was inspired by a partisan song from the Vilna Ghetto, being subsequently supplemented by other influences.[68]

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[66] See Michael Strasser, "'A Survivor from Warsaw' as Personal Parable," *Music and Letters* 76 (1995): 52–63 for a more detailed explanation of the circumstances surrounding the premiere.

[67] Arnold Schoenberg, Preface to *A Survivor from Warsaw*, ed. Jacques-Louis Monod (Vienna: Boelke-Bomart, Inc., 1979), iii.

[68] Camille Crittenden, "Texts and Contexts of *A Survivor from Warsaw*", in *Political and Religious Ideas in the Works of Arnold Schoenberg*, edited by Charlotte M. Cross and Russell A. Berman (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), 231–258.

Figure 1.1 Text of *A Survivor from Warsaw*

Narrator:

I cannot remember ev'rything.
I must have been unconscious most of the time.
I remember only the grandiose moment
when they all started to sing as if prearranged,
the old prayer they had neglected for so many years—

the forgotten creed!

But I have no recollection how I got underground
to live in the sewers of Warsaw for so long a time.

The day began as usual: Reveille when it still was dark—
Get out! Whether you slept or whether worries kept you awake
the whole night:

You had been separated from your children, from your wife,
from your parents;

you don't know what happened to them how could you sleep?
The trumpets again –
"Get out! The sergeant will be furious!"
They came out; some very slow: the old ones, the sick ones;
some with nervous agility.
They fear the sergeant. They hurry as much as they can.

In vain! Much too much noise; much too much commotion—
and not fast enough!

The Feldwebel shouts: "Achtung! Stilljestanden! Na wird's mal?
Oder soll ich mit dem Jewehrkolben nachhelfen? Na jut; wenn
ihr's durchaus haben wollt!"

The sergeant and his subordinates hit everyone:
young or old, strong or sick, guilty or innocent.
It was painful to hear them groaning and moaning.

I heard it though I had been hit very hard,
so hard that I could not help falling down.
We all on the ground who could not stand up were then beaten
over the head.

I must have been unconscious.
The next thing I knew was a soldier saying:
"They are all dead!"
Whereupon the sergeant ordered to do away with us.

There I lay aside half conscious.
It had become very still—fear and pain—

Then I heard the sergeant shouting: "Abzählen!"
They started slowly, and irregularly:
one, two, three, four
"Achtung!" the sergeant shouted again:
"Rascher! Nochmal von vorn anfangen!
In einer Minute will ich wissen,
wieviele ich zur Gaskammer abliefere!
Abzählen!"

They began again, first slowly: one, two, three, four,
became faster and faster, so fast
that it finally sounded like a stampede of wild horses,
and all of a sudden, in the middle of it,
they began singing the Shema Yisroel.
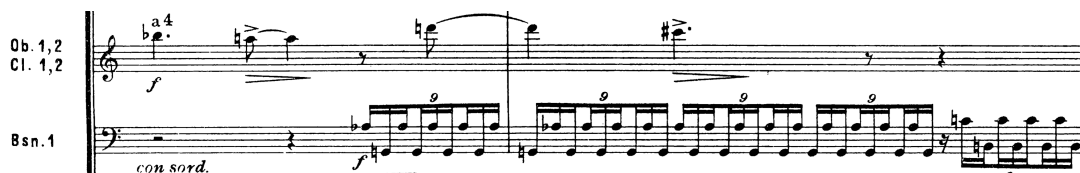
Chorus:

Sh'ma Yisra'el Adonai Eloheinu Adonai echad.
V'ahav'ta eit Adonai Elohekha b'khol l'vav'kha uv'khol naf'sh'kha
uv'khol m'odekha
V'hayu had'varim ha'eileh asher anokhi m'tzav'kha hayom al
l'vavekha.
V'shinan'tam l'vanekha v'dibar'ta bam
b'shiv't'kha b'veitekha uv'lekh't'kha vaderekh uv'shakh'b'kha
uv'kumekha

In its final form, the text, written in a mixture of Schoenberg's own idiosyncratic English, German, and Hebrew, recounts the fragmented first-person narrative of a concentration camp prisoner who watches powerlessly as a group of Jews being herded to the gas chambers begin singing the "Shema Yisrael": "the old prayer they had neglected for so many years—the forgotten creed!" (see Figure 1.1). The tragic overtones of the text carry over into the piece's melodic construction: although *Survivor* is an example of Schoenberg's dodecaphonic writing, the specific construction of the piece emphasizes a number of tragic implications, including prominent descending minor seconds that seem to 'sigh' (see Example 1.1) and a striking use of the trombone that references traditional sonic conventions associated with lament. Yet, these sonorous and motivic allusions are not the only

implications of Schoenberg's construction. A number of authors, including Christian Martin Schmidt, Beat Föllmi, and Joe Argentino, have noted that *Survivor* is also pervaded by triadic sounds due to Schoenberg's centring of his tone row on the augmented triad of {0,4,8}. Argentino goes so far as to suggest that the tripartite structures in *Survivor* (of which the augmented triad is one) "ultimately represent the name and presence of God; ... thus provid[ing] hope and unity ... that is ultimately realized at the climax of the composition".[69] To take Argentino's interpretation, the contrast between hope and despair is thus rendered integral to *Survivor* on all levels.

Example 1.1 Arnold Schoenberg, *A Survivor from Warsaw*, bars 45–46, oboe and bassoon lines only

Despite this, early reviewers including Olin Downes and Kurt List criticized *Survivor* for its repetitive motives and seemingly mimetic gestures, the former hearing "poor and empty music" full of "bogy noises which have been heard many times before".[70] List sees in it an unwelcome touch of the programmatic, but despite this criticism, he maintains that it is a profound achievement and declares, "it does not matter that the composer cannot fully comprehend the horror of extermination or the obsessional motives that force those who survived it to repeat endlessly and in unemotional tones the unspeakable terror of their experience."[71]

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[69] Joe R. Argentino, "Tripartite Structures in Schoemberg's *A Survivor from Warsaw*", *Music Theory Online* 19, no. 1 (March 2013): 16.

[70] Olin Downes, "Schoenberg Work is Presented Here", *New York Times*, 14 April 1950, 27.

[71] Kurt List, "Schoenberg's New Cantata", *Commentary* 6, no. 5 (November 1948): 471.

In spite of these criticisms, the work has appeared regularly in the orchestral repertoire. Nearly seventy years on from its first appearance, *Survivor* remains an unsettling work that envelops a deeply disturbing account of human cruelty within an aesthetically masterful musical context. This leads James Schmidt to admit, "what makes *A Survivor from Warsaw* so difficult to bear is that, ultimately, it is not at all difficult to bear."[72] In recent years *Survivor* has featured heavily in musicological discourse, with significant books exploring its evocation of Jewish identity (David Schiller, *Bloch, Schoenberg, and Bernstein: Assimilating Jewish Music*), the changing social reception of performances in Cold War Europe (Joy Calico, *Arnold Schoenberg's* A Survivor from Warsaw *in Postwar Europe*), and its function as musical witness to the Holocaust (Amy Lynn Wlodarski, *Musical Witness and Holocaust Representation*). In-depth analyses of *Survivor*'s textual and musical structures have been produced by scholars such as Beat A. Föllmi, Camille Crittenden, Joe Argentino, and Torbjørn Skinnemoen Ottersen.[73] I will not re-tread the same ground here, except to note that many scholars have focused on *Survivor*'s musical trajectory, with the appearance of the "Shema" as the work's apotheosis serving for some to confirm a redemptive narrative arc. Reinhold Brinkmann suggests that in that moment the "messianic" *Survivor* becomes "a modern 'Ode to Joy,' born out of the deepest desperation and

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[72] James Schmidt, "Mephistopheles in Hollywood: Adorno, Mann, and Schoenberg", in *The Cambridge Companion to Adorno*, ed. Tom Huhn (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 167.

[73] See Beat A. Föllmi, "'I Cannot Remember Ev'rything.' Eine narratologische Analyse von Arnold Schönbergs Kantate "A Survior From Warsaw" op. 46.", *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 55, no. 1 (1998): 28–56; Camille Crittenden, "Texts and Contexts of *A Survivor from Warsaw*", in *Political and Religious Ideas in the Works of Arnold Schoenberg*, edited by Charlotte M. Cross and Russell A. Berman, 231–258 (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000); Joe R. Argentino, "Tripartite Structures in Schoemberg's *A Survivor from Warsaw*", *Music Theory Online* 19, no. 1 (March 2013): 1–16; Torbjørn Skinnemoen Ottersen, "Composing the Jewish Nation: Schoenberg's *A Survivor from Warsaw*, 1947–8", in "Remembering Through Music: Issues in Musical Commemoration since World War II", PhD dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2015.

terror of the twentieth century."[74] Others are more measured in their
assessment: Schmidt acknowledges that the entrance of the chorus
(concurrent with a the first full appearance of the tone row in its prime form)
gives shape to the preceding musical material, but worries that "to see this
work [as a technical tour-de-force] borders on the obscene; it turns an
historical atrocity into the 'style' best suited for the presentation of a musical
idea."[75] The tension these writers sense between horror of the Holocaust and a
redemptive narrative, or between the aesthetic treatment of tragedy and the
ethical constraints on such endeavors, is the starting point for my short
exploration of the interpenetration of guilt, confession, and the imperative of
memory within *Survivor*.

The setting and title of *Survivor* suggests an immediate connection to
the triumvirate of guilt, confession, and memory through the context of
survivor's guilt. As a phenomenon, survivor's guilt predates its nomenclature,
but the term originated in the post-World War II period and is still sometimes
referred to as KZ syndrome, itself a contraction of the German word for
concentration camp: *Konzentrationslager*. At the time of *Survivor*'s
composition, it is unlikely that Schoenberg had ever heard of survivor's guilt.
Nevertheless, the narrative of *Survivor* bears striking resemblance to the
characteristics common amongst Holocaust survivors, war veterans, and other
victims of trauma. Although it is no longer considered a discrete mental
illness, recent editions of both the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental
Disorders* (DSM) and the *International Statistical Classification of Diseases and
Related Health Problems* (ICD) identify survivor's guilt as a significant subset
within the wider diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. In both
contexts, the most typical symptom is intrusive memories, or flashbacks,

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[74] Reinhold Brinkmann, "Schoenberg the Contemporary: A View from Behind", in
Constructive Dissonance, ed. Juliane Brand and Christopher Hailey (Berkeley: University of
California Press, 1997), 214–215.

[75] Schmidt, "Mephistopheles in Hollywood", 167.

wherein an individual experiences "recurrent, unwanted traumatic memories of the distressing event."[76] This description dovetails with the vivid, broken flashes of memory in *Survivor*'s text wherein the narrator seems to be re-living his past rather than remembering it. The immersive quality of re-lived memory appears prominently in *Survivor*, notably when the text shifts from Schoenberg's own (rather idiosyncratic) English to the *Feldwebel*'s[77] Prussian-accented German. Like the piece as a whole, this reaches a climax with the introduction of the Hebrew chorus, which moves the audience from a position of hearing a narration to actually experiencing what the narrator remembers hearing. The perspectival instability of this repeated transgression of boundaries between interior and exterior memories is replicated in the relationship between the music and the text. Amy Lynn Wlodarski posits that the repetitive mimetic gestures of the music are a deliberate representation of the slippage between the narrator's subconscious and conscious memories: a "psychosonic phenomenon in which musical memories are sensed and then articulated in a spoken text."[78] Over the course of *Survivor* the audience is itself dragged back into the narrator's memories as part of a shared experience.

Beyond the vivid evocation of a specific memory, there is an obsessive quality to the narrative that suggests that Schoenberg's Survivor is compelled to tell and re-tell his story. Although he is frank about his memory loss, this inadequacy seems to haunt the narrator. The process of telling takes on the quality of an increasingly desperate attempt to jog his memory and fill in the gaps. According to Judith Lewis Herman the "highly emotional, contradictory, and fragmented" manner of the story-telling, such as that evidenced in

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[76]"Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Symptoms," The Mayo Clinic, http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/post-traumatic-stress-disorder/basics/symptoms/con-20022540 (accessed 28 April 2014).

[77] The *Feldwebel* is an enlisted rank in the German army equivalent in modern terms to the British sergeant or the American staff sergeant.

[78] Amy Lynn Wlodarski, *Musical Witness and Holocaust Representation* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 17.

Survivor, "serves the twin imperatives of truth-telling and secrecy" characteristic of trauma victims.[79] Even as the narrator denies any specific guilt by repeatedly reminding his audience of his powerlessness ("I must have been unconscious", "I had been hit very hard,/so hard that I could not help falling down") the sense of an unnamed, generalized guilt intensifies. In combination with the fact that the narrator is ambiguous in terms of religion and nationality (although he references Warsaw and recognises the "Shema", there is no indication in the text that he identifies as either a Pole or as a Jew), this suggests a collective experience of guilt channelled through this single confessional narrative.

Like guilt, confession is doubly significant. In a narrow construction, to confess is to admit to something, often in a legal or religious sense of guilt. A confession is by extension a statement of that which is confessed; however, the origins of confession lie deep in Latin, where *confitieri* means 'to declare' or 'to avow'. In English it retains the Latinate sense of a forceful statement, particularly in the context of a religious confession of belief. In this setting, a confession is a statement of identity predicated on a series of assertions about the nature of God, humankind, and reality. Regardless of its context, confession is a term whose connotative valence hinges on conceptions of truth: a confession may be secret, false, forced, or incomplete, but each of these descriptive terms refers back to the question of the confession's truthfulness. Drawing on this concern with truth, Francis R. Hart considers confession an exercise in individual ontology—a "personal history that seeks to communicate or express the essential nature, the truth, of the self".[80] Likewise, J.M. Coetzee writes of autobiography, "we can demarcate a mode of autobiographical writing that we can call the *confession*, as distinct from the *memoir* and the *apology*, on the basis of an underlying motive to tell an

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[79] Judith Lewis Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (London: Pandora, 1994), 1.

[80] Francis R. Hart, "Notes for an Anatomy of Modern Autobiography," in *New Directions in Literary History*, ed. Ralph Cohen (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1974), 227.

essential truth about the self."[81] Although Hart and Coetzee focus on the self-revelation of an individual person's confession, it is pertinent to note that confession also includes a communal and creative aspect. Both of these may be demonstrated through religious rituals of confession: the former by the collective confession of faith, which not only binds people together in a community of shared belief but is predicated on the recognition of the declaration of faith as a performative act, and the latter by confession of sin, during which the confessant constructs him- or herself not only as a sinner, but also as a particular kind of sinner in relationship to the confessor through the choice of what actions to reveal. Both of these instances of confession turn on notions of identity and reveal the extent to which these concepts are intertwined.

The conception of confession as both an individual and a communal identity-making act has led a number of authors to place *Survivor* in the context of Schoenberg's re-embrace of his Jewish identity throughout the 1920s and 1930s, evidenced by compositions such as *Die Jakobsleiter* and *Moses und Aron*, and his Zionist writings of the post-war period.[82] In this paradigm, *Survivor* becomes the composer's personal confession of a renewed ethno-religious identity and a corresponding rejection of his previous attachment to the Germanic European culture in which he lived and worked until 1933. An example of this is Alexander Ringer's claim that "Arnold Schoenberg poured all his sorrow and the full measure of his Jewish pride into a unique mini-

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[81] J. M. Coetzee, "Confession and Double Thoughts: Tolstoy, Rousseau, Dostoevsky", *Comparative Literature* 37, no. 3 (Summer 1985): 194.

[82] For further information see David Isidore Lieberman, "Schoenberg Rewrites His Will," in *Political and Religious Ideas in the Works of Arnold Schoenberg*, ed. Charlotte M. Cross and Russell A. Berman 193–230 (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2000); Michael Strasser, "'A Survivor from Warsaw' as Personal Parable," *Music and Letters* 76 (1995), and Christian Martin Schmidt, "Schönberg's Kantate 'Ein Überlebender aus Warschau' op. 46", *Archiv für Wissenschaft* 33, no. 3 (1976): 174–188. Moshe Lazar has written a lengthy article contextualising Schoenberg's religious journey within the experience of assimilated Jews in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; he offers a valuable analysis of *Moses und Aron* and *Der biblische Weg* in combination with many of Schoenberg's writings as evidence. "Arnold Schoenberg and His Doubles: A Psychodramatic Journey to His Roots", *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute* 17, Nos. 1/2 (June/November 1994): 8–150.

drama, a relentless crescendo from beginning to end of unmitigated horror defeated by unyielding faith, that paean to Jewish suffering *A Survivor from Warsaw*".[83] By singing the "Shema" (traditionally used as an observant Jew's last words) the doomed prisoners in the narrative recover their ethno-religious identity in the face of death, suggesting that such a recovery within the performative frame of *Survivor* reflects Schoenberg's personal experience. This interpretation is supported by the fact that the initial impetus for *Survivor* seems to originate with the efforts of Russian Jewish dancer Corinne Chochem to recruit Schoenberg to write something in support of his fellow Jews.[84] Although the project for Chochem failed to materialise due to lack of funds, when the Serge Koussevitsky Foundation later approached Schoenberg with a commission he returned to the subject of Jewish suffering to finish the cantata. Schoenberg himself ties the "Shema" to the concept of identity in a 1948 letter to Kurt List in which he claims:

> I think the *Shema Jisroel* is the *Glaubenbekenntnis*, the confession of the Jew. ... The miracle is, to me, that all these people who might have forgotten, for years, that they are Jews, suddenly facing death, remember who they are. And this seems to me a great thing.[85]

Whilst Schoenberg's re-embrace of his Jewish heritage and support for a Jewish state are fundamental to understanding the compositional background of *Survivor*, the interpretation of *Survivor* as personal parable, to use the words of Michael Strasser, is not the only option. If, as I suggest, *Survivor* depicts an experience of survivor's guilt on the part of Schoenberg's imagined narrator, it could also be read as providing a means of expiating that

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[83] Alexander Ringer, *Arnold Schoenberg: The Composer as Jew* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 203.

[84] Crittenden, "Texts and Contexts of *A Survivor from Warsaw*", 231–258.

[85] Arnold Schoenberg to Kurt List, 1 Nov. 1948, in *Arnold Schoenberg Self Portrait: A Collection of Articles, Program Notes, and Letters by the Composer about his own Works*, ed. Nuria Schoenberg Nono (Pacific Palisades, CA: Belmont Music Publishers, 1988), 105.

guilt through repeated remembering and recounting of experience. In this sense, the confessional character of the narrative is still present, but rather than an affirmation of a religious identity, it operates on a different level by distilling the narrator's experience into that of the Survivor. Through confessing his memories, the narrator constructs his identity as one whose survival entails the responsibility to bear witness to those who did not. In this paradigm, the Jewishness of either Schoenberg or his narrator is ultimately subsumed into a guilt that recognises no confessional boundaries and is thus available to a range of audiences.

The overlap between individual and collective confessions in *Survivor* complicates the assessment of the confessant's identity. Wlodarski argues that, despite the centrality of Jewish suffering and identity, *Survivor* can be understood more clearly as enacting traumatic memory as a personal memorial or witness to the Holocaust. She points to the reiteration of memory as an organising feature in both Schoenberg's own writings and *Survivor*'s text as evidence that "Schoenberg intended *Survivor* not only to enact memory but also to produce it."[86] The question Wlodarski leaves unanswered is for whom this memory is intended. In his letter to List, Schoenberg claims it is at least partially directed at fellow Jews, writing:

> Now, what the text of the *Survivor* means to me: it means at first a warning to all Jews, never to forget what has been done to us, never to forget that even people who did not do it themselves, agreed with them and many of them found it necessary to treat us in this way. We should never forget this.[87]

Nevertheless, it seems as though *Survivor* is also directed outward at the Austro-German cultural world Schoenberg inhabited prior to emigrating, as well as perhaps at the Western world more generally. After all, 'never forget' is a command that can be applied to Jews and non-Jews alike. Joy Calico has

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[86] Wlodarski, *Musical Witness and Holocaust Representation*, 15.

[87] Arnold Schoenberg to Kurt List, 1 Nov. 1948, in *Arnold Schoenberg Self Portrait*, 105.

demonstrated that Cold War-era productions of *Survivor* in Europe were motivated by a variety of different considerations depending on the political and cultural situations of the individual countries in which it was performed. As she writes,

> *A Survivor* might signal acknowledgement or commemoration of the Holocaust ... it could represent an endorsement of Schoenberg specifically, of dodecaphony, or of modernist music generally ... in the Eastern Bloc, *A Survivor* acted as a canary in the cultural-political coal mines ... although even then its presence required de-Semitization in the name of antifascism.[88]

Foremost amongst these various motivations was the establishment of particular national or social narratives that both defined a society's relationship with the traumatic past of the Second World War and reflected the political unease of the Cold War. In some of these performances, notably in East Germany, this resulted in the realities of the specifically Jewish characters depicted in *Survivor* being over-written with more politically relevant narratives of anti-fascism, while in Norway, where a very small pre-war Jewish population was nearly obliterated, a different approach held sway in which the performances of *Survivor* became a way of commemorating the Jewish travesty against the backdrop of broader national feelings of complicity in Norway's fascist past.[89] In contrast to these politically and nationally pertinent performances, Calico notes that initial performances in Czechoslovakia combined personal and collective memories by featuring Karel Berman, a Jewish concentration camp survivor, as narrator.[90] The use of poetic confession to produce (and reproduce) memories amongst a wider audience is thus a key feature of *Survivor*.

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[88] Joy H. Calico, *Arnold Schoenberg's* A Survivor from Warsaw *in Postwar Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 1–2.

[89] See 66–86 and 87–111 in Calico, *Arnold Schoenberg's* A Survivor from Warsaw *in Postwar Europe.*

[90] See 136–160 in Calico, *Arnold Schoenberg's* A Survivor from Warsaw *in Postwar Europe.*

The concern with how and what we remember operates on multiple levels throughout *Survivor*. In the text, the Jews find redemption in the moments before death through the affirmation of their faith. In that instant, the narrator tells the audience, they remember who they truly are. The importance of religious ritual as embodied memory is strengthened by the fact that the "Shema" cuts off abruptly after the injunction: "these words that I command you today shall be in your heart./You shall teach them diligently to your children, and you shall speak of them/when you sit at home and when you walk along the way, when you lie down and when you rise up." The ritual affirmation of their religious identity is something observant Jews participate in on a daily basis, but the opportunity to pass on the rituals of confession from generation to generation is cut off from these prisoners. One level up from the plight of the prisoners is the narrator who, plagued by holes in his memory, struggles to locate himself within the narrative. In fact, the audience discovers comparatively little about the narrator's experiences in the text of *Survivor*; apart from the notes about being struck or unable to remember, he recounts primarily the activities of others. As Volf writes, "to be a speaker, which is to say, to be a human being, is to be a rememberer"[91]; thus, by virtue of his survival, *Survivor*'s narrator is compelled to remember in the place of those who died and to share those memories with his audience. The final level of memory is that which is passed on to the audience. In a sense, every performance of *Survivor* acts as a temporal manifestation of the same impulse to memory evident in the physical memorials to the Holocaust.

Holocaust survivors such as Primo Levi and Elie Wiesel have exposed the guilt of not having perished in harrowing detail in their autobiographical writings, but *Survivor* is the best-known musical exposition of the same feeling expressed in those searing first-person accounts. For these writers, and potentially also for Schoenberg, the "memory of evil will serve as a shield

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[91] Volf, *The End of Memory,* 147.

against evil … the memory of death will serve as a shield against death."[92] Even though none of the other works I discuss in the following chapters have the same connections to survivor's guilt as does *Survivor*, each engages with the wider question of how individuals and societies might narrate and potentially expiate experiences of guilt through music.

In his seminal text *L'Ecriture du désastre*, Maurice Blanchot warns his readers that "there is a limit at which the practice of any art becomes an affront to affliction."[93] This neatly summarizes one key position on the intersection between aesthetics and ethics in the context of trauma, namely, that artistic representation of trauma "enacts a form of aesthetic trauma against historical memory and the actual victims".[94] This, taken in conjunction with Theodor Adorno's oft-quoted statement "to write a poem after Auschwitz is barbaric", has been interpreted to act as a dictum against the imposition of art in the process of mourning.[95] Nevertheless, although Blanchot and Adorno seem to advocate silence as the only possible response to the incomprehensible, this is balanced by the imperative of memory that demands transmission in order to survive. The tension between the necessity of remembrance and the utter impossibility of adequately representing horror is encapsulated by Adorno's later contention that

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[92] Elie Wiesel, *From the Kingdom of Memory: Reminiscences* (New York: Summit, 1990), 239.

[93] Maurice Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, trans. Ann Smock (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 83.

[94] Wlodarski, *Musical Witness and Holocaust Representation*, 8.

[95] The original is part of a longer sentence: "Kulturkritik findet sich der letzten Stufe der Dialektik von Kultur und Barbarei gegenüber: *nach Auschwitz ein Gedicht zu schreiben, ist barbarisch,* und das frißt auch die Erkenntnis an, die ausspricht, warum es unmöglich ward, heute Gedichte zu schreiben [The critique of culture is confronted with the last stage in the dialectic of culture and barbarism: to write a poem after Auschwitz is barbaric, and that corrodes also the knowledge which expresses why it has become impossible to write poetry today]". *Prismen, Gesammelte Schriften,* Vol. 10a *Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1977), 30.

extreme suffering ... demands the continued existence of the very art it forbids. It is in art alone that suffering can be voiced without being immediately betrayed by it. However, by transforming this suffering, despite all attempts at irreconcilability and severity, into an artwork it is as though the deference owed to the victims were violated.[96]

Likewise, Blanchot asks, "the holocaust, the *absolute* event of history ... How can it be preserved, even by thought? How can thought be made the keeper of the holocaust where all was lost, including guardian thought?" But when faced with the failure of thought and reason, he claims that preservation may happen only in the remembrance of "the mortal intensity, the fleeing silence of the countless cry."[97] It is not too far a stretch to see in *Survivor*'s pained account just such an attempt to capture a moment of "the fleeing silence of the countless cry".

A Survivor from Warsaw stops short of forgiveness, much less reconciliation. In this sense, it is markedly different from the following case studies, each of which exemplifies multiple facets of guilt, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Nevertheless, *Survivor* raises questions about the expiation of guilt and the relationship between a traumatic past and the imagined future that open the work up to these discourses. It also offers a profound site for the exploration of the themes of memory and witnessing which will emerge again in later cases studies. The impossibility of either confronting or obtaining absolution from the dead poses a significant problem for Schoenberg's narrator, but here it is resolved through his becoming a witness to destruction. Furthermore, by having the Survivor recount his story to the audience, Schoenberg transfers the responsibility of memory to the listener in an act

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[96] Theodor W. Adorno, *Noten zur Literatur Vol. III* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1965), 125. "Das Übermaß an realem Leiden [...] erheischt auch die Fortdauer von Kunst, die es verbietet; kaum wo anders findet das Leiden noch seine eigene Stimme, den Trost, der es nicht sogleich verriete. Aber indem es trotz aller Härte und Unversöhnlichkeit zum Bild gemacht wird, ist es doch, als ob die Scham vor den Opfern verletzt wäre. Aus diesen wird etwas bereitet, Kunstwerke, der Welt zum Fraß vorgeworfen, die sie umbrachte."

[97] Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, 47.

that occurs anew with every hearing. In this way, the Survivor finds a measure of redemption whilst the audience is initiated into the imperative of memory that drives this piece. In addition to providing a microcosm of these thematic interactions, this miniature case study demonstrates the techniques of textual interpretation, contextualisation, and performance analysis that inform the remaining case studies even as it illuminates the fundamental tensions that underlie musical performances of guilt, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Seen in this light, *A Survivor from Warsaw* can be considered one of Schoenberg's most compelling stories of guilt and redemption.

<div align="center">*   *   *</div>

After this brief exploration of survivor's guilt it falls to the remaining case studies to explore other areas of guilt, forgiveness, and reconciliation. The first case study considers in detail how ideals of authenticity, self-revelation, and persona structure our understanding of the relationship between performer and audience within the genre of the indie singer-songwriter. As my medium for this case study I have chosen William Fitzsimmons and his 2008 album *The Sparrow and the Crow*, itself an acute study of personal performative guilt in the wake of a broken relationship. In addition to exploring the performative language of confession Fitzsimmons employs, I include a survey of Fitzsimmons's reception that reveals how the interplay of audience expectations, performative conditions, and emotive content combine to create a distinctively charged relationship between Fitzsimmons and his listeners.

Questions of guilt, forgiveness, and reconciliation inevitably touch on the relationship between human beings and the divine and in my third chapter I turn to Christian rituals of forgiveness as they are transformed for the concert stage. Two choral settings of Psalm 51 by Arvo Pärt and James MacMillan, each entitled *Miserere*, serve as the foundations for an investigation of the liminal space between performances of the sacred and of

the sacramental. I suggest that by transubstantiating the sacramental traditions of confession in pieces designed for the concert hall, these composers navigate the boundary between the aesthetic and the ritual experience.

My final case study takes as its subject two works connected to reconciliation efforts in Australia and South Africa: contemporary societies that are still facing up to their respective traumatic histories. Kerry Fletcher's "Sorry Song" addresses Australia's history of racial discrimination, while Philip Miller's *REwind: A Cantata for Voice, Tape and Testimony* concentrates on the legacy of apartheid violence in South Africa by incorporating recordings from South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Although both "Sorry Song" and *REwind* engage with questions of guilt, forgiveness, and reconciliation, I argue that the unified narrative of healing in "Sorry Song" functions as a performative communal apology whilst the fragmented narrative of *REwind* illustrates how reconciliation may be achieved through constructing a collective history from individual experiences.

After discussing this diverse set of musical performances in depth, in my conclusion I draw them into dialogue with each other in order to draw out some of the implications the interactions between musical performance and guilt, forgiveness, and reconciliation have for our further understanding of music's role in everyday life. I also address the roles of memory, forgetting, and memorialisation in music as well as pick out some of the implications of music for the transformation of conflict. Throughout, I return to the impact of the question of how people explore guilt, forgiveness, and reconciliation through music on how we narrate our personal lives (*The Sparrow and the Crow*); the resources and rituals through which we access the divine (*Miserere*s); and our relationship to the 'others' in our lives—both those present in our society ("Sorry Song"), and those that haunt our collective pasts (*REwind*). Together, these pieces demonstrate a range of ways that people have wrestled with the implications of guilt, forgiveness, and reconciliation for the wider human experience.

2 VICARIOUS GUILT: WILLIAM FITZSIMMONS AND PERFORMING CONFESSION

> The question was and is, who speaks, and when, and for whom, and why.
>
> —Neil Bartlett, *Who Was That Man: A Present for Mr Oscar Wilde*[1]

In a dimly lit room panelled with dark wood a tall, spare man with an incongruously bushy black beard strums a guitar quietly. One might think him lost in thought, but this is William Fitzsimmons and hazy pink lights illuminate a hushed and expectant crowd in a scene of intimate connection between the singer-songwriter and an audience that will be repeated time and

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[1] Neil Bartlett, *Who Was That Man: A Present for Mr Oscar Wilde* (London: Serpent's Tail, 1988), 149.

again over the course of his tour. As the singer begins a well-known song, phones appear in the hands of many eager to record a live performance, whilst others whisper along to their favourite lyrics. This is a scene that could take place almost anywhere and with almost anyone, but what is most striking about this particular performance is only apparent on close listening to the singer's lyrics, which are full of acknowledgments of guilt and pleas for forgiveness. While it is in the nature of songs that they express intimate feelings in public, enclosed within an aesthetic frame, the intense focus of both singer and audience go beyond what is usual in concerts, creating a distinctively charged interpersonal relationship. This chapter argues that this music is compelling in part because, rather than in spite, of its subject matter. A performance by William Fitzsimmons can constitute a performance of confession and even expiation through the ritualised enactment of catharsis. Audience perception of and participation in this ritual draws them into a relationship with Fitzsimmons and his music that transforms them from observers into witnesses. Understanding how Fitzsimmons and his audiences perform confession has implications for our understanding of how and what music can communicate.

The concept of a confessional aesthetic has particular resonance within literature, where the tradition of the written confession stretches back through Rousseau to at least Augustine. Permeating this tradition is an emphasis on confession as truth-telling: witness Francis R. Hart's consideration of confession an exercise in individual ontology—a "personal history that seeks to communicate or express the essential nature, the truth, of the self".[2] The focus on self-revelation is echoed in Jeanette Winterson's claim that "for artists, there is no line [between self and work], not because everything is autobiography, but because it is impossible to do good work

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[2] Francis R. Hart, "Notes for an Anatomy of Modern Autobiography," in *New Directions in Literary History*, ed. Ralph Cohen (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), 227.

without using every ounce of the self."[3] Likewise, J.M. Coetzee writes of autobiography: "we can demarcate a mode of autobiographical writing that we can call the *confession*, as distinct from the *memoir* and the *apology*, on the basis of an underlying motive to tell an essential truth about the self."[4] Finally, writing about the broader phenomenon of confession, Michel Foucault considered it a mark of Western society's obsession with "the infinite task of extracting from the depths of oneself, in between the words, a truth which the very form of the confession holds out like a shimmering mirage".[5] Through these explanations, confession emerges as something that obliges us to disclose not just the truth, but the essential truth about ourselves.

Although these authors focus on the self-revelation of an individual, the confessional aesthetic as it occurs in other contexts also includes communal and creative aspects. For instance, in the religious ritual of confession the confessant constructs him- or herself not only as a sinner but also as a particular kind of sinner in relationship to the confessor. This identity construction is accomplished through the choice of what actions to reveal. Within art, the Romantic ideal of the self-expressive artist in society continues to provide an influential frame for interpretation. For example, Christine Fanthome has analysed Tracey Emin's professedly confessional artwork as questioning the "relationship between art and creator, and artist and addressee" in ways that reveal the communal construction of identities of confessant (identified with Emin) and confessor (identified with Emin's interviewers and the public in general).[6] The situating of the confessional

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[3] Jeanette Winterson, "Like Her Art, Tracey Emin's Book Turns the Personal into the Public", *The Times* [UK], 22 October 2005: 3.

[4] J.M. Coetzee, "Confession and Double Thoughts: Tolstoy, Rousseau, Dostoevsky," *Comparative Literature* 37, no. 3 (Summer 1985): 194.

[5] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume I*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 59.

[6] Christine Fanthome, "Articulating Authenticity Through Artifice: the Contemporary Relevance of Tracey Emin's Confessional Art", *Social Semiotics* 18, no.2 (June 2008): 223–224.

artwork within this relational space suggests parallels to musical performance; moreover, there is a double resonance to be found in that both musical performance and artistic endeavours partake in the same replication of "socially agreed forms of expression" as does religious ritual.[7] The multiple conceptual threads linking these activities point to the pervasive nature of confession as a performed activity. One implication for the audiences of performative confession is encapsulated in Peter Brooks's suggestion that "if misery loves her company so does guilt"; this in turn leads David Terry to ask "what better way to experience [guilt] than through watching someone bear his soul in performance?"[8] Audiences for confessional performances thus participate in constructing what it means to confess.

In spite of the generally approving tone of the authors I have cited, doubts about the nature and validity of confession remain. Self-revelation is itself a problematic concept, implying as it does the existence of a single core identity that is capable of being both known and revealed. This has implications for music that adopts a confessional stance, for the ability to confess through music rests on a conception of artistic truth-telling complicated by its presentation within the aesthetic frame of a musical performance. In the same way that every autobiography contains fictive elements, autobiographical music strikes a balance between truth and interpretation. The blend of the real and the not-quite-real in song means that such performers stand at once inside and outside the song frame, making it difficult to decipher where the performance ends and the personal life of the performer(s) begin. As a person who has made a career out of performing intimate details of his personal life, Fitzsimmons contends with a tension between confession and performance that reaches a peak on his album *The*

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[7] Nicholas Cook, "Between Process and Product: Music and/as Performance", *Music Theory Online* 7, no. 2 (April 2001): §14.

[8] David P. Terry, "Once Blind, Now Seeing: Problematics of Confessional Performance", *Text and Performance Quarterly* 26, no. 3 (July 2006): 218.

Sparrow and the Crow, and is embodied in the album's twin cornerstones of "I Don't Feel It Anymore (Song of the Sparrow)" and "Please Forgive Me (Song of the Crow)".

As Algernon Moncrieff quips, "the truth is never pure and rarely simple", and this is rarely truer than when an individual attempts to represent his or her life and the lives of others.[9] The reliance on truthfulness (as well as its closely related term 'authenticity') implicit in confessional music is particularly prominent in musical genres whose participants have developed performance cultures which place great emphasis on notions of integrity. Within popular music, both folk and rock music have drawn upon a discourse of authenticity to shape standards of performance. In recent years a similar discourse has become prevalent within indie music, and in particular amongst proponents of a sub-genre I call confessional indie music. As an indie singer-songwriter whose work is consistently identified as personal, intimate, and confessional, William Fitzsimmons offers a particularly apt case study for deepening our understanding of how indie music and its listeners construct a distinctively confessional aesthetic.

In this chapter I construct a multi-faceted view of Fitzsimmons's confessional performance on *The Sparrow and the Crow* with the aim of exploring the relationships this creates between the singer and his various audiences. I begin by contextualising the singer and his work with a brief biography before situating him within the larger context of confessional indie and the singer-songwriter tradition. I then turn to the question of how confessional performances are constructed with particular attention paid to linguistic ideas of performativity and the importance of perceptions of authenticity within indie music. At the heart of the chapter are analyses of Fitzsimmons's performance characteristics and the relational subject-positions these create. I trace these relationships through an examination of his

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[9] Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Act One (1899; repr., London: Methuen and Co., 1969), 18.

reception using information gleaned from online sources. The concluding section examines some of the persistent issues and questions generated by confessional performance.

2.1 Equal parts songwriter and psychotherapist

William Fitzsimmons was born in 1978 near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania as a sighted child of two blind parents. His parents were both amateur musicians, and Fitzsimmons frequently recalls growing up in a house full of music, saying on one occasion:

> [Music was] never a dream so much as an absolute necessity in order to get along in our household. I don't like to label my parents as disabled but it was definitely different, not being able to look into their eyes, or they into mine. There was a gap, and it was felt very early on. Music was the way my parents communicated. That was the language in our household, and how we spoke on an emotional level.[10]

Even with this early and deep-set enjoyment of music, Fitzsimmons did not consider a career in music until much later in life. Instead, he studied psychology at university, married, and worked as a mental health technician at Cooper Hospital in Camden, New Jersey before returning to graduate school at Geneva College to study clinical mental health counselling.[11] While working with the mentally ill, he realised that there were things in his own life, including the continuing struggles with his own mental illness, that he would have to address in order to continue counselling others: "I needed to do something to get into a place where I could help people instead of being part

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[10] William Fitzsimmons, quoted in Naim Label biography, http://www.naimlabel.com/artist-william-fitzsimmons.aspx (accessed 24 February 2014).

[11] William Fitzsimmons, interview with *NAMI Advocate*, National Alliance on Mental Illness (2010), http://www.nami.org/ADVTemplate.cfm?Section=Advocate_enewsletter_2010&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=98154 (accessed 24 July 2014).

of a problem. You need to be clear and healthy when you sit down and try to help someone else."[12] Returning to music was a natural step in this process and Fitzsimmons began writing songs as a side project.

The initial locus for this musical self-exploration was the trauma of his parents' divorce, which occurred when he was young.[13] Returning to those painful memories, William began writing songs, some of which would find their way onto his first album, *Until When We Are Ghosts* (2005). Although available details of the elder Fitzsimmons' divorce are minimal, Fitzsimmons accuses his father of being the primary cause with lyrics such as "And I don't believe your protest/That you swear you didn't know/How to even change a diaper/Or to teach me how to throw" ("Please Don't Go") and "I was sorry you missed Christmas/Do you think that you'll still miss us?/I was angry when you left us" ("You Broke My Heart"). On the other hand, Fitzsimmons's mother, who retained primary care for the children, remains a passive figure in lyrics such as "Did you think about my mother/when you shared the same bed covers/Did you wonder if it changed her/When your sons became your strangers" ("You Broke My Heart"). These and other lyrical allusions suggest that the elder Fitzsimmons abandoned his family whilst the bitter "I am my father and I found another" from "Find Me to Forgive" is perhaps an acknowledgement that Fitzsimmons's father had left for another lover.[14] The process continued the next year with the release of *Goodnight*, a poignant exploration of both the continuing effects of his parent's divorce and the cracks appearing simultaneously in Fitzsimmons's own marriage. These two albums were recorded in a home studio with the help of like-minded artists

[12] William Fitzsimmons, interview with Daniel Hajek, "William Fitzsimmons: Psychotherapist, Songwriter", http://danielhajek.com/2012/11/01/william-fitzsimmons-psychotherapist-songwriter/ (accessed 22 April 2014).

[13] According to Naim Label, he was 12 when his parents divorced, and 14 when the divorce was finalised (referenced in the music as "14 years is all you made it"). Interview with LAist.com, http://laist.com/2008/05/10/william_fitzsim.php (accessed 23 March 2015).

[14] Lyrics to "Please Don't Go", *Goodnight*; "You Broke My Heart", *Goodnight*; "Find Me To Forgive", *The Sparrow and the Crow*.

such as Ingrid Michaelson and uploaded to MySpace, where Fitzsimmons slowly began to accumulate listeners. At this point Fitzsimmons was still working as a psychotherapist and writing music on the side, but the tide would soon turn.

In early 2007, "Passion Play," one of Fitzsimmons's songs from *Until When We Are Ghosts,* aired during an episode of the popular television series *Grey's Anatomy.* In the episode, the song underscores a scene between George O'Malley, one of the main characters, and his father in which the latter is trying to apologise for mistakes he has made before he goes into surgery. As Fitzsimmons sings the initial verse, George says "Dad, stop it. Stop apologising, stop saying goodbye, you can't … that's no way to go into surgery!" to which his father replies, "I'm gonna die someday, Georgie. We're all gonna die, and I'm lying here in this bed … it gives me time to think about all the things I haven't said is all."[15] The use of "Passion Play", with its lyrics "I just want to be not what I am today/I just want to be better than my friends might say/I just want a part in your passion play", as the soundtrack to a scene in which two characters are reconciled set the tone for the future reception of Fitzsimmons's music. This was the first of many uses of Fitzsimmons's work as a background track in television shows, and the increased exposure resulted in a widening of his audience.

Even as Fitzsimmons turned to writing and performing music full-time, he was struggling in his personal life. In what he has since called a "pathetic irony", immersing himself in the darkness and pain necessary for producing *Goodnight* was the final straw in the collapse of his marriage of nearly ten years.[16] He is often reluctant to spell out the details of his marriage's breakdown, whether out of consideration for his ex-wife and others involved, or from a desire to keep some part of his past out of the public eye. However,

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[15] "Six Days, Part 1", *Grey's Anatomy,* Season 3, Episode 6, aired 11 January 2007, 21'05"–23'12".

[16] Fitzsimmons, quoted in Naim Label biography.

in an interview with the Dutch online music platform FaceCulture, he admitted "it was betrayal … I was not a faithful person and it was that one thing. … In a lot of other areas I was pretty good, but that's kind of the most important one, and that's the thing that tore us apart."[17] From the pain and guilt attendant on such an experience Fitzsimmons wrested a set of songs that became *The Sparrow and the Crow* (2008). The album is linked to *Goodnight* both lyrically and thematically: the last track on *Goodnight* is entitled "Afterall", while the opening track on *The Sparrow and the Crow* is "After Afterall". Even the title of *Goodnight* finds its mirror on *The Sparrow and the Crow* in the closing track "Goodmorning". Although these connections are immediately apparent, there are a number of more subtle echoes, from parallel lyrical allusions to the outright recycling of titles and key phrases between albums. This reflects Fitzsimmons's grim appraisal of the painful events in his own life as indicative of similar dispositions and choices made by his own parents, a stance that makes sense in the light of his assessment of what went wrong with *Goodnight*:

> To this day I still don't know whether the process I went through to make those songs was a symptom or a cause of a larger issue, but I do know that I regret it. I don't know if it would have changed anything, but I regret it. … To convey heartbreak you have to experience loneliness. I wanted it to be a dark experience. It just went too far.[18]

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[17] William Fitzsimmons, interview with Face Culture, 30 November 2009, 1'38"–1'58" (part 2), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2yyPcqtjswA (accessed 21 March 2014).

[18] Fitzsimmons, quoted in Naim Label biography: "It was easily the darkest time I've been through. My marriage hadn't been good for some time and that was the final straw, recording that album. To this day I still don't know whether the process I went through to make those songs was a symptom or a cause of a larger issue, but I do know that I regret it. I don't know if it would have changed anything, but I regret it. … It's not that I'm ashamed of those songs per se, but from them I will always be reminded of the worst mistakes I've made: losing my house and my wife, being broke and homeless. I'm of the mind-set that suffering can be a curative experience, but I wouldn't have wished those days on anyone. … To convey heartbreak you have to experience loneliness. I wanted it to be a dark experience. It just went too far."

The emotional tenor of *The Sparrow and the Crow* is evident from a glance at the track list (see Figure 2.1), which charts an introspective path through the charred ruins of a relationship.

Figure 2.1 Track listing for *The Sparrow and the Crow* (2008)

1. After Afterall
2. I Don't Feel It Anymore (Song of the Sparrow)
3. We Feel Alone
4. If You Would Come Back Home
5. Please Forgive Me (Song of the Crow)
6. Further From You
7. Just Not Each Other
8. Even Now
9. You Still Hurt Me
10. They'll Never Take the Good Years
11. Find Me to Forgive
12. Goodmorning

At its heart is the opposition between guilt and forgiveness given aural form in the juxtaposition of "I Don't Feel It Anymore (Song of the Sparrow)" and "Please Forgive Me (Song of the Crow)". As these titles suggest, the images of the sparrow and the crow appear in multiple guises throughout the album, and Fitzsimmons has said that the contrast between the two, with the crow symbolizing "this evil, dark element … selfishness" and the sparrow "true love, with steadfastness … [and] an element about returning back to home after a long journey" is what drew the entire album together.[19] Visual cues from the album artwork, as well as the aural distinction between the vocal duet with

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[19] William Fitzsimmons, interview with Stereo Subversion, 27 October 2008, http://stereosubversion.com/interviews/william-fitzsimmons-3 (accessed 20 March 2015).

Priscilla Ahn in "I Don't Feel It Anymore" and the solo "Please Forgive Me", lead many music journalists and bloggers to associate Fitzsimmons with the figure of the Crow and his ex-wife with that of the Sparrow, even though the identification is not explicitly stated on the album. Regardless of interpretation, the album struck a chord with audiences and iTunes named it the Best Singer-Songwriter Album of 2008.

The Sparrow and the Crow brought Fitzsimmons to the attention of a wider audience and in early 2008 he joined fellow MySpace artists Michaelson, Priscilla Ahn, Joshua Radin, and Cary Brothers, among others, on his first national tour, the wide-ranging Hotel Café Tour. In November and December of that year, Fitzsimmons headlined his first tour in support of The Sparrow and the Crow; in the years since then he has completed multiple tours of the United States, Canada, and Western Europe. He has also released three further full-length albums and two EPs: Derivatives (2010), Gold in the Shadow (2011), Lions (2014), Pittsburgh (2015), and Charleroi (2016). The eight tracks that make up Derivatives are a mixture of re-worked material from The Sparrow and the Crow, original music, and a cover version of Katy Perry's "I Kissed A Girl", a song Fitzsimmons sings frequently at live shows. In content and in orientation—even in the use of the same cover image in reverse—it serves as a complementary volume to The Sparrow and the Crow, opening with two remixes of prominent songs from that album: "I Don't Feel It Anymore" and "If You Would Come Back Home". Another track from The Sparrow and the Crow, "Goodmorning", is also present in remixed format. Surprising in its absence is "Please Forgive Me (Song of the Crow)", but the album does include two renditions (an acoustic and an electronica remix) of "I Don't Feel It Anymore", both of which lack the designation "(Song of the Sparrow)" that is part of the song's original title. The new material on the album is a single song entitled "So This Is Goodbye", presented both as an acoustic track and as a remix, whilst the album's closing track is "I Kissed a Girl". In Fitzsimmons's cover version, what in its original form is a playful story of a woman who as part of an "experimental game" kisses another woman is transformed by the substitution of a single word into the story of a man who cheats: the chorus is

altered from "I kissed a girl just to try it/I hope my boyfriend don't mind it" to "I kissed a girl just to try it/I hope my girlfriend don't mind it". If *Goodnight* is the tragic precursor to *The Sparrow and the Crow, Derivatives* is the other end of his journey and the point at which Fitzsimmons might finally say goodbye.

After a break of a few years, Fitzsimmons came out with *Gold in the Shadow* in 2011. Titles such as "Psychasthenia" highlight that the songs draw on his experience as a mental health worker, but Fitzsimmons has suggested that the album can be read as "a real and long coming confrontation with personal demons, past mistakes, and the specter of mental illness which has hovered over me for the great majority of my life" as much as it references his therapeutic work.[20] The album returns to the evocative, half-whispered lyrical style of Fitzsimmons's first albums with a new strain of hopefulness that reflects the duality of the subject matter: "it's about sickness and it's about wellness."[21] Fitzsimmons's most recent full-length effort, *Lions*, is more cheerful in outlook, though hardly an appropriate accompaniment to a dance party. It continues the juxtaposition of opposing characteristics from *Gold in the Shadows*, with Fitzsimmons framing it in terms that suggest an unusual perspective on the titular animals: "it's about savagery and it's about kindness and it's about us being those two things at the very same time."[22] The mixed nature of human character likewise features on the EPs *Pittsburgh* and *Charleroi*, which are conceived as a two-volume treatment of Fitzsimmons's family history through an exploration of his two grandmothers: "one … a

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[20] William Fitzsimmons, quoted in editorial review on Amazon, http://www.amazon.com/Gold-Shadow-William-Fitzsimmons/dp/B004JAUCGE (accessed 12 September 2014). Fitzsimmons has suffered from anxiety, depression, and anorexia nervosa, and has on occasion suggested that his interest in mental health therapy stemmed in part from identification with his patients' struggles.

[21] William Fitzsimmons, quoted in album review of *Gold in the Shadow, The Ruckus*, 17 March 2011, http://www.whatstheruckus.com/2011/03/william-fitzsimmons-gold-in-the-shadow.html (accessed 16 December 2016).

[22] William Fitzsimmons, "Lions EPK", https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XEflDMsZKb0 (accessed 21 March 2014).

steadfast presence in William's life ... the other a ghostly figure of a long forgotten story."[23] Positive changes in Fitzsimmons's personal life are reflected in the later albums' more upbeat tone. Since the release of *Sparrow* he has remarried and adopted two children with his second wife; songs dedicated to their children feature prominently on *Lions*.

In many respects, this story sounds like that of a typical, moderately successful, indie musician. His biography on *Naim Label* encapsulates Fitzsimmons's defining features in a single rhetorical question: "how many other musicians can you name who are ex-psychotherapists, and whose blind parents' divorce was so traumatic he wrote an album about it, the recording of which in turn proved so harrowing it precipitated the dissolution of his own marriage, which he then proceeded to document on the follow-up?"[24] What this characterization of Fitzsimmons does not touch upon is the curious relationship between the content of his music and the aesthetic frame of the song medium. This relationship is curious primarily because, unlike the balladeer who might sing songs written by or about others, Fitzsimmons is explicit about singing from his own experiences. He is not alone in this umbrella genre of autobiographical musicians—indeed there are fruitful comparisons to be made with artists such as Bon Iver, Adele, and Sufjan Stevens—but in addition to the nature of their subjects, the genre of confessional artists share a contentious relationship with the very nature of performance. The rest of this chapter is devoted to exploring how Fitzsimmons navigates this relationship by constructing his performances to emphasise their confessional qualities.

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[23] Description of *Charleroi*, http://williamfitzsimmons.com/media/ (accessed 24 October 2016).

[24] Fitzsimmons, Naim Label biography.

2.2 The conditions of confessional performance

By referring to Fitzsimmons as a confessional indie singer-songwriter I am positioning him both as an exponent of a particular subgenre of popular music and as someone who is understood within the framework of that subgenre. This situating of Fitzsimmons is crucial because, as David Brackett argues, "Genres bring with them connotations about music and identity which may encode specific affective qualities [and] a whole variety of social characteristics," with the result that "genres may be understood as mediating the discursive web (spun between the media, consumers, and industry personnel) in which musical meaning circulates."[25] This genre-generated musical meaning is tied to material and non-material factors, in the same way that, as Franco Fabbri suggests, genres themselves are characterized by a mixture of sonic patterns and social meanings that obtain significance in particular spatio-temporal context.[26] The confluence of these significances within confessional indie shapes our understanding of Fitzsimmons and his music.

Yet, what does calling Fitzsimmons a confessional indie singer-songwriter actually entail? Beginning from the central tenet of this compound moniker, we start with "indie", which, although it is most familiar when applied to music and film, is a term that can be applied across a host of different art forms without specific unifying aesthetic ideals or media. Within music, Ryan Hibbett suggests that the indie phenomenon can be traced from the so-called "underground" scene of the 1960s with bands such as the Velvet Underground through 1980s "college rock" and the "alternative" music of the

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[25] David Brackett, "(In Search of) Musical Meaning: Genres Categories and Crossover," in *Popular Music Studies*, ed. David Hesmondhalgh and Keith Negus (London: Arnold, 2002), 66–67.

[26] Franco Fabbri, "A Theory of Musical Genres: Two Applications", in *Popular Music Perspectives*, ed. David Horn and Philip Tagg (London: IASPM, 1982): 52–63.

1990s before the term "indie" came into play.[27] Today, indie music plays host to a profusion of subgenres: eighty-five indie subgenres, including indietronica and indie emo rock along with the lesser-known indie shoegaze and indie fuzzpop, are listed on the genre map on *Every Noise at Once*.[28]

Despite this explosion of subgenres, the simplest definition of indie music is that implied by the very label: indie is a contraction of independent, and the original artists associated with this name were those who were unaffiliated with major record labels. The rejection of major label status is not a litmus test, as artists categorised as indie can be found in the catalogues of all major labels. This is in part because of the growing popularity of indie music—to the point where Steven Hyden claims to be "witnessing the death rattle" of the genre, and Peter Weber ends his article on indie music's growing market dominance with the aside, "maybe 'indie' isn't winning after all. How could it? Once a genre wins, it's not "independent," it's popular."[29] Hyden's and Weber's suspicion of claims to independence recognises that the tenets that once defined indie music now seem to be in flux, including the idea of independence itself. Although the overall percentage share of the music industry controlled by major labels has decreased in the past decade, the three remaining major labels in the United States (Warner Music Group, Universal Music Group, and Sony Music Group) and their various subdivisions or affiliates control about two-thirds of the recorded music produced in the

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[27] Ryan Hibbett, "What Is Indie Rock?" *Popular Music and Society* 28, no. 1 (February 2005): 57–58.

[28] *Every Noise at Once*, http://everynoise.com/engenremap.html (accessed 20 July 2016); see Ryan Hibbett, "What Is Indie Rock?" *Popular Music and Society* 28, no. 1 (February 2005): 55–77 for a more detailed exploration of indie's origins.

[29] Steven Hyden, "Indie Rock's Tuneful Death Rattle", *Grantland*, 1 October 2013, http://grantland.com/features/haim-days-gone-indie-rock-death-rattle/ (accessed 8 July 2014); Peter Weber, "How Indie Artists Came to Dominate the Music Industry", *The Week*, 2 January 2014, http://theweek.com/article/index/254640/how-indie-artists-came-to-dominate-the-music-industry (accessed 8 July 2014).

United States.[30] The rest of the recorded music industry is funnelled through indie labels, or is self-produced—though much of this music still relies on the major labels for distribution. For his part, Fitzsimmons remains largely independent: his first two albums were self-produced before he was signed to two independent labels, first to Downtown Music and later to Nettwerk Records. In addition, Fitzsimmons has continued to work with other prominent indie musicians: his album *Lions* was produced by Chris Walla, the founding guitarist of indie rock band Death Cab for Cutie. Thus, he not only fits the technical requirements for being an indie artist but also actively places himself within the expectations of the genre in terms of independence.

The historic struggles of producing and distributing music apart from the major record labels have had a significant impact on the indie aesthetic, and it is here that the singer-songwriter comes to the fore. In comparison to the shifting sands of indie, the designation "singer-songwriter" seems self-explanatory: Fitzsimmons belongs to a classification of artists who write their own lyrics, melodies, or, as in Fitzsimmons's case, both. Just as indie is contrasted with pop, the singer-songwriter is contrasted with those who adopt music written by others. However, this plays into the opposition at the core of the indie philosophy between what is good and what is popular—a dichotomy that is sometimes framed in terms of substance versus execution, or authenticity versus inauthenticity. This is not a new idea: within popular music this distinction extends to the clashes between folk and rock or between rock and pop. Looking back further, the accusations of vapidity and genre standardisation that characterise these debates bear striking resemblance to the negative assessments of popular music by classical music composers and critics in the early and mid-twentieth century or to the veneration of a particular heroic style of Beethoven's music and consequential denigration of

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[30] Weber, "How Indie Artists Came to Dominate the Music Industry", http://theweek.com/article/index/254640/how-indie-artists-came-to-dominate-the-music-industry (accessed 8 July 2014).

both stylistic outliers within Beethoven's oeuvre and of other artists such as Rossini of a century before.[31] Of course, not all singer-songwriters are indie musicians, and vice versa, but I contend that within the indie milieu the singer-songwriter represents an ideal form of indie music-making that is tied to tacit, if often unexpressed, beliefs about what is valuable in the indie musical experience.

The privileging of the authentic over the popular has an impact on every aspect of indie music, from the style of clothing worn to recording practices to performing styles and beyond. It also influences how audiences judge musicians, with the quickest condemnation reserved for those artists who transgress the genre's accepted bounds. If an independent artist moves to a major record label, he or she may be denounced for 'selling out'. Implicit in the terminology is the charge of valuing money and fame over artistic integrity, itself a reflection of the self-same substance/execution divide. The cession of artistic control is associated furthermore with diminishing creativity, epitomised in Michael Azerrad's argument that "nearly every band [who sold out] did their best and most influential work during their indie years; and once they went to a major label, an important connection to the underground community was invariably lost."[32] To combat the temptation of selling out, indie audiences rely on standards of authenticity and artistic sincerity to judge whether an artist conforms to the expectations of the genre. Thus, in addition to audiences and performers, the perception of authenticity involves a set of external standards against which performances are (consciously or unconsciously) measured. These ideas, whilst not obviously tied to particular sounds, are reinforced by choices regarding musical things such as instrumentation and vocal timbre, thereby demonstrating Fabbri's

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[31] See Theodor Adorno "On Popular Music", in *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, 3rd Ed., ed. John Storey, 73–84 (Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Ltd., 2006) for one of the most influential dismissals of popular music on these grounds.

[32] Michael Azerrad, *Our Band Could Be Your Life: Scenes from the American Indie Underground, 1981–1991* (Boston: Back Bay, 2001), 5.

argument that genres are constituted as combinations of the sonic and the social.

The final component I have suggested for Fitzsimmons's musical classification is "confessional". Unlike indie or singer-songwriter, confessional indicates an approach to musical communication. For Fitzsimmons and fellow indie singer-songwriters such as Bon Iver, Sufjan Stevens, or Ingrid Michaelson, this combines the popular conception of the singer-songwriter as personally expressive as well as on their often-(auto)biographical lyrics.[33] Incidentally, Bon Iver's critically-acclaimed debut album *For Emma, Forever Ago* (for which singer-songwriter Justin Vernon holed up in a remote Wisconsin cabin to recover from both a broken heart and glandular fever) was released just before *The Sparrow and the Crow* in early 2008, and both Stevens and Michaelson came to prominence in the early- to mid-2000s. This temporal grouping parallels the explosion of first-person narratives in media forms as diverse as reality television, blogs, and Twitter. Although the confessional ideal within music has a lengthy pedigree (witness the long-standing tendency to read autobiographical meaning into works of Western art music), this wider phenomenon of self-revelation contributes to creating a hospitable environment for confessional song within indie music.

2.3 Confession and constructing the performative self

Near the opening of this chapter, I suggest that confession is predicated on two things: a revelation of the self, and an assumption of the truthfulness of that revelation. In ordinary life, there exist means for determining whether these conditions have been met, often by investigating historical facts or interrogating the confessant in hopes of eliciting authenticating detail. In the

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[33] Nicola Dibben gives a similar argument for her characterization of Björk as a confessional artist in "Subjectivity and the Construction of Emotion in the Music of Björk", *Music Analysis* 25, no.1–2 (2006): 171–197.

case of a performed confession such as Fitzsimmons's, these avenues are not normally available to the curious party. Rather, audiences rely on an implicit belief about a performer's confession that is informed by both generic expectations and performance conventions. The following sections of this chapter investigate how this confessional aesthetic is constructed between Fitzsimmons and his audience.

In analysing Fitzsimmons's performances as partaking in a confessional aesthetic I build on J.L. Austin's theory of linguistic performativity as discussed in the introduction. In addition, I apply the idea of the song as an aesthetic frame that conditions how audiences react to the speech-acts contained within it; the song thus becomes a setting for action as well as a vehicle for recounting a story. Where this interpretation of the song-frame becomes complicated is when the frame is traversed by a story that blends fictive and real elements. As I suggested previously, this positioning of a performance both inside and outside the frame is characteristic of what I have called the confessional subgenre of popular music. Within Fitzsimmons's oeuvre, *The Sparrow and the Crow* stands out as an example of a confessional mode of songwriting that lends itself to this kind of analysis. However, my purpose in applying the idea of performativity to *The Sparrow and the Crow* is not to analyse this music line-by-line but rather to explore the repercussions of the idea of speech as action for our understanding of the music and its effects.

First is the way Fitzsimmons constructs his confession as self-revelatory, which in Austin's parlance answers the question of the confessor's authority to speak. The artist continually emphasises his personal connection to these songs through the way his albums are presented: for example, in the acknowledgements for *Goodnight* he includes the wry note "William Fitzsimmons—vocals, guitars of various types, banjos, piano, melodica, drum stuff, uncomfortable lyrical self-disclosure", while *The Sparrow and the Crow* is

subtitled "A True Story by William Fitzsimmons".[34] These explicit, yet somehow self-effacing, appeals to authorial integrity are common in confessional music. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that the audience sees only part of the picture. If *The Sparrow and the Crow* is a story, Fitzsimmons is the storyteller. He is the means by which the listening audience experience the events referenced in the music, but he is also the story's narrator and its primary antagonist. The story is unequivocally his. That is to say, Fitzsimmons has the right to tell this story, but (like all stories) it cannot be only his.

If we accept that Fitzsimmons has the authority to make this confession, the intimate nature of these lyrics still raises the question of for whom he is confessing. His audience exists on two levels: on the one hand, there is the listening public who purchase albums, attend concerts, and make videos in response to this music, and on the other hand, the woman who is both the subject and the ostensible addressee for the album. Each of the songs on *The Sparrow and the Crow* is addressed to "you", and all except the final song on the album ("Goodmorning") cycle in pronoun between I, you, and we. If the song lyrics did not make the identity of the "you" clear, the album as a whole is dedicated "most of all to her".[35] Of his ex-wife's reaction to the album Fitzsimmons says:

> We didn't talk for a while which is normal. The first things get pretty dark. But when we were finally able to talk to each other and to forgive each other, she did eventually listen [to part of the album]. She said she can make it through what happened. It was very hard for her to listen to it. But she forgave me eventually. That's all I wanted.[36]

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[34] Liner notes for *Goodnight* and *The Sparrow and the Crow*.

[35] Liner notes for *The Sparrow and the Crow*.

[36] William Fitzsimmons, interview with *aufgemischt!*, 23 December 2009, http://www.aufgemischt.com/wp/2009/12/interview-william-fitzsimmons/ (accessed 3 April 2014).

Of note is the care with which Fitzsimmons approaches any mention of his ex-wife in his music or interviews, scrupulously avoiding identifying her, even by first name. Whether this is motivated by courtesy, a specific desire for anonymity, or some other concern is unclear. Nevertheless, although the woman is absent, as the primary addressee her presence is a permanent fixture on *The Sparrow and the Crow*. The listening public never hears her voice directly, and Priscilla Ahn's donning of her persona in the "I Don't Feel It Anymore" duet is the only place in the album where a hint of her perspective appears; however, even here our vision is filtered through Fitzsimmons's storytelling. Ahn may be giving voice to this mysterious woman, but the words she sings were written by Fitzsimmons and thus it is still his voice we hear through her silvery tones. Throughout the album, then, Fitzsimmons as speaker is addressing both his absent ex-wife and his present audience of observers.

The double nature of his audience complicates our interpretation of Fitzsimmons's confession and requests for forgiveness. After all, for people who are neither celebrities nor politicians, requesting forgiveness from a person one has wronged usually involves contacting that person and apologising in a personal manner rather than making a public pronouncement, yet in this case, Fitzsimmons has made a public statement of contrition, apparently without first contacting the woman from whom he is seeking forgiveness. This is a particularly strange method of going about obtaining pardon, and one that seems as likely to get thrown back in one's face as be successful. Moreover, performing these songs in front of third parties seems almost like an affront, a sort of public airing of dirty laundry. There have been occasions when the subject of an artist's musical exposition contemplated retaliation, such as the case of Marvin Gaye's 1978 album *Here, My Dear*: after the release of the alternatingly tender and scathing account of his turbulent marriage and divorce from Anna Gurdy Gaye, Anna publicly

considered filing an invasion-of-privacy lawsuit.[37] In contrast, Fitzsimmons's ex-wife has never spoken publicly about *The Sparrow and the Crow* or the divorce, and although Fitzsimmons sent her a copy of the album in the hope that she would listen to it, he claims she initially decided it was too difficult to finish after hearing the first half of the album.[38]

This raises the question: what is the album designed to achieve? What speech-act is brought into existence by it? If it is forgiveness, by whom is Fitzsimmons being absolved? If it is his ex-wife, Fitzsimmons's statement "It was the best way that I knew how ... to reach out to my ex in a way that hopefully would have been understood"[39] seems hardly credible, if for no other reason than that a private mix-tape would have done as well as a means of communication. Alternatively, if Fitzsimmons felt the need to demonstrate sincerity to his ex-wife by involving the audience as witnesses, her presence at a concert would seem to be key. As a method of obtaining forgiveness, regardless of whether it came from his ex-wife, his audiences, or himself, the writing of these songs clearly fell short. In one of his more impassioned declarations Fitzsimmons admits:

> When I wrote *The Sparrow And The Crow* I thought: That's how I'm going to get over my divorce! Write these fucking hardcore honest songs! Play them! And then you can move on! But that just fucked me up worse. Every single night I had to think about this shit, and no one was helping me. People were clapping, but

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[37] Peter Lester, "In L.A.'s Other Marvin Case, It's Gaye vs. Anna Gurdy, With Brother Berry In The Middle", *People*, 9 April 1979.

[38] William Fitzsimmons, interview with Ongekend Talent, YouTube video, 11'50", 7 February 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2T8rz5pCu9s (accessed 20 October 2014).

[39] William Fitzsimmons, interview with FaceCulture, 30 November 2009, 3'30"–3'58" (Part 1), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2yyPcqtjswA (accessed 21 March 2014).

> I needed fucking help, I was in a bad place. So writing songs is definitely a helpful thing, but it's no substitute for people.[40]

Even if we presume that finding forgiveness and closure is part of the album's purpose in addition to being a performative frame, from this statement it would seem that performance was a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for Fitzsimmons's processing of his guilt and pain.

Over the years, Fitzsimmons has touched on the personal difficulty of performing songs from *The Sparrow and the Crow* numerous times and his interpretation of that experience has changed. I believe this reveals some of the complexity of this experience rather than a desire on Fitzsimmons's part to dissemble. In a 2009 interview, it seems as though the excruciatingly public nature of the confession is what made the experience of performing these songs at once humbling and cathartic:

> There's something a little embarrassing about saying you were wrong in front of other people that I think is really healthy. I was able to purge some of my guilt, I think, because I was admitting that I was the asshole in front of anyone that would ever hear the music.[41]

In this interpretation, the fact that a listening public acted as witnesses to Fitzsimmons's confession was a key (though clearly not the only) component in working through the issues attendant on his culpability. With the audience playing the role of confessor, this ritual of confession became something re-enacted every time he took the stage. At a certain point, this repetition became too much to bear, and in 2011 Fitzsimmons explained, "If I'm playing a show, I'm feeling it, but I'm not really working it out, I'm not forgiving myself,

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[40] William Fitzsimmons, interview with Michael Kraft, 22 March 2014, http://www.shitesite.de/2014/03/22/interview-with-william-fitzsimmons/ (accessed 20 March 2015).

[41] William Fitzsimmons, interview with FaceCulture, 30 November 2009, 0'36"-1'00" (Part 2), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2yyPcqtjswA (accessed 21 March 2014).

I'm not talking about it, I'm just singing about how much of an ass I was."[42] After the release of *Gold in the Shadow*, it was, the singer relates, a great relief to recognise that he wouldn't have to put on a show using only the songs from *The Sparrow and the Crow* again.[43] The difference Fitzsimmons draws between "working it out" and "just singing about [it]" rests on a distinction between the singer's existence as a human being and his performing persona, whereas the characterization of his behaviour as that of an ass implies a further separation between a generalised performing persona and the specific character embodied through *The Sparrow and the Crow*.[44] Although Fitzsimmons here seems to connect the performance of confessional music primarily with the process of self-forgiveness, the ritualised nature of the live show suggests that the confession is an essentially performative act, albeit one complicated by aesthetic concerns, that works on both the performer and his audience.

It is evident that Fitzsimmons created and performed these songs in the years surrounding the album's release as a means of expiating guilt and communicating a desire for forgiveness, but his purpose in continuing to perform them has altered with time. In a sense, the songs have accomplished their purpose: even though Fitzsimmons and his ex-wife are not reconciled, on some level they have forgiven each other for the mutual pain caused. But even though he now mixes songs from different albums in his concerts, these pieces

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[42] William Fitzsimmons, interview with FaceCulture, 2 February 2011, 0'35"-0'46" (Part 2), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zgHP90HvGNM&spfreload=10 (accessed 21 March 2014).

[43] William Fitzsimmons, interview with FaceCulture, 2 February 2011, 3'01"-3'38" (Part 1), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-qCoELsjwDA&spfreload=10 (accessed 21 March 2014).

[44] These terms are from Philip Auslander, "Musical Personae", *The Drama Review* 50, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 100–119. Other scholars have suggested other divisions, including Edward Cone's discussion of singer, persona, and vocal protagonist in *The Composer's Voice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 3; Simon Frith's human being, star, and song personality in *Performing Rites: On the Value of Popular Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 186, 212; and Dennis Waskul's persona, player, and person in "The Role-Playing Game and the Game of Role-Playing: The Ludic Self and Everyday Life", in *Gaming as Culture: Essays on Reality Identity and Experience in Fantasy Games*, ed. Patrick Williams, Sean Hendricks, and Keith Winkler, 19–38 (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2006).

remain the basis of his career, and audiences frequently request older, more familiar songs from *The Sparrow and the Crow* as encores. It is perhaps telling that no matter the current status of his relationship with his ex-wife, Fitzsimmons approaches any performance, and particularly those of "I Don't Feel it Anymore" or "Please Forgive Me", with soberness. At a concert I attended in March 2012 he went so far as to introduce "I Don't Feel it Anymore" as "a very personal song to me … this is a song that I've wrestled with since the very day that I wrote it".[45] The following performance by Fitzsimmons and his then-touring partner Abby Gundersen was accompanied by near-complete silence from the audience.

The contrast between Fitzsimmons's lived experiences in the present and the necessity of accessing the emotional components of his past in performance has led to some interesting choices. One of the ways Fitzsimmons preserves this separation involves representing mental and emotional boundaries with physical objects, including a carpet he places on stage in order to delineate the physical and temporal space in which he gets to re-enter the emotional turmoil the songs represent.[46] Six years on from the initial appearance of *The Sparrow and the Crow* he acknowledges: "now when I play ["I Don't Feel It Anymore"] I remember the people and the feelings. She's still there, you know. But I don't have to go inside the house anymore. I can just drive by."[47]

From the perspective of performativity analysis, a key component of assessing speech-acts such as apologies is their perceived sincerity. In Austin's argument this condition is intended to exclude speech acts that are

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[45] Personal notes made by the author at concert on 3 March 2012 at The Parish in Austin, Texas.

[46] Kevin Forest-Moreau, "Another side of William Fitzsimmons," *Creative Loafing Atlanta* (22 April 2014) http://clatl.com/atlanta/another-side-of-william-fitzsimmons/Content?oid=10959614 (accessed 20 March 2015)

[47] William Fitzsimmons, interview with Norman Fleischer, *Nothing But Hope and Passion*, 9 January 2014, http://nbhap.com/music/interviews/william-fitzsimmons/ (accessed 22 March 2014).

infelicitous, for instance, pronouncing participants in what is known to be a sham marriage as husband and wife.[48] In the case of Fitzsimmons's music, the initial texts certainly indicate a sincere request for forgiveness in songs such as "If You Would Come Back Home", "Find Me to Forgive", and of course, "Please Forgive Me". Yet, after Fitzsimmons and his ex-wife reach some level of rapprochement, the evaluation of performative sincerity becomes part of how audiences approach Fitzsimmons—a part of the performative frame through which his behaviour is interpreted. This reveals a central tension between the private and the public in confessional performance.

This tension parallels a movement from sincerity to authenticity in the discourse. In the context of musical performance, the two are closely linked to the point wherein the words are frequently used to describe the same activities: the authentic (genuine, original, natural) performance is one in which the performer behaves sincerely (i.e., free from pretence). However, one distinction to be preserved is that the authentic action, though ultimately socially constructed, nevertheless asserts itself as the genuine, or real, form of a given action. In other words, it adheres to a set of understood external ideals. In contrast, the sincere action is one that accurately represents an internal state. Sincerity thus makes no claims for the veracity of an action, but rather focuses on what the individual undertaking such an action believes. Because of authenticity's significance in current popular discourse and its implications outside the strictures of performative theory I now investigate in more depth how judgments of authenticity as understood within confessional indie music provide a useful means of describing the impact of Fitzsimmons's music.

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[48] For Austin, the sincerity inheres in the participants' belief in the capacity of the speech-act to be undertaken, and is thus contingent again on the authority of the speaker and the appropriateness of the action. This is not to say, for instance, that such a pronouncement would be infelicitous in the case of an arranged marriage or the like.

2.4 Who wants to be authentic?

It has been almost thirty years since Richard Taruskin asked "do we really want to talk about 'authenticity' anymore?", but this "stock-in-trade of press agents and promoters" remains a deeply embedded trope.[49] The object of Taruskin's aim in 1988 was the term 'authentic performance', particularly as it was applied to what is now called historically informed performance; in contrast, studies of authenticity within popular music tend to reverse the order of those terms to discuss the performance of authenticity (or, indeed, authenticities) rather than the authenticity of performance. By discussing the importance of authenticity in evaluating Fitzsimmons, or indeed other confessional indie artists, I do not suggest that their performances are any more authentic than those of other performers; rather, I reveal the ways in which confessional indie audiences willingly overlook the constructed nature of these performances in favour of interpreting them as congruent with the confessional ideal of authenticity.

The question of authenticity is an abiding concern within music criticism, but what actually is it and how do we construct it? Although it is often associated with purity and naturalness, it is socially constructed rather than existing in a cultural void. As a designation it is both deeply problematic and nigh ubiquitous: a cursory Google search for scholarly articles and books containing "authenticity and music" turns up more than 230,000 results.[50] As it is currently deployed in the broader cultural sphere, authenticity is at once a descriptor and a means of evaluating worth. In both contexts, authentic indicates something that is not false, or something that is not an imitation of another. The implication of veracity inherent within a discussion of the authentic suggests a reason for both its enduring popularity and its propensity for raising temperatures: authentic is frequently used as a signifier of

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[49] Richard Taruskin, "The Pastness of the Present and the Presence of the Past", in *Authenticity in Early Music*, ed. Nicholas Kenyon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 137.

[50] Search on Google Scholar for "Authenticity AND Music", 17 January 2017.

something believed to be either intrinsic or factual. It is, in Lionel Trilling's words, "implicitly a polemical concept"[51], and in this paradigm a failure of authenticity is a betrayal of something one holds dear.

The ubiquity of the term 'authenticity' at times leads to some confusion as different meanings of the word are conflated. In his 2002 article "Authenticity as Authentication", Allan Moore points out multiple uses of the term within popular music: as a descriptor of a performance style or a particular socio-economic status, as shorthand for artistic motivation, or even as an acknowledgement of a performer's sincerity.[52] Furthermore, these various meanings can be bundled together in a description of a single performance so that a single term might apply to one or more of these features simultaneously. In any case, authenticity is something negotiated by performers and audiences from within a particular set of conventions rather than being derived from an objective set of standards.

Authenticity in performance is perhaps the most salient type of authenticity for this project, but it is also one of the hardest to pin down. Moore suggests that the key to a performance of authenticity is the audience's interpretation of particular gestures or of the performance style of an artist as authentic—a phenomenon he refers to as authenticity of expression. This "first-person authenticity" is perceived when "an originator (composer, performer) succeeds in conveying the impression that his/her utterance is one of integrity, that it represents an attempt to communicate in an unmediated form with an audience."[53] This unites Philip Bohlman's concept of a folk authenticity as purity of practice with Lawrence Grossberg's argument for different discourses of authenticity predicated on honesty to experience

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[51] Lionel Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity* (Cambridge, MA; Harvard University Press, 1972), 94.

[52] Allan Moore, "Authenticity as Authentication", *Popular Music* 21, no. 2 (May 2002): 210–211.

[53] Ibid., 214.

operating in different subgenres of rock music.[54] Implicit is a connection between authenticity and truth that persists in spite of the acknowledged social conditioning of authenticity. Although the listener recognizes that the performance is a constructed image of sincerity, he or she willingly—even eagerly—accepts it as a genuine attempt at truthful expression.

Sarah Rubridge picks up on Moore's distinction in her argument that "Authenticity is ... not a property *of*, but something we ascribe *to* a performance."[55] Rubridge is correct in ascertaining the audience-to-performance direction of authenticity, but I would add that authenticity is not a static quality that can be applied blanket-fashion, but is subject to constant negotiation by the participants. Furthermore, the authentic does not inhere in any individual sound or structure, but is constructed by an audience in a particular cultural and historical situation. Thus, we can speak of the indie aesthetic of authenticity as something distinct from the rock or folk or Britpop aesthetics of authenticity. William Fitzsimmons's cultural context is the indie music scene, and those who determine authenticity are indie music's listeners. Understanding how his music may be perceived as authentic thus requires understanding how indie music as a whole is perceived as a vehicle for authentic artistic expression.

The centrality of authenticity for confessional indie leads me to suggest that establishing a Fitzsimmons performance as authentic is a key concern for both artist and audience. In order to explore how subjective authenticity is constructed in indie music generally and in Fitzsimmons's performances specifically, I borrow the concept of a musical subject-position from Eric

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[54] Ibid., 213; see also Lawrence Grossberg, "The Media Economy of Rock Culture: Cinema, Postmodernity and Authenticity", in *Sound and Vision: The Music Video Reader*, ed. Simon Frith, Andrew Goodwin, and Lawrence Grossberg, 185–209 (London: Routledge, 1993) and Johan Fornäs, *Cultural Theory and Late Modernity* (London: Sage Publications, 1995), 274–279.

[55] Sarah Rubridge, "Does Authenticity Matter? The Case for and against Authenticity in the Performing Arts", in *Analysing Performance*, ed. Patrick Campbell (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 219.

Clarke. In the article "Subject Position and the Specification of Invariants in Music by Frank Zappa and P. J. Harvey", Clarke defines subject-position in music as "the way in which the general manner of a listener's response is directed or determined by material characteristics of the music."[56] As the basis for his argument, Clarke introduces J.J. Gibson's idea of affordance, particularly Gibson's claim that the specification of the source of a stimulus is an important component in conveying perceptual meanings that relate to both nature and culture. Musical stimuli such as the spatial location of sound, its timbre, or dynamic level can suggest interpretations that "combine social conventions (for example, the meaning of falsetto voice; the ideology of The Velvet Underground) and physical principles (for example, the direct specification of a state of the vocal tract by a creak/scream; the specification of space/distance by reverberation)."[57] In the analysis of songs by Frank Zappa and P.J. Harvey that follows this outline of an "ecological" approach in the article, Clarke focuses on three questions, namely, 1) What subject-position does this music adopt in relation to its semantic material? 2) How is that subject-position articulated in technical terms? and 3) Where does that subject-position leave the audience? Although I go beyond examining the aural ecology of Fitzsimmons's music to encompass how his performances are presented holistically, these questions shape my interpretation of Fitzsimmons's performance, particularly of the two central tracks from *The Sparrow and the Crow*: "I Don't Feel It Anymore (Song of the Sparrow)" and "Please Forgive Me (Song of the Crow)".

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[56] Eric F. Clarke, "Subject Position and the Specification of Invariants in Music by Frank Zappa and P. J. Harvey", *Music Analysis* 18, no. 3 (Oct. 1999): 351.

[57] Ibid., 371.

2.5 Performing confession

Fitzsimmons has consistently made it clear in interviews that communication with an audience is his primary goal in making music, saying: "To me [music is] really the most effective and powerful way to connect with another human being."[58] This is particularly relevant in the case of *The Sparrow and the Crow*, since it was conceived in the form of an address to a single individual: Fitzsimmons's ex-wife. Although this address continues to serve as an aesthetic frame for Fitzsimmons's performances, his audience has since expanded to encompass the thousands of people who listen to his music or attend his concerts. Communication through song not only entails the interweaving of words and music, but also extramusical factors. This section treats each of these elements through a close examination of Fitzsimmons's performance of key moments from *The Sparrow and the Crow*.

2.5.1 You, me, and we: the language of intimacy

Many albums that chronicle the harrowing end of a relationship focus on the experience of one person—often the wronged or abandoned lover. As can be seen in Figure 2.2, *The Sparrow and the Crow* complicates these expectations by presenting the perspective of both the wrongdoer and that of the absent lover in "I Don't Feel It Anymore", albeit in a way that filters our perception of the latter through the eyes of the former. "I Don't Feel It Anymore" contrasts the viewpoints of Fitzsimmons and of his ex-wife in a striking presentation of the division between individuals in a failed relationship. In the studio recording with Priscilla Ahn, this gulf is as much aural as verbal, with the timbral differences between the singers signalling the presence of multiple personae.

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[58] William Fitzsimmons, interview with FaceCulture, 30 November 2009, 1'11"–1'18" (Part 3), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_VcNv2qg0g (accessed 21 March 2014).

Figure 2.2 Text of "I Don't Feel it Anymore (Song of the Sparrow)"

Verse 1

Hold on this will hurt more than anything has before

What it was, what it was, what it was

I've brought this on us more than anyone could ignore

What I've done, what I've done, what I've done

Verse 2

I've worked for so long just to see you mess around

What you've done, what you've done, what you've done

I want back the years that you took when I was young

I was young, I was young, but it's done

Chorus 1

Oh take it all away I don't feel it anymore

Oh take it all away

Oh take it all away I don't feel it anymore

Oh take it all away

Verse 3

We'll fall just like stars being hung by only string

Everything, everything here is gone

No map can direct how to ever make it home

We're alone, we're alone, we're alone

Chorus 2

Oh take it all away I don't feel it anymore

Oh take it all away

Oh take it all away I don't feel it anymore

Oh take it all away

At live shows when Fitzsimmons sometimes performs this song as a solo, the shift in perspective is made clear in the lyrics by the change between the first and second verses from "I've brought this on us more than anyone could ignore/What I've done, what I've done, what I've done" to "I've worked for so long just to see you mess around/what you've done, what you've done, what you've done". The lyrics thus imply the change in speaker both through the change in pronoun and the emphasis on guilt implicit in the first verse and the frustration evident in the second. In both the solo and duet versions, the parallel musical structures of the first two verses give the impression of mirrored experiences expressed by the different characters.

The final verse is lyrically (and, in the recorded version, sonically) a duet, but although the singers' voices are in harmony, the lyrics belie the sounding consonance with images of disintegration and loss. The speakers seem to have resigned themselves to an unchanging situation, singing "We'll fall just like stars being hung by only string/Everything, everything here is gone/No map can direct how to ever make it home/We're alone, we're alone, we're alone." From this point of no return, the chorus appears to address a third party, one who is able to "take it all away". One interpretation of these lines is that the speakers are asking a divine power for release from the burden of their mutual guilt, whilst another suggests that the speakers are actually addressing each other (or the listening audience) and admitting their inability to continue in a failed relationship.

"Please Forgive Me" has the same verse-chorus structure as does "I Don't Feel It Anymore", but this time Fitzsimmons is the only speaker. If anything, the text is even more direct than that of "I Don't Feel It Anymore" in its acknowledgement of guilt. An examination of the text as a whole reveals that the song is structured around three topics: 1) what "I" have done, 2) what "you" have done, and 3), what "my demons" have done. Figure 2.3 compares two versions of the text, first as it is sung, and then with the lines re-arranged so that all the text pertaining to each topic is placed together.

Figure 2.3 Text of "Please Forgive Me (Song of the Crow)"

Text as sung on record:	Text arranged by topic:
Verse 1	**I**
My demons walk with me	I put you on that tree
They told me not to leave them alone	I tore your heart to pieces
I put you on that tree	I left you out at sea
I tore your heart to pieces	I left you there to bleed
Verse 2	**You**
You swept me off my feet	You swept me off my feet
You gave your heart to me alone	You gave your heart to me alone
I left you out at sea	And so your heart is free
I left you there to bleed	And so your heart is free
	My demons
Chorus	My demons walk with me
But please forgive me	They told me not to leave them alone
Please, please forgive me	My demons waltz with me
	I begged them not to leave me alone
Verse 3	**Chorus**
My demons waltz with me	But please forgive me
I begged them not to leave me alone	Please, please forgive me
And so your heart is free	
And so your heart is free	

The first topic, in which each line begins with "I", recounts a vivid series of images describing the things of which Fitzsimmons is guilty: "I put you on that tree/I tore your heart to pieces"; "I left you out at sea/I left you there to bleed". The allusion to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ in the first of these lines suggests that Fitzsimmons's ex-wife has taken the punishment for his sin, while the second depicts him as a wild animal. Contrast this active violence with the neglect of the second pair in which Fitzsimmons abandons his wife. A second topic concerns the innocence of his ex-wife, presenting her first as a

selfless individual who trusted Fitzsimmons completely ("You swept me off my feet/you gave your heart to me alone") before suggesting that she has finally escaped the damage he caused ("And so your heart is free"). The third topic uses the imagery of demons to characterise the relationship between Fitzsimmons and his personal failings. The reversal of power relationships this topic depicts is also one of the most arresting textual elements in the entire album: in the first verse, Fitzsimmons sings that his demons walk beside him and that they are the ones who tell him not to abandon them, suggesting that a triumphant Fitzsimmons is struggling free of their influence. Yet, by the end of the song, all sense of triumph is gone as the repentant Fitzsimmons pleads with the demons to stay as they dance around him—one can only imagine with a sort of gleeful abandon.

Between the first two verses which set up the conflict and the devastating conclusion of the third verse comes the chorus: a simple, repeated plea for absolution. The key word in this chorus, though, is almost inaudible in the studio version: Fitzsimmons breathes "but" in such a low register that, lacking recourse to the official lyrics, some might find it difficult to interpret. This single word intensifies the request for forgiveness by taking in the entirety of his offence and saying 'in spite of all this, please forgive me'.

One of Fitzsimmons's distinctive vocal traits is his heart-felt lyrical delivery that ranges in dynamic from conversational to barely audible. "Gentle", "mellow and delicate", and "softly sweet" are among the common descriptions of his vocal sound, which also elicits frequent comparisons with his contemporaries and sometime collaborators Sufjan Stevens, Justin Vernon of Bon Iver, and Sam Bream of Iron and Wine.[59] Both "I Don't Feel It

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[59] Reviews by Jim Fusilli, "A Precision in Language", *The Wall Street Journal,* http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/ SB10001424052970204271 104574290490509920608 (accessed 4 March 2014); Grant Jenkins, "The Sparrow and the Crow", *The Gideon Chronicles Blog*, 1 January 2010, http://lightchild.wordpress.com/tag/william-fitzsimmons/ (accessed 4 March 2014); Samantha Noble, "Concert Review: William Fitzsimmons Captivates at Iron Horse", http://www.masslive.com/ entertainment/index.ssf/2014/06/ william_fitzsimmons_captivates.html (accessed 27 July 2014).

Anymore" and "Please Forgive Me" are sung almost entirely in a quiet dynamic range, matching the low rippling of the guitar accompaniment. In addition to the volume of his singing, Fitzsimmons's breathy timbre and frequent use of the falsetto range contribute to the overall perception of his singing as a whisper, with a sense of having to lean in in order to catch what he is saying. The hushed nature of Fitzsimmons's singing fosters a sense of intimacy with an audience who must remain quiet in order to make out the lyrics being sung.

The lyrics themselves are swathed in a musical environment that emphasizes finger-picked guitar, piano, and light drums. On his first two albums, Fitzsimmons recorded himself playing all of the instruments heard on the albums, before layering them together to achieve a supple and subtle interweaving of different sounds. His later albums bring in other artists as musicians, allowing Fitzsimmons to focus on singing whilst experimenting with new instrument combinations. The primary instrument on *The Sparrow and the Crow* is still Fitzsimmons's acoustic guitar, but the list of instruments played by others includes piano, Hammond organ, Wurlitzer, tack piano, banjo, hi-string guitar, both electric and upright basses, tambourine, drums, and percussion. "I Don't Feel It Anymore" combines two acoustic guitars (one hi-string) and the banjo with a simple bass line played on the Wurlitzer. Similar combinations of three or four instrumental timbres are common on the other tracks, but in a subtle reinforcement of the unique position accorded "Please Forgive Me", it is the only track on the album for which Fitzsimmons is the only musician heard. This guitar-centric styling grows out of Fitzsimmons's history as a solo act and emphasis on producing, recording, and performing stripped-down versions of even his most instrumentally complex songs on solo guitar. These choices regarding instrumentation and recording techniques have implications for the wider perception of his music as an authentic statement of personal significance.

2.5.2 Recording the sound of honesty

One of the ways the quest for authenticity manifests itself aurally is in indie music's fondness for a do-it-yourself approach. In terms of recording, imperfect quality, a limited sonic palette, and even mistakes in diction or instrumental accompaniment are all taken to be markers of a real, rather than elaborately staged, experience. This aspect of performance is most evident in the Fitzsimmons's first two albums, which were recorded in a makeshift home studio. However, on the professionally recorded *The Sparrow and the Crow*, a hint of that aesthetic can be heard at the end of "Even Now", a piano-driven song of whispered recognition of enduring love (see Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4 Chorus of "Even Now"

> Oh but I love you
> Even still even now
> Even though we fell apart
> Even still even now
> And I hope we'll meet again
> Even still even now
> Even though we fell apart
> Even still even now
> And I hope you'll be okay

At the end of the track there is a rustling sound after the final chorus, revealed in an interview to be the sound of Fitzsimmons getting up from his chair and walking away. He says of that choice, "I wanted to leave that one just as it is. No tricks or editing. Just hit record and sing and play it honestly."[60] Although the track may be motivated by a genuine interest in a 'raw' sound, it

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[60] William Fitzsimmons, in Chris Bienkiewicz, "Interview: William Fitzsimmons," *RockOko*, http://www.rockoko.pl/en/wywiad-william-fitzsimmons (accessed 7 March 2014).

is nonetheless the result of a carefully–controlled recording environment in which decisions about the number and placement of microphones and the balance between piano and the vocals were thought through. This is an excellent example of what William Moylen and Serge Lacasse call "phonographic staging", wherein recording techniques actively shape a song's narrative through manipulating the audience's sense of space, time, timbre, or loudness.[61] If we perceive the chair rustling as a genuinely honest gesture, it is still an honesty that is inescapably mediated by technology.

2.5.3 Fitzsimmons in concert

In live concert, perceptions of authenticity are based on different factors than in recording, though of course some elements of phonographic staging can be applied to real-time performance as well as to recordings (witness the sound mixing choices that allow Fitzsimmons's quiet, high-pitched voice to project over the instrumental mix even in a large room). Among the key factors in live performance are extramusical indicators such as dress and demeanour. On the surface, Fitzsimmons seems to fit the stereotype of the hipster type of indie singer-songwriter: promotional photos demonstrate proclivities for plaid flannel shirts, knit caps, combat boots, and braces, while fans and reviewers regularly comment on his luxuriant beard. He has commented that he consciously chooses his tour wardrobe from the same clothes he would wear at home, joking that the resulting look is "thirty per cent hipster and seventy per cent homeless".[62] Furthermore, he converses easily with the crowd in between songs, including opening up about parts of his life not explicitly documented in his music, including his struggles with anorexia nervosa and

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[61] See William Moylen, *The Art of Recording: Understanding and Crafting the Mix*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Focal Press, 2002) and Serge Lacasse, "Persona, Emotions and Technology: the Phonographic Staging of the Popular Music Voice", CHARM Symposium 2: Towards a Musicology of Production (part of The Art of Record Production conference), 17–18 September 2005 (London, 2005), http://charm.cchcdn.net/redist/pdf/s2Lacasse.pdf for more information.

[62] Personal notes made by the author at concerts on 7 March 2014 at The Garage, London, UK, and on 11 August 2015 at Scala, London, UK.

anxiety disorders. At a concert in March 2014, he spoke about the challenges of adopting a child and made jokes about forgetting to take his medication as an explanation for his at-times erratic behaviour. In a review of a 2009 concert in Leipzig, Germany, the blogger at *aufgemischt!* relates the story of how Fitzsimmons, in an expansive mood, dedicated the next song to the audience before looking at the setlist and realising belatedly that the next song was "You Broke My Heart" from *Goodnight*. Yet, this (and Fitzsimmons's rueful reaction) "puts a finger on what his concerts are like and why so many people love the likeable singer".[63] In interviews, he appears to speak off the cuff, often pausing to formulate answers or talking over the interviewer. His Twitter feed is filled with concert information, often-amusing tour anecdotes, and photos of his home life whilst his profile reads "Singer. Former psychotherapist. Enjoys whiskey and plaid shirts. Still not convinced by the Warren commission."[64] This self-conscious—yet to all appearances genuine— description blends identity markers (Fitzsimmons's dual work-related identities) with references to rural Americana, epitomised by the whiskey and plaid shirts, and an allusion to the widespread controversy surrounding the investigation into John F. Kennedy's assassination in 1963 which could be read as either sincere or firmly tongue-in-cheek. The overall impression of Fitzsimmons is of an unpretentious, down-to-earth personality that harmonises with the blend of indie folk and electronica in his music.

A distinctive non-aural characteristic of Fitzsimmons's live performance style is his lack of eye contact with audiences whilst playing. Even though he looks out at the crowd in between songs and at his band members during instrumental breaks he usually sings with closed eyes (see

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[63] "Aber genau das ist es, was seine Konzerte ausmacht und weshalb viele Menschen den sympathischen Sänger so lieben." In "William Fitzsimmons: Interview", published in *aufgemischt!*, 23 December 2009, http://www.aufgemischt.com/wp/2009/12/interview-william-fitzsimmons/ (accessed 3 April 2014).

[64] William Fitzsimmons, Twitter feed, https://twitter.com/wfitzsimmons (accessed 9 October 2014).

Figure 2.5). At first glance this might seem alienating to audience members who have come to expect a performance that is as much visual as aural, but instead it suggests a level of absorption in the musical experience that dovetails with the expectations of performing as meaningful experience.

Figure 2.5 Photo of William Fitzsimmons in performance[65]

To view this image, please consult the copy of the thesis held in the University Library, University of Cambridge.

Nicholas Cook has explored the phenomenon of the artist's closed eyes in the case of Jimi Hendrix's performance of Foxy Lady at the Isle of Wight Festival in 1970 in *Beyond the Score,* saying of Hendrix, "the effect is one of withdrawal from the stage: it is as if Hendrix is accessing some invisible world from which he draws the music, acting more as a medium for a higher source than a

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[65] Photo courtesy of William Fitzsimmons, http://williamfitzsimmons.com/media/

creative agent in his own right".[66] In the case of Fitzsimmons it is possible that it is an unconscious habit stemming from his childhood experience of communicating without eye contact with his blind parents, and unlike Cook's description of Hendrix's transcendent quality, my overall impression of Fitzsimmons's performance is one of striking familiarity and closeness rather than detachment. It appears that my perception is not unique: descriptions of Fitzsimmons's performances are often phrased in emotional language that strengthens their interpretations as personally meaningful. In one case, Chris Bienkiewicz introduces his experience of Fitzsimmons's performance style with a series of evocative images: "A palette of emotions served with the purest sincerity. Unique softness that surrounds with fluffy calm. Landscape of life sketched with dreams and memories. Depth of nostalgia touching a trembling spot."[67]

Another factor that contributes to the perception of authentic intimacy in Fitzsimmons's performances is venue size. Figure 2.6 collects information about the capacity of concert venues, including location, date of performance, and capacity. As a sample of the types of venues Fitzsimmons favours, I have selected performances in the United States and Canada that took place between April and June 2014 as part of Fitzsimmons's Lions Tour in North America. Information about the number of tickets sold is not available for all of these performances, so instead I have listed the size of the performance venue according to the venue specifications.

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[66] Cook, *Beyond the Score,* 297.

[67] Bienkiewicz, "Interview: William Fitzsimmons".

Figure 2.6 Concert Venues and Capacities April–June 2014

Venue	Location	Capacity	Concert Date
Littlefield	Brooklyn, NY	300+	15 April 2014
Jack H. Skirball Center for the Performing Arts	New York, NY	850	16 April 2014
Union Transfer	Philadelphia, PA	600+	17 April 2014
Rex Theater	Pittsburgh, PA	300	18 April 2014
Howard Theater	Washington, DC	600	20 April 2014
Metro Gallery	Baltimore, MD	250	21 April 2014
The Southern Café and Music Hall	Charlottesville, VA	200+	22 April 2014
Pour House Music Hall	Raleigh, NC	300	24 April 2014
Vinyl	Atlanta, GA	300	25 April 2014
Barking Legs	Chattanooga, TN	100+	26 April 2014
Exit/In	Nashville, TN	500	27 April 2014
Shank Hall	Milwaukee, WI	300	3 May 2014
Majestic Theater	Madison, WI	250+	4 May 2014
The Englert Theater	Iowa City, IA	725	6 May 2014
Cedar Cultural Center	Minneapolis, MN	450	7 May 2014
The Waiting Room Lounge	Omaha, NE	250	8 May 2014
Daniels Hall	Denver, CO	300	10 May 2014
Etown Hall	Boulder, CO	200	11 May 2014
The State Room	Salt Lake City, UT	300	13 May 2014
The Triple Door	Seattle, WA	300	15 May 2014
Wild Buffalo	Bellingham, WA	350+	16 May 2014
Biltmore Cabaret	Vancouver, BC	350	17 May 2014
Doug Fir Lounge	Portland, OR	300	18 May 2014
WOW Hall	Eugene, OR	400	19 May 2014
The Independent	San Francisco, CA	500	22 May 2014
Troubadour	West Hollywood, CA	300+	24 May 2014
The Glass House	Pomona, CA	800	25 May 2014
The Crescent Ballroom	Phoenix, AZ	550	28 May 2014
Kessler Theater	Dallas, TX	300	30 May 2014
The Parish	Austin, TX	450	31 May 2014
The Gramophone	Saint Louis, MO	200	5 June 2014
The Ark	Ann Arbor, MI	400+	6 June 2014
Iron Works	Buffalo, NY	500	9 June 2014
Signal Kitchen	Burlington, VT	250	13 June 2014
Iron Horse Music Hall	Northampton, MA	200+	14 June 2014
The Sinclair	Cambridge, MA	500	15 June 2014

Most of these venues hold between 400 and 500 people for a standing room only show, though some are as small as 100 or as large as 850.[68] These

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[68] The capacity for many of these venues varies widely according to staging, but I have taken the standing room information from the venue website and rounded to the nearest 25. The exceptions to this pattern of performance venues are Fitzsimmons's performances in Continental Europe, where he frequently performs in churches and outdoor venues where

generally fall into the category of mid-size venues, designed largely to accommodate artists whose popularity has outstripped the capacity of bars but who have not yet acquired the kind of popularity that sells out amphitheatres or stadiums. For the Lions Tour in 2014, Fitzsimmons travelled with a band, but in his early tours he frequently played as a solo artist. Even though his later musical style incorporates more instruments and layered sounds, he frequently alternates between playing with a band and the solo acoustic shows with which he began his career. Whether he plays alone or accompanied by a band, the relatively small size of the venues ensure that audience members stand or sit quite close to him during the concert.

2.5.4 Selling a star

Beyond the physical realities of performance, whether live or recorded, this homespun authenticity is also visible in the packaging and marketing of Fitzsimmons's music. Even though the production standards for his CDs have risen steadily over the course of Fitzsimmons's career, they retain a striking simplicity in their artistic design. *Until When We Are Ghosts* is the only one of Fitzsimmons's CDs to be sold in a sleeve rather than a case, and accordingly it has a single image printed on it, in this case a black and white photo of a young girl overlaid with the album's title and Fitzsimmons's name. The CD for *Goodnight* features cover art created by Jenny Ross depicting a starry night scene. The inside of the CD case and the CD itself are covered in hand-drawn art showing a heavily bearded man (presumably Fitzsimmons) in a variety of everyday scenes (standing on an escalator, riding in the back of a pickup truck, etc.).[69] *The Sparrow and the Crow* is likewise personal, but focuses still more

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accurate information about capacity is unavailable. However, it is worth noting that Fitzsimmons's popularity in Germany and the Netherlands means that he often sells out shows even in these larger venues. As of yet I have found no one reason for Fitzsimmons' popularity in Europe in general and in Germany and the Netherlands, in particular; however, an indie record label in Germany was one of the very first places outside of the United States to carry Fitzsimmons's work and Germany was his first tour location in Europe. He has returned to Europe several times in the last several years and says it remains a special place for him.

[69] All art other than the cover image are by Ben Scruton.

intently on the person of Fitzsimmons by using a photograph of the artist in profile taken by Erin Fitzsimmons[70] as the album cover (see Figure 2.7). The same photo is used as the cover of *Derivatives*, but this time in a 'derived' version: reversed, cropped, and with a different colour scheme (see Figure 2.8). The implications are clear: *The Sparrow and the Crow* and *Derivatives* are, if not quite two sides of the same coin, intimately connected. Later albums continue the focus on the individual, but there is a marked move away from the iconography that links these two.

Figure 2.7 Cover photo for *The Sparrow and the Crow* (2008)

To view this image, please consult the copy of the thesis held in the University Library, University of Cambridge.

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[70] Erin Fitzsimmons (née Brown) is William's second wife, whom he married in April 2008. The photo is undated.

Figure 2.8 Album cover for *Derivatives* (2010)

 To view this image, please consult the copy of the thesis held in the University Library, University of Cambridge.

It is tempting to believe that this positioning of Fitzsimmons as authentic within the trappings of a particular music genre is purely a marketing choice driven by commercial concerns. While there are undoubtedly commercial implications of successfully marketing 'authenticity' in popular music, to speak of the perception of authenticity without mention of the choices made behind-the-scenes that create and reinforce such perception is impossible. All of these elements come together to create an image of authenticity that is a powerful force in the reception of Fitzsimmons's music. This chapter opened with a quotation from Neil Bartlett's *Who Was That Man: A Present for Mr Oscar Wilde*, but the eternal questions it references are as applicable to music as to literature or to everyday

interaction. Who is speaking? When? For whom? Why? These questions must be addressed in any study of authentic confession.

2.6 Persona and star text in indie music

On 17 May 1966, Bob Dylan played a concert at the Manchester Free Trade Hall that would go down in popular music history. The first half of the concert consisted of Dylan accompanying himself on the acoustic guitar and harmonica in the traditional 'folk' manner while in second half Dylan played a Fender Stratocaster backed by the (electronically amplified) touring band the Hawks. It was not the first time Dylan had 'gone electric'—that honour went to his much-discussed performance at the Newport Folk Festival the previous year—but the Manchester concert became infamous when, in a quiet moment, a disgruntled fan yelled out "Judas!" Dylan responded, "I don't believe you … you're a liar!" before launching into the rock and roll anthem "Like a Rolling Stone".[71] The concert was part of Dylan's World Tour 1966, and the controversy it unleashed has coloured much of the writing on his career and music.

The unknown fan's comment[72] reveals the extent to which Dylan's use of electronically amplified instruments was perceived as a betrayal by some, but why people were so angry is more complicated. Simon Frith has suggested that, for Dylan's fans "the issue here seems to be less the dishonouring of an ideal or an original musical concept, than the betrayal of an identity, of an

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[71] The incident was captured and eventually released in an album version known as *The Bootleg Series Vol. 4 Bob Dylan Live 1966, The "Royal Albert Hall" Concert.*

[72] As of 2014 both Keith Butler and Jon Cordwell have claimed to be the heckler at the concert. See articles supporting the respective candidates here: Chris Nelson, "Fan Who Called Dylan 'Judas' Breaks 33 Years Of Silence", *MTV.com*, 9 March 1999, http://www.mtv.com/news/512709/fan-who-called-dylan-judas-breaks-33-years-of-silence/ (accessed 1 October 2014); Andy Kershaw, "Bob Dylan: How I Found The Man Who Shouted 'Judas'", *The Independent*, 22 September 2005, http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/features/bob-dylan-how-i-found-the-man-who-shouted-judas-314340.html (accessed 1 October 2014).

understanding of what an artist *stood for,* and how that, in turn, reflected (and reflected back on) the identity of their listeners."[73] For the audience, Dylan's acoustic folk music connoted authenticity, personal intimacy, and unmediated communication that stood against the slick production values of contemporary pop songs. For many, these were also connected with an anti-establishment social consciousness that found expression in Dylan's gritty vocal styling and pungent lyrics. When Dylan left the folk sensibility for the Dark Side of rock music some of his fans felt he had invalidated all the things he had meant for them, but what they were actually reacting to was a profound disconnect between the rock style of performance and the folk persona they had come to expect.

Edward T. Cone developed the idea of persona in music in his 1974 book *The Composer's Voice,* in which he argues that "each art in its own way projects the illusion of the existence of a personal subject through whose consciousness that experience is made known to the rest of us."[74] As examples of such personae he borrows the categories put forth by T.S. Eliot in regard to poetry: in a poem, the author (read here composer or performer as appropriate to music) might speak to herself, address an audience, or assume a character. Regardless, there is always someone—and someone in particular—speaking. The division between performer and persona opens up interesting avenues of research by separating the physical body of the performer from the consciousness he, she, or they embody. Cone refers to this consciousness in song as the vocal protagonist and suggests that in performance "the singer … is the persona turned into a person."[75] Cone's amalgamation of persona and person in the body and voice of the singer is particularly significant in light of

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[73] Simon Frith, "Why Does Music Make People So Cross?" *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy* 13 no. 1 (2004): 67.

[74] Edward T. Cone, *The Composer's Voice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 3.

[75] Ibid., 23.

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Serge Lacasse's comments on the nature of the stage voice, itself an "aural index of the artist's persona and represented emotions."[76] I have already mentioned that Fitzsimmons's singing voice tends towards a breathy tone and high-pitched, delicate timbre, which is likely why I (and others) found his substantial baritone speaking voice surprising on first hearing. For the audience, this is an aural reminder that the man on stage is both person and performer; it is possible that it is also a means of mental segregation for Fitzsimmons himself—between the person he is and the stage presence he embodies.

Popular music is replete with performers who slip between various personae: the high-profile reinventions of performers such as Lady Gaga and Madonna are merely the best-known examples. In contrast to Cone's vocal protagonists that are specific to a given piece, these performing personae are normally identities constructed through multiple acts of performance. Some performers develop personae so completely that they entirely obscure the real person behind it all. Disentangling the human being from the star can be delicate work! Unlike Freddie Mercury or Bob Dylan, William Fitzsimmons does not use a stage name. Unlike Lady Gaga or Madonna, his public image is not one of conspicuous manipulation of expectations or continual reinventions of persona[77]; instead, his self-presentation is as sincere and intimately expressive within the confines of a single persona that is assumed to correspond closely with his 'real life' character. Furthermore, as a singer-songwriter the audience's attention is always focused on him as a solo artist; even in shows where he performs with a band he remains the centre of

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[76] Serge Lacasse, "Persona, Emotions and Technology: the Phonographic Staging of the Popular Music Voice", 1.

[77] Lady Gaga (Stefani Germanotta) has been the subject of multiple recent discussions about authenticity, many incredulous of her over-the-top performing style; nevertheless, both the artist and her fans conceive of her work as authentic and their relationship hinges on feelings of intimacy as exemplified by Gaga's moniker "Mother Monster". Although both Gaga and Fitzsimmons operate within discourses of authenticity, they perform authenticity using different means.

attention. The resulting image of Fitzsimmons is conspicuously in line with what Nicola Dibben has identified as "a compositional ideology [in pop music] in which singers understand themselves to be expressing things about or from their own experience."[78]

Against this representation, Cone argues "that all music, like all literature, is dramatic: that every composition is an utterance depending on an act of improvisation which it is the duty of the performer or performers to make clear."[79] Likewise, in an article entitled "Performance Analysis and Popular Music: A Manifesto", Philip Auslander cautions against forgetting the inherently dramatic nature of all performance, saying: "we must be suspicious of any supposition that musicians are simply 'being themselves' on stage."[80] The use of personal experience as an anchor for a performed persona is a familiar process when it comes to dramatic actors, who are frequently praised for their ability to inhabit a range of characters, yet the application of the same process in musicians makes some uncomfortable. As Jeanette Bicknell acknowledges, "although we accept for the most part that actors play at being someone else, we expect singers, at some level, to be themselves, or at least to be true to the persona they have established."[81] For Fitzsimmons, the fact that he has established himself as an indie artist with a distinctively confessional outlook constrains his ability to (re)present himself onstage in a way that alters the perception of authentic intimacy built into his performing persona without alienating his audience.

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[78] Nicola Dibben, "Consuming Musical Bodies: Star Image and Song Personality in Vocal Performance", Keynote paper, *The Musical Body: Gesture, Representation and Ergonomics in Performance*, 22–24 April 2009, Royal College of Music, 3.

[79] Cone, *The Composer's Voice*, 3.

[80] Philip Auslander, "Performance Analysis and Popular Music: A Manifesto", *Contemporary Theatre Review* 14, no. 1 (2004): 6.

[81] Jeanette Bicknell, "Just a Song? Exploring the Aesthetics of Popular Song Performance", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 63, no. 3 (Summer 2005): 267.

The confluence of person and persona is particularly relevant to the music of Fitzsimmons and other similar artists because their music is both conceived and perceived as biographical, or even autobiographical. There is thus an assumption of veracity underlying discussions of Fitzsimmons's music and indie musicians more generally. According to Moore, this artistic truth-telling can occur in three ways: "that artists speak the truth of their own situation; that they speak the truth of the situation of (absent) others; and that they speak the truth of their own culture, thereby representing (present) others."[82] On *The Sparrow and the Crow*, Fitzsimmons can be interpreted as truth-telling in multiple contexts: personally, in that the subject of the music is his own life; relationally, in that the relationship with his (absent) ex-wife forms the emotional heart of the music; and culturally, in that the framing of the songs as personally significant invites listeners to participate vicariously by accepting these truths as relevant to their own lives. The veracity of the first two of these may be impossible for the outsider to evaluate with certainty, although I have suggested there are reasons to be sceptical of both; however, the latter involves audiences and can be explored in greater depth. It is to them that I now turn.

Audiences who have bought in to the assumption that indie music offers an authentic personal experience expect, or perhaps even demand, that these artists present their experiences in a genuine way. In the case of the music discussed here, these personal experiences are sometimes-harrowing stories of the breakdown of human relationships, and yet the audience enjoys hearing them. Dibben suggests that one reason for our culture's interest in celebrities and public figures is because they offer us models of how (or how *not*) to be human, so that we suture together bits of other people's lives and actions to provide a narrative for our own. Yet that does not erase the sense of disquiet when listening to Fitzsimmons sing on his first album "If it's required

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[82] Moore, "Authenticity as Authentication", 209.

that I forsake all others/I'll do that and more" with the knowledge that only a few years later it would turn into "You were my lover for nearly 8 years/But I am my father and I found another."[83] There is a tinge of voyeurism in this witnessing, a sense that we as the audience have appropriated the private pain of another and, through processes of identification, made it our own. As the audience, then, what is our place: confessors? Perpetrators? Fellow victims? Perhaps all of the above. This relationship between performer and audience and the former's reception by the latter can illuminate to what extent this music is experienced as singing confession.

2.6.1 Positioning the audience

As part of a larger work re-evaluating music and/as performance, Nicholas Cook reminds us that "To understand music as performance means to see it as an irreducibly social phenomenon, even when only a single individual is involved."[84] This tenet of music as irreducibly social is closely related to relational musicology's argument that one of the things music does is create relationships between and among listeners and performers. Participation in music through performance or through listening enacts these social relationships that connect performers to each other and to the audience. In the case of Fitzsimmons, the relationships in question can be conceived in multiple ways. From one perspective, Fitzsimmons's work is thoroughly relational in that each of his albums has relationships as its subject, whether those relationships are romantic (*The Sparrow and the Crow*), familial (*Goodnight*, *Until When We Are Ghosts*, and *Lions*), or therapeutic (*Gold in the Shadows*). However, these relationships are not created and sustained through musical performance even though they are the subjects of the musical

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[83] Dibben, "Consuming Musical Bodies", fn. 1; lyrics to "Forsake All Others", *Until When We Are Ghosts*; lyrics from "Find Me to Forgive", *The Sparrow and the Crow*.

[84] Cook, "Between Process and Product", §14.

performance. Of more relevance to this study are those connections created between Fitzsimmons and his audience, particularly in the context of *The Sparrow and the Crow*, as well as those created among members of his audience. As Frith argues, "in responding to a song, we are drawn, haphazardly, into emotional alliances with the performers and with the performer's other fans."[85] Although I have touched on these relationships earlier in this chapter, I now explore them in greater detail.

These relationships leave traces on the Internet where Fitzsimmons's fans interact with one another and with the artist. Facebook is a hotbed of this activity, particularly on Fitzsimmons's official Facebook page.[86] Although the artist rarely responds individually to his fans—posts regularly receive tens to hundreds of comments, likes, and shares—they continue to use the platform to communicate, both with the artist and with his other fans. Some of these comments are aimed directly at establishing a particular closeness with Fitzsimmons. For example, on 27 August 2016, Zachary Gómez wrote on a photo of Fitzsimmons and one of his children:

> We had a conversation at your stop at Stubb's in Austin last year and it really encouraged me. Things have changed for the better because my God works all things together for my good. I know He's at work in your life. Soon I will be experiencing what you are in this sweet photo. Grace and peace to you, William.[87]

The inclusion of the benediction implies that Gómez does not expect a response, but the clear impulse to share his experience nonetheless suggests the comment's dual purpose. This comment allows Gómez to both express gratitude to Fitzsimmons and signal his status as a fan to Fitzsimmons's

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[85] Simon Frith, "Music and Identity", in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: SAGE Publications, 1996), 121.

[86] In this section I incorporate comments from William Fitzsimmons's Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/williamfitzsimmons/) as representative examples of some of the ways fans interact with each other and the artist via Facebook. These were gleaned from archival searches on his page during October 2016.

[87] Zachary Gómez, comment, 27 August 2016.

audience. Likewise, Samuel Sanchez connected his personal experience to Fitzsimmons's on a post of a live recording of the artist's song "Hear Your Heart" by writing, "I'm literally on the way to my grandma's funeral. This was so beautiful. Thank you." The intimacy of this revelation garnered 4 'likes' and a comment ("God bless & peace") from fellow Fitzsimmons fans.[88] Other examples of Fitzsimmons's music helping to generate a collective identity through affective communities range from seconded requests for Fitzsimmons to give concerts in particular locations, general affirmations of the quality of past performances, and the tagging of individuals to bring their attention to particular posts. More overt communal actions include paeans such as Talia Pridachina's exclamation "Open-hearted gentle souls attract other open-hearted gentle souls! Never met a hateful William Fitzsimmons fan in my life!"[89] Although determining the extent to which these affinity groups (which may or may not be contiguous with official fan groups) might exist offline is beyond the scope of this chapter, a preliminary examination of comments such as these is suggestive.

One of the most striking features of this type of interaction is the number of posts that address Fitzsimmons using casual, intimate titles such as 'friend', 'dude', or even 'brother'. While many of those who comment on Fitzsimmons's page have seen the artist live and even met him (perhaps multiple times), it seems unlikely that very many fans have established the kind of long-lasting personal relationship with the artist that would ordinarily warrant the use of such kinds of address. Instead, the easy familiarity with which they address Fitzsimmons and each other is at least partially a result of the emphasis on personal revelation contained within the confessional aesthetic. Through participating in Fitzsimmons's performance audience members feel as though they have come to know an individual whose

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[88] Samuel Sanchez and MI RI, comments, 25 May 2016.

[89] Talia Pridachina, comment, 18 October 2015.

character is sufficiently close to that of his performing persona that the two can be conflated.

In addition to the distinction between human being and performing persona put forth by Cone, there is a third entity at play in a sung text; namely, the narrative character from whose point of view the song may be sung and whose relationship to either the singer or his or her performing persona may be indeterminate. Naomi Cumming suggests that listeners are capable of perceiving this character as a "virtual presence or agency ... in the work, without false beliefs being held about its capacity to act as a conduit for the creator's states of mind."[90] While Cumming's arguments for the separation of performer and 'virtual presence' is compelling, in the case of Fitzsimmons's audience there is a marked elision of all three levels of performance so that even when Fitzsimmons makes it clear that the perspective of the song is not wholly his (as in the duet portion of "I Don't Feel It Anymore"), the songs tend to be received as though singer, persona, and character are co-present within Fitzsimmons.

Lawrence Kramer suggests that one of culture's functions is to construct for a given musical performance "actual or virtual subject position[s] that the listening subject ventures to fill".[91] I have already demonstrated some of the ways an ecological approach to subject positioning reveals how the subculture of confessional indie music constructs a confessional aesthetic. Returning to the idea of subject position from a different perspective, I now suggest ways in which subject positions can be constructed through the use of visual imagery and language. The concept of subject position originated within film studies and suggests that the audience, or spectator, adopts a certain relation to the film and its events which is conditioned by such aspects

[90] Naomi Cumming, *The Sonic Self: Musical Subjectivity and Signification* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000), 160.

[91] Lawrence Kramer, "The Mysteries of Animation: History, Analysis, and Musical Subjectivity", *Music Analysis* 20, no. 2 (2001), 157.

of the film as viewing perspective and shot composition. The particular perceptual attitude suggested by a subject-position is distinct from the influence of the spectator's personal background or prior viewing experience.[92] As the locus for this analysis I turn to the official music videos produced for *The Sparrow and the Crow* and made available via Fitzsimmons's official YouTube channel. I explicate some of the characteristics that serve to construct particular subject positions which the audience then fills with significance.

Three official music videos were made for *The Sparrow and the Crow*: one for "If You Would Come Back Home," one for "After Afterall," and one for "I Don't Feel It Anymore (Song of the Sparrow)."[93] The first is a visually striking and symbolically rich montage following Fitzsimmons as he walks through barren fields and into an abandoned house draped in tangled red thread. As the camera follows the strings around the rooms it becomes clear that Fitzsimmons himself is entangled—a point driven home by a lingering shot of the artist's left hand still wearing a heavy gold wedding ring and clutching a fistful of string. The second, for "After Afterall", matches the introspective mood of the lyrics with black-and-white videography juxtaposing night-time shots of the solitary artist with a bleak winter landscape. Throughout, the camera follows the artist closely, but, unlike in "If You Would Come Back Home", never shows him in the act of playing or singing. This dislocation of the visual and aural realms encourages the viewer to identify the sounds they hear as existing within their own mind—or perhaps even to see themselves as inhabiting Fitzsimmons's mind. The video's

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[92] John Thompson, "Film Narrative and the Structuralist Controversy", in *The Cinema Book*, ed. Pam Cook, 3rd Ed. (London: British Film Institute, 2007), 510–529.

[93] "William Fitzsimmons– "If You Would Come Back Home", YouTube video, 4'00", 9 March 2009, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rbr80q4Rq1o (accessed 28 December 2013); "William Fitzsimmons – "After Afterall" from the Sparrow and the Crow", YouTube video, 2'41", 13 April 2009, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YbQ7g18IGZs (accessed 28 December 2013); "I Don't Feel it Anymore – William Fitzsimmons", YouTube video, 3'48", 29 April 2009, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z5qcpflwF9w (accessed 28 December 2013).

depiction of Fitzsimmons's physical isolation is heightened by the addition of the sound of a rushing wind in the underscore. As the music's final, unresolved chord sounds, the video's visual imagery challenges the foregoing trajectory by turning to a colour shot showing Fitzsimmons silhouetted against the pink and purple shading of a dawn sky. Each of these videos uses videographic techniques to construct a subject position that emphasizes intimacy as the camera's 'eye', and therefore the viewer's attention, follows Fitzsimmons as a silent observer.

In contrast to these professionally produced music videos, the last of the three is of a solo acoustic performance of "I Don't Feel It Anymore (Song of the Sparrow)." The nearly four-minute video is shot from a single camera angle and shows Fitzsimmons in casual clothes and a beanie sitting on a couch with his acoustic guitar. The setting is nondescript, yet domestic—other than the single lamp for illumination and an electric guitar on a stand there is nothing to hint of any particular location. In the limited light, it is difficult even to see Fitzsimmons's face, but his quiet voice projects clearly over the finger-picked guitar. The static frame and homemade quality of the videography initially suggests that there is no overt narrative shaping the video, but the very fact that it appears as though an individual (Dennis Adler, according to the video's credits) has picked up a camera in order to capture a seemingly spontaneous performance is itself a narrative which leads listeners towards interpretations of the performance as authentic, intimate, and unmediated. In this video the viewer is encouraged to imagine themselves as both the sole witness to and the addressee of Fitzsimmons's performance.

If we consider the linguistic construction of subject positions in Fitzsimmons's music, a similar division emerges. The first is that of identifying directly with Fitzsimmons himself. This subject-position is suggested in part by the preponderance of first-person language and perspective throughout the album. A simple tally of the lyrics reveals that first-person language (I, me, my, etc.) is roughly fifty per cent more common than second-person language (you, your, etc.) on *The Sparrow and the Crow*, but the differences in relative

prominence and perspective are even greater than the raw numbers suggest. For instance, the opening track on the album, "After Afterall", begins with three lines that balance first and second person pronouns, but the emphasis of each line in terms of structural position (first versus last) and melodic line (higher versus lower) is on the first person (see Figure 2.9).

Figure 2.9 Verse 1 of "After Afterall", *The Sparrow and the Crow*

> I still love you
> I still want you
> I still need you
> After all

This is hardly surprising given that Fitzsimmons is a solo artist, but the consistency with which the first-person perspective is reinforced has ramifications for how audiences conceive of their relationship to the song texts. At Fitzsimmons's concerts, as is the case at most live music events of popular music, the audience frequently sings along to the most well-known songs. In these cases, this can place the audience squarely in Fitzsimmons's shoes as he (or his character) reveals elements of his life. As previously mentioned, Fitzsimmons is the single song-character in all of the tracks on *The Sparrow and the Crow* with the exception of "I Don't Feel It Anymore (Song of the Sparrow)" and it is this framing of the musico-linguistic 'picture' that encourages the audience to identify with Fitzsimmons himself.

Although adopting Fitzsimmons's own perspective is the most obvious subject-position for the audience, other interpretations are possible. Earlier on in this chapter I propose that Fitzsimmons addresses both his audience and his ex-wife through this music, which in turn implies that another potential subject-position for the audience is that of Fitzsimmons's ex-wife. Here the audience member stands in for the addressee of the songs rather than for the speaker, identifying with the "you" rather than with the "I". These opposing subject-positions of Fitzsimmons and his ex-wife are analogous to the

opposition between the Sparrow and the Crow that runs throughout the entire album, and occasional comments by listeners indicate that they make the same connection, as when YouTube user Sarah S writes "oh. Take it all away… I am a sparrow."[94] In each of these two subject-positions there is an element of vicarious experience, but the strength of the first-person perspective and the concomitant desire to identify oneself with the artist explains the comparative lack of audience members identifying as the recipient of the artist's words.

A third potential subject position for audience members entails denying both of these subject-positions in favour of operating as observers to the relationship drama being played out again and again on the stage. A connection with John Stuart Mill's exposition of poetry as overheard expression can be drawn here: these observers are actually overhearers— witnesses to words that are not (necessarily) intended for them. Mill believes that this is because poetry does not necessitate an audience, but is "feeling confessing itself to itself", a belief that echoes through popular discussions of music to this day.[95] In some cases, this distancing of the audience from the artist is due to the sense that there is something improper about these displays of the self. Writing of the similarly emotive performer Jeff Buckley, *Revolver* and *Chicago Tribune* reviewer Greg Kot asserted: "There's a fine line between drama and melodrama. … I saw Jeff perform several times and it was almost unbearably intimate at times. You were either pulled in or you brushed it off as self-indulgence. But there was no in-between."[96] The framing of Buckley's performative intimacy as simultaneously appealing and potentially troubling echoes the contrasting reactions to Fitzsimmons's confessional style. T.S. Eliot

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[94] Sarah S, comment on "I Don't Feel It Anymore – William Fitzsimmons", YouTube video, 3'48", 29 April 2009, https://www.youtube.com/all_comments?v=z5qcpflwF9w (accessed 16 October 2014).

[95] John Stuart Mill, "Thoughts on Poetry and Its Varieties", in *Dissertations and Discussions: Political, Philosophical and Historical* (1859, reprint; New York: Haskell Publishing House, 1973), 71.

[96] Greg Kot, *Revolver* (May–June 2001), 120.

suggests that the state of being an overhearer is a pleasurable one: "part of our enjoyment of great poetry is the enjoyment of overhearing words which are not addressed to us"[97]; however, even if this is accurate it does little to mitigate the accusation of confessional voyeurism.

In examining Fitzsimmons's performance in the context of the discourse surrounding confession it becomes clear that each of these subject-positions has implications for the relationship between audience and performer. If the audience identifies with Fitzsimmons, they take the subject position of the transgressor; if they identify with the addressee they take the position of the wronged victim. Those who remain observers, then, are left in the position of the confessor. It seems clear from reactions to Fitzsimmons's music that listeners identify with each of these positions; these and other audience perceptions are the subject of the next section.

2.7 Stream and shout: Fitzsimmons's reception online

The number of avenues for listening to music has expanded dramatically within my lifetime. I grew up in a home where my parents' collection of LP records was slowly superseded by cassettes, CDs, and finally by other forms of digital media such as mp3 files or streaming audio. Where those of my parents' generation would have searched for a record, cassette, or CD in order to listen to recorded music, my first instinct is to search on YouTube. Similarly, I only occasionally listen to music on the (analogue) radio, but I do have accounts for several Internet streaming radio services.

Quite apart from discussions of the effect the medium of musical listening has on musical consumption habits, one of the interesting side effects of these patterns of listening that are primarily based on the Internet is that many of these sites include options for listeners to interact with a video or

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[97] T.S. Eliot, "The Three Voices of Poetry", in *On Poetry and Poets* (New York: Farar, Straus & Cudahy, 1957), 109.

a streaming track by leaving a comment, expressing enjoyment through 'liking' something, or by creating an individualized playlist based around certain characteristics. In order to explore how listeners perceive the nature of Fitzsimmons's performances I have crafted a study that collects individual responses to Fitzsimmons's music via a crowd-sourced folksonomy of playlist-tagging and online comments. My data comes primarily from three Internet music sites: last.fm, YouTube, and 8tracks.com. The set of data from YouTube consists of users' comments on selected videos of both "I Don't Feel It Anymore (Song of the Sparrow)" and "Please Forgive Me (Song of the Crow)" whilst the set from last.fm also contains comments, but on streaming tracks of songs from the album. Last.fm uses a music recommendation system called "Audioscrobbler" which records details of tracks that users listen to—each time a track is streamed it receives a "scrobble"—and can link to home computers, mobile devices, and other Internet streaming sites. It also offers users the chance to tag tracks with descriptions and to use a Shoutbox to make comments. In contrast to the other two, 8tracks.com is a streaming site where registered users can create playlists to share with all who have access to the site. What is particularly interesting about the information from 8tracks.com is that the playlists normally contain artwork, a descriptive title, and a set of user-generated tags in addition to the tracks themselves, creating a relatively data-rich subsection of the field. The resulting portrait of how individuals experience and use this music suggests that some listeners experience Fitzsimmons's work as confessional and redemptive.

Although there are scores of fan-made videos of Fitzsimmons available on YouTube, Fitzsimmons made only a few official videos from *The Sparrow and the Crow*. The video of his acoustic version of "I Don't Feel It Anymore (Song of the Sparrow)" that I discuss above has attracted over 345,000 views and nearly 250 comments. Many of those commenting chose the simple praise of "beautiful", "gorgeous", or "lovely", but others remark on the uncomfortable juxtaposition of beauty and pain, as does Bex G: "This song is beautiful and all but its REALLY depressing"; jwate25: "wow tearful experience there :')" his

voice really breaks your heart but at the same time repairs it", and Micaela Martin's admission: "I think I die inside everytime I hear this song But I love it."[98] Still other listeners explicitly connect the performance to their own personal experiences, whether to losing a lover, going through a difficult divorce, or surviving abuse, thereby identifying Fitzsimmons's performance with their own lives.[99] A final set of responses share intense emotional experiences ranging from Zoe Anderson's "This man has been saving my life for years" and 36sweetooth's "his voice just kind of melts the layers of my heart one at a time" to emilia alvarez's "yes, please take it all away. I don't feel it anymore. we will fall just like stars hung by only string. I feel this deep pain inside my heart (really my mind) when I hear this song. It feels like someone just grabbed your heart and set it on fire and you can't help but cry."[100] Although the overwhelming majority of reactions to the video are positive, there are some 'dislikes', as well as a few negative comments, most of which revolve around sexual innuendo or questioning the musical taste or sexual orientation of other listeners.[101] The range of comments on the YouTube video suggests that while audience members may have different responses to the music, there is a shared experience of authentic emotional connection that brings fans together with Fitzsimmons and with each other into loosely organised affinity groups.

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[98] Comments on "I Don't Feel It Anymore – William Fitzsimmons", YouTube video, 3'48", 29 April 2009, https://www.youtube.com/all_comments?v=z5qcpflwF9w (accessed 16 October 2014).

[99] Examples include comments by Timsykinsy, MsJoshsmommy, and Katrina Yasmin on "I Don't Feel It Anymore – William Fitzsimmons", YouTube video, 3'48", 29 April 2009, https://www.youtube.com/all_comments?v=z5qcpflwF9w (accessed 16 October 2014).

[100] Comments on "I Don't Feel It Anymore – William Fitzsimmons", YouTube video, 3'48", 29 April 2009, YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/all_comments?v=z5qcpflwF9w (accessed 16 October 2014).

[101] Cf. comments by ventilatedzygote and William Henry Harrison on "I Don't Feel It Anymore – William Fitzsimmons". Those who have strong positive reactions to the music are more likely to comment than those who have a milder reaction or a negative reaction, but the proportion of likes to dislikes (3,184 to 20 as of February 2015) supports the assertion that reactions are largely favourable.

The data from last.fm seems to confirm this common experiential thread.[102] The user-generated folksonomy of fifty-eight tags for "William Fitzsimmons" reveals a cluster of generic designations having to do with indie, rock, alternative, and singer-songwriter genres that make up just over one-third of the total number of tags. The next largest group (approximately one-quarter of the total) are emotional in character: beautiful, amazing, chill out, etc. The remaining third are split between tags that reference sound qualities (e.g., acoustic guitar) and tags that are distinctive to the individual doing the tagging (e.g., favourite artists). On the site's initial listing of "I Don't Feel It Anymore", which collects data from over 100,000 listeners and nearly five times that number of scrobbles, the range and character of the seventy-four distinct audience 'shouts' are similar to those comments on the YouTube video, with the majority of comments expressing admiration of the song's perceived beauty and emotional content. However, one user posted an interpretation of the song that draws together elements of the entire album in a personal manner:

> I think he's the Sparrow – its about moving on. After Afterall he keeps yelling out "Please don't keep me" and the female singer yells "Please don't leave me" .. He's deciding to move on after a divorce, as hard as it is, he's accepting what has happened and breaking it off, he doesn't feel the love for her anymore. It's a sad song, but its gorgeous. Its hard to tell still though – I think the entire album represents the two sides of his thoughts, whether to break away and move on (Sparrow) or plead for forgiveness and ask to get back together (Crow). It's brilliant really, if you notice, its these two "characters" one after another. One song describing how he feels sad being far away from his ex-lover in

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[102] The data from last.fm includes tags for "William Fitzsimmons" along with 'shouts' from "I Don't Feel It Anymore" and "Please Forgive Me". I transcribed the tags and shouts from each Shoutbox before sorting them manually. The tags were divided by type of designation while the 'shouts' were coded according to what kind of response they employed, ranging from quotation of lyrics to generic comments on the song's emotional or aesthetic qualities to intense personal interpretation of the song or singer. Many shouts mixed different kinds of responses, e.g., krackotte's shout on "Please Forgive Me": "'my demons walk with me, I've begged them not to leave me ..alone' seriously...seriously...WOW just wowed...the sincerity of the apology just mindbottling."

> Further From You, and then a song relating to the breaking away
> with Just Not Each Other. Describing they will love again "just
> not each other" .. they'll break away for the good of each other.
> Just my 2 cents.[103]

The analysis of both the Sparrow and the Crow as internal to Fitzsimmons lends an interesting psychological dimension to this interpretation: even though this reading of the album contradicts Fitzsimmons's own statements about the relationship between the titular birds, it demonstrates how listeners invest these songs with personal significance.

My final set of data comes from 8tracks.com. As of 1 October 2014, 8tracks.com lists sixty-five playlists tagged with "William Fitzsimmons" and forty-eight tagged with "I Don't Feel It Anymore".[104] Overall, these playlists fall into two categories: a smaller complement organised around ideas of relaxation and a larger complement (between two-thirds and three-quarters of the total) oriented towards emotional categories of sadness and heartbreak. Of the former category, a playlist such as "Wrap the music around you" by GDYK with its subtitle "Music for rainy evenings: light a few candles, pour yourself some red, cuddle up, enjoy" is indicative of a somewhat melancholy cast common even amongst playlists not explicitly dealing with heartbreak. Of the latter, entries such as "It's about time," by Hayat_As, are typical: this was published on 28 March 2012 and contains several different types of tags, in this case artist (William Fitzsimmons, Ingrid Michaelson), genre (pop, indie), and emotion/situation (break up). In addition to these tags, the playlist has been

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[103] Shout by mrsquizz posted to last.fm in April 2009, http://www.last.fm/music/William+Fitzsimmons/_/I+Don%27t+Feel+It+Anymore+(Song+Of+The+Sparrow)/+shoutbox?page=2 (accessed 26 August 2014).

[104] There are more than 15,000 playlists on 8tracks.com that contain music by Fitzsimmons, but most are not tagged with his name. By limiting my detailed search to the smaller collection, I generate a data set that is more closely associated with Fitzsimmons. I then read through the playlists and their tags in order to create an overall picture of themes before extracting representative examples. I followed a similar process for "William Fitzsimmons", "I Don't Feel It Anymore" and "Please Forgive Me", but in the case of the latter, the search generated such a wide range of mixes, most of which were not associated with Fitzsimmons's music, that I have decided to leave out "Please Forgive Me" as a search option for this section.

given a faded black-and-white cover photo of a girl pulling dark grey clouds behind her on a string and a short explanatory note: "Now that we've packed/Lets move out from his heart/Trying to catch memories, albums and letters/trying to leave his heart clean from anything that lived before".[105] Users employ various techniques to position their mixes. One of the more detailed playlists is titled "♥Melancholy♥" by Fcukboys and contains a complete definition of melancholy in the description:

> mel·an·chol·y [mel-uhn-kol-ee] noun, plural mel·an·chol·ies, adjective
> noun
> 1. a gloomy state of mind, especially when habitual or prolonged; depression.
> 2. sober thoughtfulness; pensiveness.
>
> adjective
> 3. affected with, characterized by, or showing melancholy; mournful; depressed: a melancholy mood.
> 4. causing melancholy or sadness; saddening: a melancholy occasion.
> 5. soberly thoughtful; pensive[106]

Other mixes are far more to the point, for example, nattyyyy's "sad sad sad cry" or alex.falsetta's "Bonechilling Sadness", both of which open with "I Don't Feel It Anymore". As with the playlists described above, the latter of these playlists includes a black and white photo (this time of a sad-looking puppy) and a set of tags that make clear the aesthetic orientation of the playlist (singer-songwriter, indie, acoustic, folk, pop) and its emotional tenor (sad, heartbreak, love, acoustic, depressing). The quotation alex.falsetta chose to headline the playlist is from Washington Irving: "There is a sacredness in tears. They are not the mark of weakness, but of power. They speak more eloquently than ten

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[105] "Wrap the music around you", by GDYK, http://8tracks.com/gdyk/wrap-the-music-around-you (accessed 1 October 2014); "It's about time," by Hayat_As, http://8tracks.com/hayat_as/it-s-about-time (accessed 1 October 2014).

[106] "Melancholy" by Fcukboys, published 27 June 2013, http://8tracks.com/fcukboys/melancholy (accessed 26 August 2014).

thousand tongues. They are the messengers of overwhelming grief, of deep contrition, and of unspeakable love."[107] This affirmation of overt emotional display as one of strength and even sublimity is itself a comment on the perceived power of the music.

2.7.1 Communication as communion?

There are two threads running throughout these posted responses to Fitzsimmons, the first of which is a thoroughly Romantic ideal of the song as an art form in which an artist externalises his or her interior world, and therefore available to the audience.[108] This ties in with the discussion of first-person authenticity earlier in this chapter. The illusion of direct communication inherent in this ideal of the song is most evident in the scores of comments directed at Fitzsimmons personally. Whilst many of these contemporary incarnations of fan mail are posted in forums that the artist has little to no chance of seeing, much less responding to (e.g., comments on fan-made videos), when he does respond personally to comments made on his Facebook page or tweets he receives he punctures the aesthetic boundary between man and musician.

The second of these threads is how frequently Fitzsimmons's music is associated with negative feelings. This is most often expressed as sadness, but other things that appear consistently include love (and its loss), heartbreak, depressed mood, and being alone. Equally striking is the consistent aestheticisation of these negative emotions or experiences by the audience: the songs are not only haunting but "hauntingly beautiful"; Fitzsimmons's

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[107] "Bonechilling Sadness," by alex.falsetta, published 8 February 2015, http://8tracks.com/alex-falsetta/bonechilling-sadness (accessed 9 February 2015).

[108] For more on the Romantic ideal of artistic communication and authorial integrity see Nicholas Mathew, "Beethoven and His Others: Criticism, Difference, and the Composer's Many Voices", *Beethoven Forum* 13, no. 2 (Fall 2006): 148–187.

voice is beautiful, but also "pierces my soul."[109] Though some may be inclined
to dismiss such statements as hyperbole or fanaticism (witness Will Kyle's
description of Fitzsimmons's audience as "an onslaught of young women with
hungry, faraway looks in their eyes" or Ryan Reed's description of them as a
"string of 14-year-olds in girls' jeans (both sexes)"[110]), I am disinclined to scorn
these reactions as evidence of either mass hysteria or an excess of teenage
angst. Furthermore, although Fitzsimmons's audiences exhibit visual
demographic markers they are not necessarily those suggested by the above
reviewers: they tend to be young (though more likely in their twenties or
thirties than in their teens), white, and with a reasonably even gender balance.
Skinny jeans, flannel shirts, and beards may be more prominent than among
the general population, but are not required for concert admission.

The privileging of negative experience is one that has intrigued a
number of philosophers, from Aristotle through Burke and Schopenhauer to
the present day. Jerrold Levinson encapsulates the issue neatly by asking,
"what could possibly induce a sane person to purposely arrange for himself
occasions of ostensibly painful experience?"[111] In his chapter on "Music and
Negative Emotions" in *Music, Art and Metaphysics*, Levinson suggests a
number of benefits that can come from experiencing negative emotions
through music listening which, taken together, tip the scales in favour of these

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[109] Comments by JbRi08 and Bewitching Samantha on "I Don't Feel It Anymore –
William Fitzsimmons", YouTube video, 3'48", 29 April 2009, YouTube,
https://www.youtube.com/all_comments?v=z5qcpflwF9w (accessed 16 October 2014).

[110] Will Kyle, concert review for kdhx.org, 9 June 2014,
http://kdhx.org/music/reviews/ concert-review-william-fitzsimmons-with-leif-vollebekk-
climb-into-the-mouth-of-the-horn-at-the-gramophone-thursday-june-5 (accessed 20 March
2015); Ryan Reed, "William Fitzsimmons: 13 April 2011—Knoxville, TN", *PopMatters*, 22 April
2011, http://www.popmatters.com/review/139835-william-fitzsimmons/ (accessed 19 March
2015).

[111] Jerrold Levinson, "Music and Negative Emotions", in *Music, Art and Metaphysics*
(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990): 306–355.

otherwise puzzling empathetic emotional responses.[112] A few of these benefits have been implied already: Fitzsimmons himself talks about performance as catharsis, as a means of 'bleeding off' or 'purging' potentially harmful emotions, and the quotation by alex.falsetta from Washington Irving is a clear example of what Levinson calls Emotional Assurance, or the connection of the ability to feel deep emotions to an individual's sense of worth or dignity. Nevertheless, the most common benefit suggested by the written responses of readers outlined above is what Levinson types as "Emotional Communion":

> The sense of intimate contact with the mind and soul of another ... goes a long way toward counterbalancing the possibly distressing aspect of grief, sorrow, or anger one imagines oneself to have. The emotional separateness and alienation which occur frequently in daily living are here miraculously swept aside in imaginative identification with the composer whose feelings are, on the Expressionist assumption, plainly revealed for any listener to hear and to mirror.[113]

This connection Levinson mentions is fleeting, if not simply illusory. In this it makes no difference whether a performance takes place in a stadium, or a café, or in the privacy of one's own home: one's imaginative identification is not with a composer or a performer, but with the performed persona who articulates the feelings one perceives. Even though many of Fitzsimmons's listeners will have seen him in a live concert and many may have even met him there is always an element in those encounters of meeting the entity that is "William Fitzsimmons" rather than the man who carries the same name. This is not to diminish the real strength of the associations, emotional and otherwise, this persona creates in audiences, only to point out that we must take care not to confuse the human with the performer.

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[112] For a full description of these benefits see Levinson, "Music and Negative Emotions", 306.

[113] Levinson, "Music and Negative Emotions", 329.

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2.8 Private words, public emotions

In its barest form, *The Sparrow and the Crow* is a musical storytelling by a man who cheated on his wife and proceeded to tell the world (or at least a subset of the world) about it. This is not a new story, or even a particularly shocking one, but perhaps it is its very ubiquity that allows the all-too-human story of betrayal to be adapted and adopted to a wide variety of human experience through music. This seems natural, but, as Phil Ford points out, it shouldn't:

> An appeal to my experience with my ex counts for nothing, because even if you experienced something like it, what happened to me was not what happened to you, and without that shared experience, you would have to take my word for it that it happened the way I say it did.

He goes on to say:

> And yet this kind of musical meaning—conjunctions between music and ex-lovers, lovers, weddings, children, deaths, God or the gods, and the presence of sounded music at the lived moment of those conjunctions—this is what music means to almost everybody, almost all the time.[114]

This perceived collision between the public and private realms pervades our understanding of music's meaning, particularly when it comes to popular music. In an analysis of singer-songwriter Björk, who, like Fitzsimmons, is often presented as an autobiographical performer, Nicola Dibben notes: "the discourse surrounding music presents song as if it gives the listener privileged access to the singer's psyche and emotional life, yet the communal display of the emotional life seems squarely at odds with the construction of emotion as something uniquely private and self-contained."[115] Fitzsimmons's story may not be unique, but in the quotidian reality of its performance we experience something that is capable of accommodating significant meaning for its

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[114] Phil Ford, *Dig: Sound and Music in Hip Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 218.

[115] Dibben, "Subjectivity and the Construction of Emotion", 192.

listeners across both public and private realms. What in Fitzsimmons initially seems like a straightforward musical exposition of an individual's guilt and regret over a failed relationship in the manner of any number of break-up albums in fact reveals the complexity of relationships the performance of confession creates between a person, an artistic persona, and/or multiple audiences.

Most troublesome and least visible in this instance is also the most foundational of these relationships: that between Fitzsimmons and his ex-wife. Lacking recourse to even her name, she remains a shadowy figure to Fitzsimmons's wider audience. We cannot know whether she has chosen silence as the response to this incongruous apology, or been silenced by the public revelation of her marriage's implosion. I am inclined to take Fitzsimmons's impersonation of her at face value: as the woman betrayed and as the Sparrow of loyal love. Either way, "Oh take it all away I don't feel it anymore/Oh take it all away" seems like an appropriate, if damning, closing statement. For his part, Fitzsimmons seems to have found different ways of carrying the weight of his betrayal, including demarcating the performative space with physical objects such as the carpet I mentioned earlier.[116] As a means of maintaining emotional connection to a traumatic past without allowing it to consume the present, this framing of the concert allows Fitzsimmons to separate his performance from his non-performative lived experience.

Apart from the relationship between Fitzsimmons and his ex-wife, either as people or as personae, are the connections between Fitzsimmons the artist and his audience. This wider audience has been the focus of much of this chapter because it is with the addition of the third party that the interpretation of this music as performed confession comes into full force.

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[116] Kevin Forest-Moreau, "Another side of William Fitzsimmons," *Creative Loafing Atlanta*, 22 April 2014 http://clatl.com/atlanta/another-side-of-william-fitzsimmons/Content?oid=10959614 (accessed 20 March 2015)

Throughout this chapter I have characterised the members of the audience primarily as witnesses or as confessors, but although each of these roles connotes active participation in ritual (whether legal or religious), this terminology seems to misrepresent the bi-directional nature of performance by always placing Fitzsimmons at the origin of the relationship. The audience members are both onlookers and potential mediators of absolution, but they also engage with the performance as a means of creating meaning in their own lives. The experiences Fitzsimmons relates through music become a part of how audience members understand and narrate their experiences of betrayal, guilt, and confession. By absorbing the experience of another, audience members participate in the same ritual they are observing. Norman Fleischer characterises a Fitzsimmons concert as "a moment to catch our breath, a moment to reflect on ourselves and previous behaviour", and such a sentiment is in line with what Aaron Ridley posits is a crucial reason why people enjoy tragic art: it can "pose and sometimes clarify questions that any reflective person should care about."[117] Through experiencing vicariously the emotional devastation enacted in Fitzsimmons's performance listeners are offered tools for accepting the weight of having profoundly wronged another without being crushed by it.

To close the poem "A Dedication to My Wife," T.S. Eliot wrote to his second wife, Valerie, "But this dedication is for others to read:/These are private words addressed to you in public." It is a fitting end to the poem's warm celebration of the intimacy of lovers, but it nevertheless resonates with the unsettling spectacle of Fitzsimmons's performance of confession as audiences are made into witnesses for his private-public words. It is in the act of our hearing of Fitzsimmons's words that they take on force and whether we

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[117] Norman Fleischer, concert review for *Nothing but Hope and Passion*, 10 December 2013, posted 11 December 2013, http://nbhap.com/music/reviews/show-reviews/william-fitzsimmons-lido-berlin/ (accessed 22 March 2015); Aaron Ridley, "Tragedy", in *The Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics*, ed. Jerrold Levinson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 419.

condemn him or absolve him we are inexorably caught up in the drama and ritual of confession his performance enacts.

3 HAVE MERCY ON ME: MUSICAL MEDIATION AND THE DIVINE

To forgive is the effort to begin again continually.

—Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Forgiveness*[1]

In April 1770, Leopold Mozart wrote excitedly to his wife "You have often heard of the famous Miserere in Rome, which is so greatly prized that the performers in the chapel are forbidden on pain of excommunication to take away a single part of it, to copy it or to give it to anyone. *But we have it already*. Wolfgang has written it down…"[2] The *Miserere*[3] to which the elder Mozart

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[1] Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Forgiveness*, trans. Andrew Kelley (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 1.

[2] Letter from Leopold Mozart to Anna Maria Mozart, 14 April 1770, in *The Letters of Mozart and His Family*, trans. Emily Anderson (London: MacMillan, 1938), 127.

refers is a choral work written by the seventeenth century composer Gregorio Allegri and performed annually in the Sistine Chapel as a part of the Holy Week services. The story of Wolfgang's transcription of the piece by ear quickly became part of the public perception of Mozart's genius and has influenced perceptions of the work to this day. Although scholars have subsequently suggested that some of the rhetoric surrounding this feat has been exaggerated—after all, half of the piece is in plainchant, and moreover, copies of the *Miserere* already existed outside the Vatican—Allegri's composition retains a mystique that makes it a staple of the sacred choral repertoire.[4]

But what is it about this composition that makes it so popular? Various commentators have pointed to the delicate ornamentation or the soaring high C in the treble, but Peter Gillgren has argued that the *Miserere*'s initial fame stemmed from the extraordinary multimedia effect of hearing the work performed as part of the Tenebrae services during Holy Week, in which the lights in the chapel were extinguished one by one and the events surrounding Christ's crucifixion were remembered.[5] At one point in his article, Gillgren quotes French Neoclassical painter Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres's account of a Tenebrae service from the first decade of the nineteenth century:

> Finally, at nightfall, ... a perfect silence prepares and announces
> the celestial beginning of those 319 voices that begin the
> *Miserere*. Everything, at that moment, is in harmony with this

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[3] NB: Throughout this chapter I use *Miserere* in italics to designate the titles of the various musical works and Miserere mei in roman type to refer to the text of the Psalm except in quotations where I have retained the original orthography.

[4] In his book *The Musical Mind: The Cognitive Psychology of Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), John A. Sloboda notes that the memorization required is not so great as might be supposed, given that half the work is in (relatively) easy to memorize plainchant; Ben Byram-Wigfield casts doubt on some of the more exotic details of the story, claiming: " the details of this story are pure 19th-century invention. ... No order of excommunication has been found in papal edicts. Mozart was not the first to copy the work: it had been performed in London twice before he copied it and copies were widely available to tourists, despite the supposed penalty." "A Quest for the Holy Grail?" rev. ed. (2007), 17. Published on *Ancient Groove Music*, http://www.ancientgroove.co.uk (accessed 22 July 2015).

[5] Peter Gillgren "Siting Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* in a Multimedia Context: Art, Music and Ceremony in the Sistine Chapel," *Konsthistorisk tidskrift*, 80, no. 2 (2011): 65–89.

music; it is getting dark, and the twilight scarcely permits one to glimpse the terrifying painting of the *Last Judgment*, whose prodigious effect impresses a kind of terror on the soul. Finally, finally, I don't know what more to say to you; telling you this overwhelms me, if it can be told at all, for it must be seen and heard to be believed.[6]

Seventy-five years later, Swedish composer Gunnar Wennerberg described a similar experience thus: "A moment of holy silence follows; And then, as a cry from deep below raises *Miserere*. Never shall I forget this moment, so moving and solemn. I was ecstatic … and beside myself…"[7] Following these descriptions, it seems that for some audiences it was the experience of hearing the *Miserere* at a climactic point in a religious service dedicated to remembrance and repentance, perhaps in combination with its musical qualities, that granted it particular powers. Although Allegri's composition was first heard in a liturgical context, it is now more commonly performed as a concert work; yet, this *Miserere* seems to impress contemporary listeners who hear it in brightly lit concert halls or in the privacy of their homes as well as in darkened chapels. Listening to a snippet on the radio, Sid Nuncius is "transfixed" by its "limpid, spiritual loveliness with an undertow of passion", while Kurt Messick connects its spiritual purpose to its musical construction, praising the "sombre and searching spirituality that permeates the music" and suggesting that "the high piercing notes [recall] the piercing guilt and the pierced Christ".[8] I suggest that Allegri's *Miserere* remains powerful in part

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[6] Letter from Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres to M. Forestier, Holy Week, 1807, in *Ingres: Raconté par lui-même et par ses amis*, ed. Pierre Cailler, *Les Grands artistes racontés par eux-mêmes et par leurs amis* (Geneva: Vésenaz, 1947), 118–119. Cited in and translated by Richard Boursy, "The Mystique of the Sistine Chapel Choir in the Romantic Era", *The Journal of Musicology* 11, no. 3 (Summer 1993): 319.

[7] "En minut af helig tystnad följer; Och så stier som et rop ur djupen Miserere. Aldrig skall jag glömma Denna stund, så gripande högtidlig. Jag var hänförd … utom mig…". Gunnar Wennerberg, "Allegri's Miserere", in *Romerska minnen*, (Stockholm: Isaac Marcus' Boktr.-Aktiebolag, 1881), 133. Quoted in Peter Gillgren "Siting Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* in a Multimedia Context: Art, Music and Ceremony in the Sistine Chapel," *Konsthistorisk tidskrift*, 80, no. 2 (2011): 70.

[8] Sid Nuncius, "Still an Absolute Gem", review of *Allegri: Miserere* by the Tallis Scholars, CD Gimell (2005), 23 April 2010, https://www.amazon.co.uk/Allegri-Miserere-Tallis-

because it retains connotations of its original liturgical purpose, which was to act as a mediator, or go-between, in the relationship of God and humankind. In addition to the specifically religious nature of this musical intercession, this taps into wider beliefs about music as a gateway to transcendent experience, of which more will be said later in this chapter.

Moreover, Allegri's *Miserere* offers a model for other works that draw on a similarly intermediary tradition, and this chapter investigates two other examples of the *Miserere* genre. The first is a setting by Arvo Pärt, a composer steeped in the traditions of the Orthodox Church, whilst the second is that of James MacMillan, a composer whose Roman Catholic faith is clearly seen in his choice of compositional material. Like Allegri's setting, these pieces are both titled simply *Miserere*, but unlike their famous predecessor, they are not liturgical; that is, they are not intended for performance as part of a religious service. Instead, they are concert pieces that invoke religious traditions to create an atmosphere of contemplation and sober reflection within a range of performance spaces secular, sacred, or private. By lifting the Scriptural text from the liturgy and re-fashioning it, these composers allow for secular responses even while suggesting the enduring value of the liturgy and the Christian tradition. I argue that performances of these *Misereres* occupy a 'grey area' at the boundary of the sacred and the sacramental that allows for interpretations of their function as both aesthetic experiences and as confessional objects in the spiritual relationship between individuals and God.

3.1 Sacred sacraments

Although detailed explanations of the sacraments, the nature of the sacred, or indeed the position of music within the various Christian traditions all lie

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Scholars/dp/B000B865AA (accessed 3 November 2016); Kurt Messick, "Stunning", review of *Allegri: Miserere* by the Tallis Scholars, CD Gimell (2005), 15 July 2005, https://www.amazon.co.uk/Allegri-Miserere-Tallis-Scholars/dp/B000B865AA (accessed 3 November 2016).

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outside the scope of this chapter, a few key points will demarcate the grounds for this argument. In particular, the overlapping categories of sacramental, liturgical, and sacred acts require some distinction. In its barest form, a sacrament is a rite of the church endowed with particular significance as a sign of spiritual grace; however, the precise nature of a sacrament (and what qualifies as a sacrament) within Christianity has been a contested subject for centuries and the enumeration and nomenclature of the sacraments vary from tradition to tradition.[9] A liturgy is a formal structure for worship that may or may not include sacramental elements. In terms of providing a structure for action, the liturgy is closely related to the ritual. Distinctive liturgies may be used at different types of services or at different times in the liturgical calendar in order to reflect the particular nature of these services. In contrast to these strict categories, sacred is used to designate anything connected to a deity or dedicated for religious purposes. It is also frequently used to signify anything that is religious rather than secular in nature.

When it comes to exploring the use of music within Christian religious practice, I introduce a degree of simplification to this very complex field by focusing on those traditions that are most relevant. Although music and sacramental acts are often intertwined in religious practice across major Christian traditions, doctrinal statements dictate that the sacramental act is seen as separate from the music that may accompany it. Therefore, whether it is performed as part of the liturgy or in another context sacred music is not,

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[9] This section does, of necessity, simplify some of the more complex theological distinctions between denominations; for instance, issues such as the difference between a Sacrament of the Gospel and a Sacrament of the Church in Anglicanism, or the distinction between mysteries of the Church and sacraments in Eastern Orthodox theology are here passed over in silence. For an enumeration of the sacraments in Roman Catholic doctrine see *The Catechism of the Catholic Church: Revised in Accordance with the Official Latin Text Promulgated by Pope John Paul II*, Part II: The Celebration of the Christian Mystery, Section II, §1113: "Christ instituted the sacraments of the new law. There are seven: Baptism, Confirmation (or Chrismation), the Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony". In the Orthodox Churches the sacraments are not traditionally counted, as 'All of life becomes a sacrament in Christ'. Nevertheless, the Eucharist is sometimes referred to as the 'Sacrament of Sacraments', while Baptism, Chrismation, Confession, Marriage, Holy Orders, and Anointing of the Sick (Holy Unction) are usually accepted as major Divine Mysteries of the Church.

strictly speaking, a sacrament. Nevertheless, it has long occupied a privileged place in Christian life as a means for communicating and intensifying religious experience and thus accompanies many of the sacraments.[10] That music is considered powerful is evident in the restrictions placed on it. For instance, in the Orthodox tradition to which Pärt belongs, religious services are steeped in musical sound in the form of chant, but music in the form of singing is strictly controlled, and instruments other than the bells used in ritual are traditionally banned. Given this, it is unsurprising that Pärt has found continuing inspiration for composition in the musical heritage of Western Christianity, which shares ancient origins with the Eastern churches, but whose praxis has diverged over the thousand years since the Great Schism of 1054.

The Roman Catholic Church has had an abiding concern for music's appropriate place in worship, evinced by the relative importance of music at a number of ecumenical councils governing doctrine throughout history. The most recent of these is the Second Vatican Council of 1962–1965, in which thorough revisions to the form of the Roman Catholic liturgy were undertaken, including extending the types of music considered appropriate for liturgical use. While Vatican II affirmed the primacy of Gregorian chant and the pipe organ in the Roman rite, it suggested that "composers, filled with the Christian spirit, should feel that their vocation is to cultivate sacred music and increase its store of treasures."[11] Although the council's proclamations have not been uncontroversial, the relaxation of restrictions on liturgical musical composition paved the way for much of MacMillan's choral work. Of course,

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[10] See for example St. Augustine of Hippo's admission: "I see that our minds are more devoutly and earnestly inflamed in piety by the holy words when they are sung than when they are not." *Confessions*, Book 10, §49, trans. and ed. Albert C. Outler, *Augustine: Confessions and Enchiridon* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1955). Also note that although positions on what types of music are suitable for liturgical use vary, almost all Christian traditions assign music an active role in public worship.

[11] Vatican Council II, *Sacrosanctum concilium* [Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy], Chapter VI, § 121. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html (accessed 7 August 2015).

like MacMillan's own *Miserere*, not all music with undeniably sacred themes is intended for liturgical use—outstanding examples from music history include J.S. Bach's B Minor Mass and Johannes Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem*. Nevertheless, the relationship between liturgical forms and sacred composition is undeniably crucial for composers working in these fields. It is at this border between the sacred and the liturgical that both Pärt and MacMillan find fertile grounds. Furthermore, their settings of the Miserere mei text explicitly draw upon the sacramental rituals of confession and absolution as expressed in the liturgies of their religious heritages. When framed by their performance within the concert hall, these pieces bring Christian sacramental traditions to bear on the contemporary world. Their concern with transforming—or, as we shall later see, transubstantiating—the confessional relationship expressed in the *Miserere* suggests that these pieces may be said to be not just sacred, but quasi-sacramental.

In contrast to the contested position of music, confession is considered central to Christian practice across denominational divisions. Although the term may conjure up images of two figures in a shadowy, semi-secret confessional, its ritual forms differ based on denomination and on whether it is conceived of as individual or communal. In both the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches, Penance, also called Confession or Reconciliation, is a multi-step process comprising acts of contrition, confession, satisfaction, and absolution. The close association between confession in a general context and its position as a sacrament leads Russell Hillier to write of confession in Fyodor Dostoevsky's writing:

> Successful confession in Dostoevsky's fiction is always sacramental. ... It is often effected by non-vocationalised confessors as with Sofya, the itinerant book-seller of *Demons*, or Sonya, a lady of the streets; and yet the occasion is invariably hallowed by the intercession of Scripture. It is hallowed by the Word as covenant, as living, as a Truth which, albeit

momentarily, momentously sets both confessor and confessant free.[12]

Here Hillier argues that it is not the location, or even the (potentially non-religious) identity of the confessor that lends confession its weight, but rather the combination of the act of confession as truth-telling couched within Biblical scripture. The hallowing effect of the "Word as covenant" suggests that not only fictional literary, but also musical confession has close bonds to the sacramental tradition.

In my initial formulation of this argument, I suggest that these *Misereres* can function as purveyors of aesthetic experiences or as confessional objects. Whilst this is presented as a dichotomy, it is more accurate to suggest that between the aesthetic and confessional functions there exists a continuum of audience experiences in which the sacred and the quasi-sacramental are not mutually exclusive. In fact, this multiplicity of negotiated meaning is what allows for performances of these pieces to function as mediating objects in the relationship between God and humankind. The concept of mediation presupposes a gulf between two entities that can be bridged by a mediating object or individual. It refers to a bringing together, or reconciliation, of opposing forces with the intention of 'making good', of ameliorating the damages caused by the rift. Although the concept of mediation is most familiar from legal contexts, it is also a clear component of Christian theology. The Bible opens with a story of how the advent of sin brought about the separation of humankind from God, and the rest of the Bible can be read as the narrative of how this fissure was eventually bridged by the ultimate mediator, Jesus Christ. Central to this narrative of redemption is the imperative of atonement for sin, writ large in the Bible in the story of the Passion and personalised in Christian traditions through the rituals of confession and absolution. It is through association with these sacramental

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[12] Russell Hillier, "The Confessional Moment in Dostoevsky", *Literature & Theology* 18, no. 4 (December 2004): 449.

rituals that the text of the Miserere mei (and correspondingly, of the *Miserere*s) gains its particular position in the Christian liturgy and thus its quasi-sacramental role. In order to explain this framing of the Miserere mei text, it is necessary to take a longer view of its history within Christian liturgy.

3.2 The cry of the psalmist

The use of the Book of Psalms in a liturgical context originated within the Jewish religious tradition and thus predates the formation of the Christian church. Nevertheless, the early Christian church adopted the singing of psalms as an integral part of its own liturgy, a position that they retain to the present day. Among the one hundred and fifty psalms collected in the Book of Psalms are seven known since at least the sixth century CE[13] as "Penitential Psalms" or "Psalms of Confession". In these psalms, numbers 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143 in the Masoretic numbering system,[14] the psalmist cries out to God asking Him to save the psalmist from the misery and pain caused by his sins. The most famous of the Penitential Psalms are numbers 51 and 130, respectively known by their Latin incipits as the Miserere mei and De profundis. The latter is familiar to many from its inclusion in the Catholic Requiem Mass as well as various musical settings, but it is the former which is the Penitential Psalm most frequently employed in Christian liturgical services.

The Miserere mei is one of the psalms traditionally attributed to King David, and the superscription that accompanies it in the Hebrew manuscripts

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[13] A now largely discredited tradition suggested the collection originated with Augustine of Hippo (354–430 CE), but by the time of Cassiodorus's (c. 485–c. 585 CE) *Commentary on the Psalms* the psalms of the penitents were an established grouping. See Clare Costley King'oo, *Miserere Mei: The Penitential Psalms in Late Medieval and Early Modern England* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 2012) for more information.

[14] There are two different numbering systems for the psalms, one derived from the Hebrew Masoretic text and one from the Greek Septuagint. Protestant denominations and many informal Roman Catholic writings use the Masoretic numbers, whilst the Orthodox churches and official Roman Catholic writings use those from the Septuagint. In the Septuagint, these psalms are numbers 6, 31, 37, 50, 101, 129, and 142. Hereafter, I will refer to the Miserere mei as Psalm 51.

notes that David composed this psalm "when Nathan the prophet came unto him after he had gone into Bathsheba". The reference is to one of the most notorious episodes in the king's life, recounted in 2 Samuel 11–12, in which the king commits adultery with Bathsheba and then orders her husband Uriah murdered in an attempt to cover up his transgression. The cover-up is initially successful, but when Nathan confronts David, the king repents. It is fitting, then, that the psalm opens with a simple plea: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions".[15] The richness of the psalm is reflected in the many commentaries made by scholars including John Calvin, Martin Luther, and Charles H. Spurgeon, and though I will not replicate their work here, a brief summary of the psalm's structure will point out issues that will be brought to bear on the musical settings.[16]

The psalm can be roughly divided into two sections, with verses three to fourteen[17] representing the psalmist's confessions of sin and pleas for pardon. The remaining seven verses embody a distinct change in attitude, with the speaker joyfully anticipating his forgiveness. This latter section can be further subdivided into an assured expectation of personal deliverance in verses fifteen to nineteen and the national deliverance anticipated in verses twenty and twenty-one. Throughout, the psalmist avoids metaphorical language in favour of a straightforward recognition of his, and eventually the nation of Israel's, need for redemption. The three-part division of the Miserere mei into a confession of individual sin, hope for personal redemption, and national relief resembles the structure of other psalms expressing penitence,

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[15] Psalm 51:3 King James Version

[16] Cf. John Calvin, *Commentary on Psalms*, Vol. 2; Martin Luther, *Selections from the Psalms*; Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*.

[17] NB: the numbering of verses in the psalm varies based on whether or not the superscription is included. MacMillan's score does not include verse numbers, so I have adopted the system used by Pärt in which the body of the psalm begins at verse three. See Figure 3.1.

including De profundis, but of particular importance to this study is the psalm's remarkable intimacy and immediacy of expression.

Although the 51st psalm is by no means unique in its first-person perspective, it is the only penitential psalm which portrays the psalmist in the act of confession. As such, the directness of the psalmist's language is notable. Throughout, the mode of address is simple, most commonly "O God" (see Figure 3.1). Both "O God" and the Latin *Deus* are translations of the Hebrew *Elohim*, itself a title commonly associated with the concept of God as Judge.[18] This fits with the clear indication in verse six that God is being addressed as a judge. In keeping with this style, the lack of obsequiousness in the psalmist's language suggests a respectful, but not cowering, approach to God. In fact, although the speaker does not attempt to excuse or minimise his failings, he evinces an assurance that God's justice will be tempered by mercy, for instance in verse sixteen when he declares: "O God, Thou God of my salvation". The confidence thus demonstrated is based on the psalmist's affirmations of God's character as one of "lovingkindness" and full of "tender mercies". Moreover, the individual nature of the appeal is underscored in the later verses of the psalm, where the writer notes that it is not the religiously sanctioned (and communal) burnt offerings that the Lord desires, but rather the true inward repentance of a "broken and contrite heart".

In combination with the directness of the psalmist's language, the passion of his supplication gives the psalm a particularly keen edge. In the initial, penitential, section, this is achieved through successive parallel constructions that compound the emotional character of the text. This is readily apparent from verse three, in which the psalmist uses chiastic

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[18] This is the case everywhere except in verse 17, where "Lord"/*Domine* translate the Hebrew *Adonai. Adonai* is associated with the characteristic of rulership, and therefore may draw attention to the psalmist's future actions as ruler of Israel; alternatively, David Wiseman has suggested that the use of *Adonai* towards the end of the psalm (which may have originally ended at verse 19) may be poetically significant, as the names of God in the psalms are frequently distributed for emphasis and symmetry. Personal correspondence with the author, January 2016.

parallelism to reinforce his request for God's intervention: first, "have mercy on me, O God", and then "blot out my transgressions". This is immediately followed by a twofold entreaty for purification by washing and cleansing in verse four. The intensity of the physical imagery apparent in these opening verses is extended as the psalm progresses, for instance, when the psalmist extends his sinfulness back before his own birth in verse seven, or exchanges the water of his first cleansing for sacrificial blood in verse nine ("purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean").

Figure 3.1 Psalm 51:3–21 in Latin and English (King James Version).

Section 1: Confession of Sin	Section 1: Confession of Sin
[3] Miserere mei, Deus: secundum magnam misericordiam tuam. et secundum multitudinem miserationum tuarum, dele iniquitatem meam.	[3] Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.
[4] Amplius lava me ab iniquitate mea: et a peccato meo munda me.	[4] Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.
[5] Quoniam iniquitatem meam ego cognosco: et peccatum meum contra me est semper.	[5] For l acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.
[6] Tibi soli peccavi, et malum coram te feci: ut justificeris in sermonibus tuis, et vincas cum judicaris.	[6] Against thee, thee only, have l sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.
[7] Ecce enim in iniquitatibus conceptus sum: et in peccatis concepit me mater mea.	[7] Behold, l was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.
[8] Ecce enim veritatem dilexisti: incerta et occulta sapientiae tuae manifestasti mihi.	[8] Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.
[9] Asperges me hyssopo, et mundabor: lavabis me, et super nivem dealbabor.	[9] Purge me with hyssop, and l shall be clean: wash me, and l shall be whiter than snow
[10] Auditui meo dabis gaudium et laetitiam: et exsultabunt ossa humiliata.	[10] Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.
[11] Averte faciem tuam a peccatis meis: et omnes iniquitates meas dele.	[11] Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.
[12] Cor mundum crea in me, Deus: Et spiritum rectum innova in visceribus meis.	[12] Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

Section 2: Expectation of Deliverance	Section 2: Expectation of Deliverance
[13] Ne projicias me a facie tua: et spiritum sanctum tuum ne auferas a me.	[13] Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.
[14] Redde mihi laetitiam salutaris tui: et spiritu principali confirma me.	[14] Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation: and uphold me with thy free spirit.
[15] Docebo iniquos vias tuas: et impii ad te convertentur	[15] Then will l teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.
[16] Libera me de sanguinibus, Deus, Deus salutis meae: et exsultabit lingua mea justitiam tuam.	[16] Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.
[17] Domine, labia mea aperies: et os meum annuntiabit laudem tuam.	[17] O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.
[18] Quoniam si voluisses sacrificium, dedissem utique: holocaustis non delectaberis.	[18] For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would l give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.
[19] Sacrificium Deo spiritus contribulatus: cor contritum, et humiliatum, Deus, non despicies.	[19] The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.
Section 3: National Redemption	Section 3: National Redemption
[20] Benigne fac, Domine, in bona voluntate tua Sion: ut aedificentur muri Jerusalem.	[20] Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion; build thou the walls of Jerusalem.
[21] Tunc acceptabis sacrificium justitiae. oblationes, et holocausta: tunc imponent super altare tuum vitulos.	[21] Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering; then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar

The depth and range of the poetic text, in addition to its lack of specific description of confessed sins, have led to the psalm being a frequent part of Christian services in a variety of liturgical traditions that are centred on penance and forgiveness. For instance, it is recited by the congregation in both Roman Catholic and Anglican services on Ash Wednesday to mark the beginning of Lent, a period of solemn preparation in the liturgical calendar. In fact, in the Liturgy of the Hours, Psalm 51 appears an additional six times between Ash Wednesday and the Easter Vigil that marks the end of the Lenten season. In Orthodox churches, the 51st psalm is the only psalm to be

recited in full in every instance of the Divine Liturgy. In the two most commonly used Divine Liturgies, those of St John Chrysostom and of St Basil, it is chanted or spoken quietly by the celebrant whilst he censes the altar, sanctuary, and the people in preparation for the Holy Oblation, which is itself a preparation for the high point of the service, the celebration of the Eucharist. The particular emphasis on preparation evident in these instances of reciting the Miserere mei reflects the Christian belief that an individual must not approach any commemoration of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection lightly or without seeking forgiveness for his or her sins.[19] The result is that the Miserere mei text is centrally embedded in narratives of confession and redemption across the major divisions within Christianity. The text's profound declaration of human guilt and the pleading requests for divine forgiveness position it at the centre of the process of reconciling the relationship between humankind and God.

3.3 Sounding silence in Arvo Pärt

The Miserere mei is woven so closely into the liturgies of the various Christian denominations that it is unsurprising a long tradition of musical settings has grown up around it. Beyond the famous Allegri composition, there are influential settings by Renaissance composers Josquin des Prez and Orlando de Lassus, as well as settings by Jean-Baptiste Lully, Wolfgang Mozart, and Charles Gounod, among many others. Unlike these earlier composers, both Pärt and MacMillan hail from countries (Estonia and Scotland respectively) where traditions of Christian religious practice have declined considerably in

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[19] See 1 Corinthians 11:26–29 (King James Version): "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

recent decades[20]; nevertheless, their oeuvres overflow with pieces that flaunt their origins in sacred traditions. Unlike some composers of religious music, however, comparatively few of their works are intended for performance as part of religious observance: rather they bring sacred music into secular spaces. Multiple commentators have remarked on a seeming 'spiritual turn' among certain contemporary composers, with names such as Górecki, Gubaidulina, Schnittke, Tavener, and Ustvolskaya joining those of Pärt and MacMillan. Whilst there does seem to be a resurgence of interest in music with religious overtones, the idea that this represents a return to a pre-twentieth-century religious sensibility ignores both the deeply held religious beliefs of Modernist paragons such as Stravinsky, Schoenberg, or Messiaen, and the changing cultural contexts in which contemporary composers operate, in favour of a simplistic historical division between pre-Modern religiosity and Modern secularity in the West. In fact, MacMillan argues for the continuing force of religious belief, claiming, "there's a sort of idée fixe running through the development of a lot of musical modernism that points to the sacred."[21] What is most intriguing is not the fact of Pärt's or MacMillan's religiosity in a world wherein secularity seems ascendant, but the ways in which they assert the importance of religious ideals for human life through their compositions.

The personal history and compositional trajectory of Estonian composer Arvo Pärt (b. 11 September 1935) is well known; nevertheless, his stunning transition from compositions employing the serial techniques denounced by Soviet authorities in the 1960s to the radically simplified, crystalline tintinnabulation of Pärt's mature style is worthy of note. The former is exemplified by pieces such as *Nekrolog*, infamous now for its censure

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[20] Although determining religious affiliation and beliefs via polls is notoriously difficult, see https://humanism.org.uk/campaigns/religion-and-belief-some-surveys-and-statistics/ for a collection of surveys (of greater or lesser rigour) on religious beliefs in the UK.

[21] James MacMillan and Richard McGregor, "James MacMillan: A Conversation and Commentary", *The Musical Times* 151, no. 1912 (Autumn 2010): 71.

by none other than the then-First Secretary of the All-Union Congress of Composers, Tikhon Khrennikov:

> Our young experimenters should realise that there is a difference between freedom of creative searchings and lack of principles. ... A work like Pärt's [*Nekrolog*] makes it quite clear that the twelve-tone experiment is untenable. This composition is dedicated to the memory of the victims of Fascism, but it bears the characteristics of the productions of foreign 'avant-gardists': ultra-expressionistic, purely naturalistic depiction of the state of fear, terror, despair, and dejection ... so we see that the attempts to employ the expressive techniques of the avant-garde bourgeois music for the realisation of progressive ideas of our time are discredited by the results of what they produce.[22]

Despite this official attack on him as one of the 'avant-gardists', Pärt continued to develop his ideas using modern techniques such as collage, culminating in the 1968 composition *Credo*. This attempts to combine Pärt's growing interests in tonality, early common practice period music, and religious ideas with the avant-garde techniques he had used in earlier compositions. The result can be framed as a battle between good and evil, with the former represented by a pure C major tonality and references to J.S. Bach's Prelude in C Major from Book 1 of the *Well-Tempered Clavier* and the latter by aleatoric chaos. What saves this admittedly simple structure from accusations of facile naïvety is the surprisingly complex realisation, in which "the two extremes of order and disorder, good and evil, are presented not as separate blocks of energy, but as linked forces, each containing the seeds of their opposite, with a continuum of disintegration (and reconstitution) lying between them."[23] Like *Nekrolog, Credo* provoked a response from the Soviet authorities, but in this case it was not the musical style that aroused the ire of the cultural watchdogs: it was rather the overt proclamation of a personal

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[22] Tikhon Khrennikov, quoted in Paul Hillier, *Arvo Pärt* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 36.

[23] Hillier, *Arvo Pärt*, 59.

religious faith. At this point in his life Pärt was a member of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran church and his Latin text for *Credo* combines a fragment of the traditional Apostles' Creed with a quotation from Matthew 5:38–39:

Figure 3.2 Text of *Credo* in Latin and English

Credo in Jesum Christum. Audivistis dictum oculum pro oculo dentem pro dente autem ego obis dico: Non esse resistendum injuriae. Credo.

I believe in Jesus Christ. Ye have heard it hath been said, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil. I believe.

Credo was swiftly banned from performance in the Soviet Union after its premiere. According to the conductor Neeme Järvi, even the first performance happened only because he neglected to show the score to officials before the premiere: "The law was that you first had to show the score to the composers' union. I didn't. I thought they wouldn't let us. The Estonian Philharmonic organisation said, 'Let's do it.' Next morning it was a big scandal in the *Politburo* of Estonia. Then the pressure starts."[24] The backlash against *Credo* had the effect of strangling new commissions for Pärt's work, but in his biography, Paul Hillier argues that the composer had already "disappeared … into the nodal point" of Western art music by quoting Bach so prominently, and thus had already reached a compositional dead end.[25]

Regardless of the cause, after the premiere of *Credo* Pärt fell quiet for almost eight years, at least in terms of public composition. Although there is only one officially recognised composition (Symphony No. 3) in Pärt's catalogue from this period, silence should not be confused with lack of

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[24] Neeme Järvi, quoted in Arthur Lubow, "The Sound of Spirit", *New York Times*, 15 October 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/17/magazine/17part-t.html?pagewanted=3 (accessed 22 November 2014).

[25] Hillier, *Arvo Pärt*, 64.

activity: he developed technical skills and maintained his connections with the Estonian music community during this period by working as a sound engineer and composing film scores. He also embarked on a long-standing and intensive study of early music, particularly monody and the development of medieval polyphony, as well as initiating a collection of notebooks containing melodic sketches, ideas, and numerous annotations. Moreover, in 1972, he married Nora, an Estonian woman of Jewish descent, and converted to Orthodox Christianity, two decisions that would decisively shape his future path. This period has frequently been described as a search for a way out of the impasse represented by *Credo*, and Nora uses the imagery of birth to describe her husband's travails: "he didn't know if he had found anything at all, and if he had, what it was. … I saw that he was about to implode, and didn't know if he would manage to bring these labour pains to a happy conclusion."[26] This self-imposed withdrawal from the world of composition would come to a surprising end with a solo piano work composed on 6–7 February 1976 and lasting a mere two minutes. *Für Alina*, as the piece is titled, would open the floodgates for a host of works exploring Pärt's new signature style of tintinnabuli.

Tintinnabulation as a method of composition has been the subject of significant scholarly research and I will not attempt to re-tread that path here; instead, I wish to highlight a few significant points about how tintinnabulation as a concept can add to the understanding of how Pärt's music is perceived.[27] In its essential form, tintinnabulation technique is a rule that governs the relationship of two voices, one of which is a melodic line (sometimes called the M-voice) that moves in a largely stepwise fashion within a particular

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[26] Nora Pärt, quoted in Enzo Restagno, "Arvo Pärt in Conversation", in *Arvo Pärt in Conversation*, trans. Robert Crow (Champaign, France: Dalkey Archive Press, 2012), 30.

[27] For an explanation of the basics of tintinnabuli, see Paul Hillier, *Arvo Pärt* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997) and Leopold Brauneiss, "Musical archetypes: the basic elements of tintinnabuli style", in *The Cambridge Companion to Arvo Pärt*, ed. Andrew Shenton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 49–75.

diatonic tonal space. The second voice, referred to as the tintinnabuli or T-voice, sounds triadic pitches in a strict relationship to the M-voice. The result is a tonal space anchored by the triad but coloured by constantly shifting levels of dissonance. Although discussions of tintinnabulation often begin with an analytical description of how a piece may be constructed using this technique, when either of the Pärts (for Nora is an active participant in many interviews) speak about tintinnabuli they use descriptive, poetic language. Characteristic is Arvo's frequently quoted statement:

> Tintinnabulation is an area I sometimes wander into when I am searching for answers—in my life, my music, my work. In my dark hours, I have the certain feeling that everything outside this one thing has no meaning. The complex and many-faceted only confuses me, and I must search for unity. What is it, this one thing, and how do I find my way to it? Traces of this perfect thing appear in many guises—and everything that is unimportant falls away. Tintinnabulation is like this. Here I am alone with silence. I have discovered that it is enough when a single note is beautifully played. This one note, or a silent beat, or a moment of silence, comforts me.[28]

It seems clear that Pärt is discussing something larger than a compositional technique, but how to tease out the nuances of his interpretation is more challenging. Equally mystifying, at least at first, is Nora's formulation "1+1=1", conceived as a poetic elucidation of the tension between tintinnabulation's T-voice and M-voice, themselves a representation of the "eternal dualism of heaven and earth, body and spirit."[29] This layering of symbolic meanings cloaked in strikingly religious and mystical language is one reason Marguerite Bostonia argues that it is impossible to understand tintinnabulation solely as a technique or as an allusion to the sound of bells, both of which are common simplifications.[30] It is rather a "fully engaged metonym" in which the 'bells'

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[28] Arvo Pärt, "Auftakt", in *24 Preludes for a Fugue,* directed by Dorian Supin (Paris: Ideale Audience Internationale, 2005).

[29] Nora Pärt, quoted in Hillier, *Arvo Pärt,* 96.

[30] NB: *Tintinnabulum* is Latin for a "small, ringing bell".

implied by the name stand not only for the physical sounds of bells and for their cultural and religious implications, but also for unity, purity, and the "one thing" which is the object of Pärt's search.[31]

That Pärt's quest for unity has taken place within the traditions of the Christian faith is evident in the religious origins of many of his mature compositions. Since 1976 he has written a passion cantata (*The Saint John Passion*, or *Passio*) and a mass setting (*Berliner Messe*) in addition to a number of other religious texts both traditional (*Te Deum, Stabat Mater, Magnificat, Da pacem Domine, Nunc dimittis*) and more unfamiliar (*Kanon Pokjanen, Adam's Lament*). *Miserere*, with its Latin text, thus occupies familiar territory for Pärt. The influence of religion pervades many of his untexted works as well, with titles like *An den Wassern zu Babel saßen wir und weinten* (written for trombone and chamber orchestra), *Trisagion*, and *Silouan's Song* (both for string orchestra), revealing a depth of religious allusion to listeners with the requisite knowledge.[32] Although Pärt's oeuvre also includes significant untexted works without overtly religious titles, including some of his most frequently performed works such as *Fratres, Tabula Rasa, Spiegel im Spiegel*, and *Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten*, the importance of religious and liturgical traditions for the composer is difficult to overstate.

As mentioned above, this influence is seen most keenly in the texts Pärt uses. He has made it clear on numerous occasions that it is the character of the text that drives his compositions, saying, "the words are very important to me, they define the music ... the construction of the music is based on the

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[31] Marguerite Bostonia, "Bells as Inspiration for Tintinnabulation", in *The Cambridge Companion to Arvo Pärt*, ed. Andrew Shenton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 130; Arvo Pärt, quoted in Hillier, *Arvo Pärt*, 96.

[32] *An den Wassern zu Babel saßen wir und weinten* [By the waters of Babylon we sat and wept] is taken from Ps. 137: 1. It also exists in an arrangement by Christopher Bowers-Broadbent as a series of vocalises for voices accompanied by organ. *Trisagion* [Thrice Holy] is a reference to the hymn *Agios o Theos* [Holy God] used widely in various liturgies. It is most familiar in the West in the form of the thrice-repeated prayer "Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal, have mercy on us". St. Silouan the Athonite (1866–1938), the figure behind *Silouan's Song*, was an Eastern Orthodox monk. The text of his prayer (printed in the score) is on the theme of yearning for God, hence the work's subtitle: "My soul yearns after the Lord..."

construction of the text."[33] Paul Hillier glosses this by suggesting that the composer "works outward from the structure of the text and, simultaneously, inwards from the significance of the text as a whole (historically, spiritually, and liturgically)", resulting in a piece of music that is determined by and imbued with the qualities of the text rather than simply setting it.[34] *Miserere* is no exception to this textual concern, and Jeffers Engelhardt goes so far as to suggest "The remarkable logogenic qualities of *Passio* and *Miserere* that seem to make tintinnabuli emerge organically from the intonations and structure of a text (thereby effacing Pärt's subjective role in the production of musical affect) are coupled to the grain of specific voices (the Hilliard Ensemble) and the sensibilities of a specific collaborator (Paul Hilliard)."[35] The "logogenic qualities" to which Engelhardt refers here are the matching of rhythmic values and melodic movement to important moments in the text; however, the use of the word 'logogenic' also brings to mind the logo-centric character of Christian theology, which reaches apotheosis in the Gospel of John with the declaration of Jesus Christ as the divine *Logos* made incarnate.

The relationship between words and instrumental music in both sacred and secular traditions has been richly varied and at times controversial, but by allowing the words to define the musical structure in *Miserere*, Pärt is not advocating a simple return to values of intelligibility and verbal primacy. Although his setting of the texts in *Miserere* and other similar works often make individual words and phrases clearly audible, the frequent use of unfamiliar languages such as Latin and Church Slavonic makes audience comprehension of the literary content (unaided by translations) doubtful. Wilfrid Mellers suggests that his adoption of these traditional languages "is

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[33] Arvo Pärt, quoted in Nick Kimberly, "Starting from Scratch", *Gramophone* 74 (September 1996), 16.

[34] Hillier, *Arvo Pärt*, x.

[35] Jeffers Engelhardt, "Perspectives on Pärt after 1980", in *The Cambridge Companion to Arvo Pärt*, ed. Andrew Shenton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 39.

apposite to a Europe that, through the ravages of our turbulent century, is losing its identity as it grows more 'global' and in that sense more 'abstract'."[36] The emphasis on the cosmopolitan (not to say catholic) aspects of these linguistic choices is an attractive argument, but to limit the discussion to contemporary trends of globalisation ignores the special significance these liturgical languages continue to hold. In their modern incarnations, these are languages set apart for sacred purposes, dedicated to explicating and worshipping God. Until after the Second Vatican Council (itself conducted in Latin), and thus well into Pärt's adult life, Latin was the language of Roman Catholic services, and to this day Church Slavonic remains an integral part of services across a variety of Orthodox churches. Quite apart from Pärt's oft-stated reverence for the sound and structure of a given text, the use of these liturgical languages suggests at once a broad appeal and a particular ritual purpose. This reveals a central tension in Pärt's music between clarity and simplicity on one hand and a belief in the essential mystery of divine ritual on the other.

Miserere was commissioned for the 1989 Festival d'Eté de Seine-Maritime in Rouen and premiered there by the Hilliard Ensemble, but Pärt, as is his habit, revisited the piece and published a revised version in 1992. It is one of his largest-scale works, lasting between thirty and thirty-five minutes and employing an ensemble of twelve instrumentalists, five vocal soloists and a mixed-voice choir.[37] As the title implies, the text includes Psalm 51, but Pärt interweaves it with another well-known text on guilt and divine forgiveness: the Dies irae.[38] This Latin poem takes inspiration (as well as its first line) from

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[36] Wilfrid Mellers, "Arvo Pärt, God and Gospel: *Passio Domini Nostri Iesu Christi Secundum Iohannem* (1982)", *Contemporary Music Review* 12, Part 2 (1995): 38.

[37] The instrumental ensemble consists of oboe, B♭ clarinet, B♭ bass clarinet, bassoon, C trumpet, trombone, electric guitar, electric bass, percussion (tubular bells, timpani, triangle, tam-tam, and tambourine), and organ. The vocal soloists comprise one soprano, one alto (or countertenor), tenor I, tenor II, and bass.

[38] NB: As with the Miserere mei, I have rendered the text's incipit in roman type throughout, except where it appears in quotation.

Zephaniah 1:14–16, which paints a picture of God's judgement of humankind on the "day of wrath". For centuries, the Dies irae was incorporated into Roman Catholic liturgies as a special melody, or sequence, sung following the gradual and alleluia in a service: the most famous of these is a plainsong setting traditionally attributed to the thirteenth-century monk Thomas de Celano.

Figure 3.3 Text of stanzas 1–8 from the Dies irae in Latin and English

Dies irae, dies illa solvet saeclum in favilla: teste David cum Sibilla.	A day of wrath that day shall be, when the earth dissolves in ashes: so David and the Sybil prophesied.
Quantus tremor est futurus, quando iudex est venturus, cuncta stricte discussurus.	How great a terror there will be when the Judge appears to make a stern reckoning.
Tuba mirum spargens sonum per sepulcra regionum, coget omnes ante thronum.	The trumpet shall sound wondrously among the tombs of every land, summoning all before the throne.
Mors stupebit et natura, cum resurget creatura, iudicanti responsura.	Death shall stand amazed, and nature, when creation shall arise to answer to the Judge.
Liber scriptus proferetur, in quo totum continetur, unde mundus iudicetur.	A book of writings shall be produced wherein all has been recorded whence the world is to be judged.
Iudex ergo cum sedebit, quidquid latet apparebit. Nil inultum remanebit.	Therefore when the Judge appears, all secrets shall be manifest: nothing shall remain unpunished.
Quid sum miser tunc dicturus? Quem patronum rogaturus, cum vix iustus sit securus?	What shall I, poor wretch, say then? Whom shall I ask to plead for me when even the righteous is scarcely secure?
Rex tremendae maiestatis, qui salvandos salvas gratis, salva me, fons pietatis.	King of awful majesty, who freely saves those who are saved, save me, thou fount of mercy.

The *Dies irae* sequence appeared in the Requiem Mass until the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, but the impact of the text, and particularly of the

plainsong melody with which it is most closely associated, spreads far and wide throughout music history.[39] Although Pärt sets the text to his own melody in *Miserere*, it is telling that this medieval sequence appears suddenly after the vocalists intone verse five[40] of the psalm: "Quoniam iniquitatem meam ego cognosco: et peccatum meum contra me est semper (For I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is ever before me)" (see Figure 3.3). After eight stanzas of the Dies irae, the piece abruptly shifts back to the psalm text and finishes the remaining sixteen verses before murmuring a final poetic stanza to close the work: "Rex tremendae maiestatis, qui salvandos salvas gratis, salva me, fons pietatis (King of awful majesty, who freely saves those who are saved, save me, thou font of mercy)".[41]

3.3.1 'A voice of pure lonesomeness'

Pärt's guiding ideals of unity and purity are evident from the moment *Miserere* opens with a lone tenor voice calling out "miserere mei, Deus". Only isolated

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[39] The sequence is still used for funeral masses of the Tridentine Rite, and for All Souls' Day. For collations of musical quotation of the *Dies irae* plainsong within classical music, see Robin Gregory, "Dies irae", *Music & Letters* 34, no. 2 (April 1953): 133–139 and Malcolm Boyd, "'Dies irae': Some Recent Manifestations", *Music and Letters* 49, no. 4 (Oct. 1968): 347–356. For another short overview of the history, see Tom Allen and CBC Music, "A Musical History of Death: 'Exit Music' by Tom Allen", CBC Radio 2, YouTube video, 6'05" https://www.youtube.com/ watch?v=dLgvKwOYniY (accessed 4 August 2015).

[40] As with the psalms themselves, the numbering of verses within Psalm 51 vary based on the religious tradition. In the traditional Septuagint numbering which Pärt uses, the psalm's inscription form the first two verses, meaning that the opening phrase "Miserere mei, Deus" is the beginning of verse 3. I will follow this convention when discussing Pärt's setting.

[41] This translation from the Latin is by David Pinkerton, who has collected texts and translations for Pärt's work on his website: www.arvopart.org. The verse "Rex tremendae maiestatis, qui salvandos salvas gratis, salva me, fons pietatis" is notoriously difficult to translate, particularly the term "salvandos", which has the somewhat predestinative connotation of "those who should be saved". Pinkerton has chosen to gloss over this, while others have translated this verse as "King of dread, whose mercy free/Saveth those that saved shall be,/Fount of pity, pity me" or, alternatively, dispense with the theological difficulties of predestination versus free will and adopted a freer rendering, such as "King of Majesty tremendous,/Who dost free salvation send us,/Fount of pity, then befriend us". The former is from a translation by Alexander Lindsay from his *Sketches of Christian Art* (1847); the latter was approved by Pope Benedict XVI for Anglo-Catholic use and appears in the Anglican Ordinariate Order for Funerals. Although I believe Pinkerton's translation to be flawed, I use it here for consistency.

pianissimo pitches from the clarinet (the tintinnabuli voice) break the silence that surrounds each individual word in the vocal line. These pitches outline an E minor tonic triad, but the spacing of the individual notes in these early appearances obscures that harmonic identity and projects a sense of expansiveness. In contrast, the melodic line in the opening verse of the psalm text moves by step. In the first verse, this results in a melodic range for the tenor line that is extraordinarily constricted, encompassing only the four notes from C4 to F♯4 in the course of four lines of text. In the first two of these lines, the two deviations in pitch from the opening E (down to D on "mei" and up to F♯ on "tuam") seem to acquire a symbolic significance in addition to their harmonic interest. This is followed in the next line of text by a double descent from E to D during the word "miserationem" and then to C on the following "tuarum". Not to be outdone, the F♯ returns in the final line of the verse as part of "iniquitatem" before the vocal line settles on E to close. Meanwhile, the E minor tonality is confirmed by a drone in the bass clarinet and additional interjections from the clarinet. In addition to making clear reference to the traditions of chant, the contrast between the restricted movement of the voice and the airiness of the clarinet emphasises the lonesomeness of the singer, an impression only strengthened by the halting rhythm that lends this opening a feeling of hesitancy and so matches the text's appeal for mercy.

Pärt retains this restriction in vocal compass even when the initial tenor is joined by the alto soloist and the instrumental elements become more complex in the fourth verse, but subtle alterations from the previous verse of the psalm signal an increase in dramatic pacing. From the initial triadic E–G harmony, the vocal lines emphasise stepwise motion and harmonic intervals of seconds and thirds, but the alto twice soars the ear-catching intervals of a fifth and a sixth (to B4 and E5, respectively) to cross the tenor line. The tintinnabuli pitches from the clarinet are still present, but instead of the call-and-response alternation from the initial verse, the clarinet now overlaps with the vocal lines, leaving the spaces in between words to be filled by the oboe, bassoon, and organ. The resultant widening pitch range in the instruments is matched by a slow build-up on the rhythmic level. Immediately audible is the

appearance of a new shortest rhythmic value (quaver) in the clarinet, but there are also two indicated increases in tempo from the initial crotchet = 84 (to crotchet = 88 and then to crotchet = 92) which propel the music forward into the next verse of the psalm.

From the opening word "Quoniam" intoned by the bass soloist in his first appearance it is obvious that something has changed significantly in this verse: gone are the wind instruments and organ, replaced by a trembling timpani roll at the edge of audibility; from the relative stability of E minor we have entered a new sound world still anchored by E but coloured by F♮ and G♯. The vocalists enter slowly, expanding upwards from bass to soprano with melodic lines that move fluidly through an ever-greater range of pitches. Although the lines are largely imitative in contour, the prominence of the G♯ in what is otherwise a diatonic section results in a surprising level of dissonance, further intensifying the sombre mood. When all five soloists have entered, a gradual crescendo drives the voices to a climax in volume and pitch levels on the admission of guilt "et peccatum meum contra me est semper". As the soloists cut off expectantly, the timpanist accelerates the crescendo into a thunderous roar which, in Paul Hillier's words, "[opens] like a gaping pit right in front of us", followed by "the *Dies irae* erupt[ing] in a wall of sound" generated by the choir and the full instrumental ensemble.[42]

What might initially seem like a "wall of sound" is actually a rigorously constructed section that combines the compositional technique of a mensuration canon with tintinnabulation. The canonic element is a descending scale in A minor (thereby retroactively explaining the mysterious G♯ from the previous section) which occurs on five different time-scales in different instruments, each scale accompanied by tintinnabuli pitches. The fastest iterations of the scale occur in the choir and woodwinds and are the most clearly audible, but the two slowest canons, found in the electric bass

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[42] Hillier, *Arvo Pärt,* 152.

and organ, stretch over 96 and 192 beats, respectively, and are difficult to hear. Instead, the resonance of these instruments, punctuated by blasts from the percussion, provides a harmonic backdrop for the faster canons.

Not content to simply layer scales of different durations on top of each other, Pärt manipulates the canon to add rhythmic and registral interest. The initial notated rhythm of the canon is a long-short pattern that matches the trochaic metre of the text, but after the first instance of the canon the rhythm switches to a quasi-iambic short-long pattern. The two rhythmic patterns then alternate across all canonic iterations. At the same time, two prominent alterations in register occur in the choral and woodwind versions of the canon, one on the level of the scale and one within the scale. The former occurs every two stanzas, when the roles of the voices are exchanged so that the fastest-moving canon that appears initially in the lower vocal and woodwind registers moves to the higher voices and vice versa (compare Example 3.1 and Example 3.2).

Example 3.1 Arvo Pärt, *Miserere*, vocal parts only, section 10 (3 bars)[43]

Example 3.2 Pärt, *Miserere*, vocal parts only, section 16 (3 bars)

The other alteration is present only in the choir and involves the scalar melody moving between pairs of voices every four notes (see Example 3.3). Weaving in between all of these scalar patterns are the triadic pitches that bind the mensuration canon to the technique of tintinnabulation. The effect of all these different elements is one of cascading declamations of text against a boldly coloured instrumental backdrop.

From the sparseness of the previous section, the sheer amount of sound is nearly overwhelming. Enzo Restagno has commented, "Every unit, every particle of the music is perfectly organised, but the overall impression is that

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[43] N.B., Pärt's score uses rehearsal numbers rather than bar numbers.

of a highly effective mimicry of chaos" created by "an infernal machine".[44] Nevertheless, quite apart from the technical facility and assured amalgamation of different techniques Pärt demonstrates here, he has also crafted a fitting dramatic counterpart to the initial verses of the Psalm, playing off the contrasts between soloists and choir and between fragmentary and tutti instrumentation.

Example 3.3 Pärt, *Miserere*, vocal parts only, section 10 (6 bars)

Furthermore, at the very moment of the Day of Judgement invoked in verse five, the poetic speaker switches abruptly from the text of the Miserere mei, a personalised plea addressed directly to God and written in the first person, to the Dies irae's solemn warning to the world of the coming "day of wrath" when God will sit as Judge and "all secrets shall be manifest:/nothing

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[44] Enzo Restagno, "Arvo Pärt in Conversation", in *Arvo Pärt in Conversation*, trans. Robert Crow (Champaign, France: Dalkey Archive Press, 2012), 74; Arvo Pärt, ibid.

shall remain unpunished." In its emphatic communality the pairing of this text with the mixed choir brings to mind the double role of the chorus in Greek tragedy as commentator and narrator. Just before the climactic return of the sequence's opening stanza the text returns briefly to the first person in order to ask the crucial question of the sinner: "What shall I, poor wretch, say then? Whom shall I ask to plead for me when even the righteous is scarcely secure?" As the Dies irae grinds to a halt on an ominous semitone dissonance for a moment it seems as though the answer may be ringing silence.

Out of the silence comes the lone voice of the bass soloist, picking up with the sixth verse of Psalm 51. Once again, the address is directly aimed at God: "against Thee only have I sinned and done what is evil in Thy sight". Although the vocal writing still emphasises the stepwise motion and triadic pitches of tintinnabulation, it also shows the influence of the central choral section in more overtly melodic construction and greater forward motion. These combine to gradually increase the levels of dissonance, but any influence the increase in pitch variety has on the harmonic structure remains opaque. Instead of functional harmony, the ear is drawn to the continually shifting timbral palette created by different combinations of vocalists and instruments, which colours each statement in different hues. Unlike in the opening Psalm section, there are no instrumental interjections between the words (and the rests in the vocal line are themselves markedly shorter), save for a *pianissimo* drone in the bass clarinet and timpani in verse six, a cadential figure in the winds in verse seven, and isolated pitches from muted brass over an organ drone in verse eight. The extreme reduction in performing forces from the Dies irae interpolation heightens the contrast between sections and focuses attention on the singers, who continue to declaim the psalmist's words. Following the eighth verse of the psalm the instruments make their first significant appearance since the end of the Dies irae with a twelve-bar interlude that sets into motion the pattern of three psalm verses followed by an instrumental interjection that guides the next six verses. These instrumental sections increase in length and complexity, culminating after the fourteenth verse of the psalm in a cadenza-like profusion of virtuosic

figuration for the organ, joined in turn by the woodwinds, brass, and percussion. It is tempting, if perhaps a touch facile, to connect the sudden appearance of rapid figuration under the designation "tranquillo" with the words of the previous verse: "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation and uphold me with Thy free spirit." Nevertheless, Pärt himself admits that these instrumental intervals are "music we need, like light, like air" in the midst of the weight of the Psalm text.[45]

From this effusive instrumentation verse fifteen's thicker texture, faster tempo, and louder dynamic level clearly signal a new build-up of dramatic tension. Although the sense of being drawn inexorably toward a high point persists throughout, Pärt develops this tension differently in every verse, from the *fortissimo* entrance of all five soloists together on the plea "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God", punctuated by dramatic silences, to the re-introduction of the electric guitar and orchestral bells. Pärt pushes performers to new heights on verse eighteen as both soprano and tenor reach their respective high C's on "holocaustis": a word which may make many in the audience take note, but which here takes its original meaning of 'burnt offering'. After this primal scream, the following *piano* dynamic sounds even more like a whisper than before, as the soloists acknowledge that, unlike burnt offerings, a contrite heart is a sacrifice that will not be despised.

Following on from this, the vocalists return to a sparser texture reminiscent of the opening section of the psalm as the bass soloist affirms God's good will towards those who repent of their sins. The final verse of the psalm features the bass once again, this time with an unabashedly melodic line that floats over a *ppp* tremolo on the timpani. As the hushed sounds fade it seems as though the piece might be at an end, but Pärt has one final statement to make. Bringing together the soprano and alto soloists with the choir, he sets one more stanza from the Dies irae as a final plea for mercy: "King of awful majesty who freely saves those who are saved, save me, Thou

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[45] Arvo Pärt, in Restagno, "Arvo Pärt in Conversation", 74.

fount of mercy." Fittingly, these solemn words are accompanied by the organ as the tamtam, bass guitar, and orchestral bells toll above. As the resonance dies away, the audience is left in silence to contemplate the fate of the psalmist and of humankind.

3.3.2 The dangers of popularity

By any standard of measurement, Pärt has enjoyed an astounding level of success for a contemporary composer of classical music. Particularly from the 1980s, when Pärt began a successful partnership with ECM Records, his music has made a significant impact both in the concert hall and in the popular sphere. According to Bachtrack.com, a concert events listing site, he has been the most frequently performed living composer for six years running (2011–2016), outstripping the likes of John Adams, Philip Glass, and his counterpart in this study James MacMillan.[46] *Miserere* is one of seven of Pärt's works nominated for the Grammy Award for Best Contemporary Classical Composition, and he has been nominated for an additional four Grammy Awards for recordings of his compositions.[47] Audiences who do not frequent concert halls may have come across his work in various films, including *Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten* in *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004), *Fratres* in *There Will Be Blood* (2007), or *My Heart's in the Highlands* in *The Great Beauty* (2013). Pieces by Pärt are used extensively in television and in advertisements and—perhaps most distressingly to 'serious' music lovers—feature

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[46] Mark Pullinger, "He's Not the Messiah: Beethoven Topples Handel in the 2015 Stats", *Bachtrack* https://bachtrack.com/classical-music-statistics-2015 (accessed 2 November 2016) and "Classical Music Statistics 2016—More Top Tens", *Bachtrack* https://bachtrack.com/statistics-more-top-tens-january-2017 (accessed 24 April 2017). Note that Pärt also has three of the top ten most commonly played contemporary works in 2016 with *Nunc dimittis*, *The Deer's Cry*, and *Fratres*. Statistics for other years are available in archival searches on the site.

[47] "Arvo Pärt", Arvo Pärt Centre, http://www.arvopart.ee/en/arvo-part-2/honorary-degrees-awards/ (accessed 15 December 2014).

prominently on various compilations of "relaxing classical pieces".[48] His presence in popular culture is such that in 2008 Samuel Wigley called for an "Arvo armistice", worried that the pervasive use of Pärt's "severe if ineffably beautiful music" lessened its power.[49]

Despite his unquestioned commercial success, Pärt's compositional ethos has not been universally praised, with many critics suggesting that his approach is reactionary or simplistic. Josiah Fisk famously asserted of *Passio* that "the piece sounds remarkably consistent from beginning to end; what comes out of your CD player on 'Scan' is not much different from what comes out on 'Play.'"[50] Fisk's accusation that Pärt's "answer [to totalitarianism] is a withdrawal from the here and now through a self-styled form of monkish transcendence" also draws on the trope of Pärt as hermetic mystic, a perception the composer shares with his fellow so-called holy minimalists Henryk Górecki and John Tavener.[51] Whilst Pärt shares some biographical features with these composers (namely, a life under Soviet rule with the former and adherence to the Orthodox faith with the latter) the disparaging tone of Fisk's assessment rests on the contention that the music of the "New Simplists" entails a "return to a past of putative innocence" stripped of the inner life of "the dialogues, the ambiguities, the deeply questioning and even subversive powers that actually govern the operation of music, and that still blaze away below the soft, familiar surfaces of the classical masterpieces."[52] The perception of Pärt's music as a withdrawal from the world into an ethereal

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[48] Cf. *The Best of Arvo Pärt (Classics for Pleasure)*, *Classical Chillout*, or *The Calm Inspired 20th Century Classics*.

[49] Samuel Wigley, "Is it time to give Pärt a rest?" *The Guardian*, 29 May 2008, http://www.theguardian.com/film/filmblog/2008/may/29/timetogivepartarest (accessed 17 November 2014).

[50] Josiah Fisk, "The New Simplicity: The Music of Górecki, Tavener and Pärt", *The Hudson Review* 47, no. 3 (Autumn, 1994): 402–403.

[51] Ibid., 403.

[52] Ibid., 410, 397.

atemporality draws sharp criticism from MacMillan as well, who accuses the composer (along with Tavener and Górecki) of "deliberately, aesthetically and technically, avoid[ing] the whole notion of conflict."[53] Although Fisk is perhaps the best-known of Pärt's detractors, he is not alone in expressing criticism of the music frequently described as 'serene', 'hypnotic', and even 'uneventful'—descriptive terms which themselves may be interpreted as either positive or negative.

It is true that Pärt frequently uses meditative language in his discussions of music, but the idea that this represents a passive retirement from the 'real world' is strongly disputed by his defenders. In response to Jeremy Begbie's description of Pärt's music as "a cool sonic cathedral in a hot, rushed, and overcrowded culture", Robert Sholl suggests that "[it] is anything but 'cool' or objective. Its over-riding effect of lamentation and of grief is so appealing, from a Christian worldview, precisely because it does not ignore but takes up and attempts to heal what Begbie describes as 'our fallen humanity'."[54] Furthermore, a close examination of a work such as *Miserere* reveals a dramatic conception of humanity that not only contradicts Fisk's accusation of facile innocence, but also enacts a conflict so deeply rooted in the human experience as to warrant the description 'eternal'. If this is encased within a musical texture that rejects overt complexity in favour of an extreme distillation of material that does not mean that complexity of expression is also sacrificed.

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[53] James MacMillan, "God, Theology and Music", *New Blackfriars* 81, no. 947 (2000): 20.

[54] Jeremy Begbie, *Resounding Truth: Christian Wisdom in the World of Music* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 261; Robert Sholl, "Arvo Pärt and Spirituality", in *The Cambridge Companion to Arvo Pärt*, ed. Andrew Shenton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 150.

3.4 The complex corporeality of James MacMillan

If Pärt has sometimes been accused of avoiding conflict, his Scottish
counterpart MacMillan has a reputation for seeking it out. Indeed, the latter
composer is more likely to be termed a revolutionary than a monk, though
even the former label appears less frequently as the composer, born in 1959,
ages. Like the Estonian Pärt, MacMillan was born in a part of the world
sometimes considered to be on the margins of musical life. His early life was
spent in East Ayrshire, a rural area in the west of Scotland, before he moved
on to study composition at the Universities of Edinburgh and Durham.
Although he has established himself as a major force among British
composers, the political and religious zeal evident from early works such as
Búsqueda and *The Confession of Isobel Gowdie* continues to fuel public
perception of the composer as an outspoken advocate for contemporary
music. It was the premiere of *The Confession of Isobel Gowdie* by the BBC
Scottish Symphony Orchestra as part of the 1990 BBC Proms that thrust
MacMillan onto the national stage, but the composer has since been
acclaimed as the "pre-eminent Scottish composer of his generation."[55] Over
the past 25 years, MacMillan's output has ranged from chamber and orchestral
compositions to choral pieces and solo instrumental works. According to
Stephen Johnson, his famously eclectic style of composition encompasses
influences from Celtic folk music, Birtwistle, Ives, Messiaen, Schnittke,
Shostakovich, and Wagner, unified by a "deeply ingrained feeling for musical
storytelling."[56] Running parallel to these musical influences is the abiding

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[55] "James MacMillan", Boosey & Hawkes, http://www.boosey.com/cr/composer/
James+MacMillan (accessed 20 May 2015).

[56] Stephen Johnson, "Introduction to the Music of James MacMillan", *Boosey & Hawkes*,
http://www.boosey.com/pdf/brochure/2799_En.pdf (accessed 20 May 2015).

significance of religion and especially the composer's own Roman Catholic faith.[57]

Unlike Pärt, whose theological commentary is limited to suggesting that "if anybody wishes to know my 'philosophy', then they can read any of the Church Fathers", MacMillan speaks frequently about the nature of his religious belief and its interaction with composition.[58] As a devout Roman Catholic, MacMillan has been an advocate for the continuing vitality of the sacred music tradition in the modern world, regularly lamenting the loss of traditional Catholic styles of worship. His vehemence on the subject of liturgical music is part of a larger-scale rejection of compositional styles that, in his view, seem to veer from accessibility into vapidity. In 2013, he sparked protest by announcing that he would no longer write music for liturgical use due to a desire to use a reinvigorated tradition of plainchant to combat "decades of experiment which spewed forth music of mind-numbingly depressing banality" in post-Vatican II liturgical music.[59] Coming only a few years after he composed a special Mass setting for congregation and choir in honour of Pope Benedict XVI's visit to the United Kingdom, it is a surprising turn for a composer who has demonstrated a long-standing commitment to composing new music for liturgical use. Despite this disavowal of liturgical music, the composer continues to produce non-liturgical works with sacred themes.

Although his openness about his own religious faith means that it features prominently in biographical notes, MacMillan rejects the assertion

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[57] For more on a variety of cultural influences on MacMillan, see Richard McGregor, "'A Metaphor for the Deeper Wintriness': Exploring James MacMillan's Musical Identity", *Tempo* 65, no. 257 (July 2011): 22–39.

[58] Arvo Pärt, "Conversation with Lewis Owens", *Spike Magazine*, 1 June 2000 www.spikemagazine.com/0600arvopart.php (accessed 21 August 2015); for more information on MacMillan's religious beliefs, see MacMillan, "God, Theology and Music".

[59] James MacMillan, "Too much Catholic church music caters to old hippies", blog post, *The Telegraph*, 20 November 2013, http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/culture/jmacmillan/100071768/too-much-catholic-church-music-caters-to-old-hippies-fortunately-theres-a-simple-solution/ (accessed 25 May 2015).

that he is part of a resurgence of spiritual interest among musicians. In fact, he sees himself as participating in a tradition of religiously-informed composition that includes not only his idols Bach and Palestrina, but a number of twentieth century composers, including Messiaen, Stravinsky, Tippett, and Britten. On the continuing importance of the sacred tradition, he claims "It could be argued that it is in music that art did not lose its sense of connection, umbilical cord connection, with a notion of the sacred."[60] Nevertheless, although he sees Messiaen as the strongest example of a twentieth-century composer intimately concerned with religion, he draws a sharp distinction between the French composer's mystic theology and his own embodied conception of Catholic theology:

> I've always been drawn to a theology of music which emphasizes a sense of conflict, a sense of unease, a sense of the dirty, as it were, a sense of the physical, corporeal, rather than a sense of the spirit being in some way divorced or set apart from the corporeal.[61]

This musico-theological stance drives MacMillan to address topics that touch on contemporary issues as part of a "search for the sacred ... in the here and now, rather than ... in some kind of distant, unachievable place out there."[62]

In MacMillan's self-descriptions the same words crop up time and again: corporeal, rooted, conflict, dramatic. In aim, then, if not always in practice, this brings him into conflict with composers such as Górecki, Pärt, and Tavener, whom he suggests represent a sort of 'spirituality-lite' and an insufficient response to real spiritual needs in the contemporary world.

> The music ... is very beautiful, [but] it is music which avoids the complexities common in a lot of contemporary, avant-garde, modernist music of the twentieth century. There is a return to

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[60] MacMillan and McGregor, "James MacMillan: A Conversation and Commentary", 71.

[61] Ibid., 82–83.

[62] James MacMillan, quoted in Mandy Hallam, "Conversation with James MacMillan", *Tempo* 62, no. 245 (July 2008): 25.

some sense of modality, if not tonality, and there is an ethereal atmosphere in their music that I think makes people relax and feel vaguely spiritual. There seems to be a hunger for something to fill the spiritual void and some of this music at least gives people a kind of folk memory of what spiritual sustenance was about.[63]

In his suspicion of music that "makes people relax and feel vaguely spiritual" MacMillan is in the company of many other twentieth- and twenty-first-century composers, including Aaron Copland, who declared "Most people … use music as a couch; they want to be pillowed on it, relaxed and consoled for the stress of daily living. But serious music was never meant to be used as a soporific."[64] MacMillan's assessment of these sacred minimalist composers also resonates with some of the accusations levelled by Fisk, particularly the insistence on developmental processes and a certain amount of complexity as integral to musical value; however, the impression that both Pärt and MacMillan are striving to articulate something fundamental about the relationship of humanity and God is as striking as the overt differences in their compositional styles.

In addition to setting a large number of sacred texts for both professional and amateur musicians, MacMillan draws allusions to religious faith throughout his compositions. One of his largest-scale compositional projects is the three-part group of compositions *The World's Ransoming*, *Concerto for Cello and Orchestra*, and *Symphony: "Vigil"*, wherein the veiled allusions to religious subject matter inherent in the titles of the outer works are made explicit in calling the triptych *Triduum*.[65] Moreover, he frequently

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[63] MacMillan, "God, Theology and Music", 16.

[64] Aaron Copland, *What to Listen for in Music*, rev. ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1957), 249.

[65] In addition to the allusive titles given to the first and third pieces, the Concerto for Cello and Orchestra also sports descriptive titles for its movements: "The Mockery", "The Reproaches", and "Dearest Wood and Dearest Iron" which link it to the Crucifixion. The titles are thus linked to the overall designation *Triduum*, which itself refers to the Paschal Triduum: the traditional name for the three-day period immediately preceding Easter consisting of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday.

resorts to religious language when speaking about his work: for example, in his programme notes for *The Confession of Isobel Gowdie* he writes that the work "draw[s] together various strands in a single, complicated act of contrition", it "craves absolution and offers Isobel Gowdie the mercy and humanity that was denied her in the last days of her life", and "contain[s] a multitude of chants, songs and litanies (real and imagined)" that mould the music into "the Requiem that Isobel Gowdie never had."[66] The story of Isobel Gowdie, a Scottish woman tried (and believed executed) for witchcraft in 1662, combines MacMillan's interests in Celtic traditions and religious fervour into a "single, complicated act of contrition."[67] With an oeuvre saturated by religious sensibility, it was perhaps only a matter of time before the prolific composer set Psalm 51.

MacMillan's *Miserere* was commissioned by AMUZ (Flanders Festival-Antwerp) for their festival Laus Polyphoniae. In 2009 the festival, dedicated to both early music and polyphony more generally, took as its theme the Sistine Chapel. In the festival's first-ever world premiere, *Miserere* was performed in the Carolus-Borromeuskerk on 29 August 2009 by choral group The Sixteen, conducted by Harry Christophers. As an ensemble committed to both early polyphony and contemporary choral music, The Sixteen frequently present concerts which bridge chronological gaps and thus were well-suited to presenting a programme which set the contemporary MacMillan against a panoply of sacred music from the Renaissance, including the Allegri *Miserere* which served as one of MacMillan's inspirations.[68] Furthermore, MacMillan has enjoyed a long relationship with The Sixteen and their founder Christophers, marked by the commissioning of *O Bone Jesu* and the premieres

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[66] James MacMillan, programme notes for *The Confession of Isobel Gowdie*, Boosey & Hawkes, http://www.boosey.com/cr/music/James-MacMillan-The-Confession-of-Isobel-Gowdie/3115 (accessed 20 May 2015).

[67] Ibid.

[68] AMUZ Concert Promotion, http://www.amuz.be/nl/concert-archief/#2009 (accessed 19 August 2015).

of *Padre Pio's Prayer* and *The Birds of Rhiannon*, as well as multiple recordings. *Miserere* confirms the closeness of the relationship between MacMillan and The Sixteen with its dedication to Christophers. As the only work by a living composer on its premiere concert programme, MacMillan's *Miserere* was clearly intended as a foil to the great works of the Renaissance that surrounded it.

Although both Pärt and MacMillan's works exist within a musical sub-genre of Miserere mei settings practically defined by Allegri in the popular imagination, MacMillan's *Miserere* flaunts its connections to its predecessor in multiple ways. The pattern of concert programmes inviting direct comparisons between Allegri's and MacMillan's *Misereres* established at Laus Polyphoniae continued at the UK premiere of the MacMillan *Miserere* given by The Sixteen at the 2010 Spitalfields Music Festival on a concert entitled simply "The Sixteen: Allegri and MacMillan".[69] Another layer of relationship through performance was added when The Sixteen featured both works on their annual Choral Pilgrimage in 2013. The Choral Pilgrimage, billed as "an annual tour of the UK's finest cathedrals which aims to bring music back to the buildings for which it was written", covered 34 venues in the United Kingdom and Ireland during 2013.[70] The programme, entitled "Queen of Heaven", combined motets by Palestrina and MacMillan with two settings of the Miserere mei text: a specially-prepared performance version of the Allegri based on research conducted by Ben Byram-Wigfield, and MacMillan's own.[71] Ironically, Byram-Wigfield's version of the Allegri *Miserere* removes the most obvious connection between the two works by substituting the *Tonus*

[69] "The Sixteen: Allegri and MacMillan", Concert programme available: http://www.last.fm/event/1421477+The+Sixteen:+Allegri+-+MacMillan (accessed 22 July 2015).

[70] The Sixteen, "About Us: The Sixteen", http://www.thesixteen.com/page/full-biography (accessed 15 October 2015).

[71] Byram-Wigfield's research traces the evolution of the Allegri *Miserere* from various manuscript sources. The performing edition he created with The Sixteen and Christophers likewise begins with a relatively unadorned falsobordone version and progresses through various styles of ornamentation before ending on the familiar 'top C' version.

peregrinus chant for the more commonly heard Chant Tone VII for Good Friday from the *Liber usualis*.[72] MacMillan quotes the latter plainsong twice in his composition, but the allusion to Allegri is lost when placed alongside the contemporary Byram-Wigfield performing edition.

Given the circumstances of its composition, it is unsurprising that MacMillan's *Miserere* draws on some of the same traditions as Allegri's setting beyond the borrowing of Gregorian chant. Like its famous predecessor, it is written for mixed voices a cappella and runs roughly the same length of time in performance (between twelve and fifteen minutes). It also evidences a similar concern for textual intelligibility and lyrical grace, though in other respects, such as rhythmic variety and level of chromaticism, MacMillan's compositional sound world reveals the four centuries that separate him from Allegri. Unlike the Allegri, which contrasts sections for two choirs (one five-voice and one four-voice) and a plainchant, MacMillan's writing includes only brief fragments for soloists within the eight-part chorus. From this brief description, some of the surface characteristics that separate the MacMillan from Pärt's *Miserere* are readily apparent, but even though the two contemporary works differ greatly in terms of performing forces they share a sufficient number of compositional concerns to make a comparison worthwhile.

3.4.1 Desolation and devotion

The opening phrase of MacMillan's *Miserere* sets a mood of reflective quietude with the *piano* entrance of all tenor and bass parts sounding from the depths with the familiar plea marked in the score as "desolate and cold". A listener familiar with Pärt's composition might catch an eerie aural resemblance between the two here with the dark E minor tonality and long-short trochaic

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[72] Ben Byram-Wigfield, "A Quest for the Holy Grail?" rev. ed. (2007), 14. Published on *Ancient Groove Music*, http://www.ancientgroove.co.uk (accessed 22 July 2015).

rhythm, but MacMillan's duet builds from unison to soaring, arch-like phrases within the first few lines. The richness of the four lowest parts cuts off abruptly in the middle of verse four, leaving the newly-arrived alto voice alone to call upon God's mercies for redemption.

With the arrival of the fifth verse, the soprano I part enters for the first time with a rhythmically complex melodic line. A few bars later, the soprano II enters in a near-canonic relationship with soprano I, echoing the first part at varying rhythmic intervals throughout the next two verses. The aural effect of the intertwining of two voices is an impression of immense space, enhanced by the resonant recording style employed by The Sixteen on the premiere CD recording.[73] As the sopranos trail off in their acknowledgement of God's justice, the entire ensemble rests momentarily in the first fragment of silence since the work's opening. This brief pause serves both to close the psalm's first section, wherein the poetic speaker acknowledges guilt, and to prepare the listener for the following section. The parallel textual construction of verses eight and nine (both of which begin with "Ecce enim") is reflected in the compositional structure: verse eight is the first time all voice parts sing tutti, and this commanding "for behold" is marked at first *fortissimo* and "emphatic", whist the following "in sins did my mother conceive me" repeats the dynamic marking and adds the instruction *con fuoco*. Furthermore, MacMillan continues his rhythmic play in these two verses by mixing largely homorhythmic sections with short imitative sections.

All of this leads up to the opening of verse ten when MacMillan raises the level of emotional intensity still higher. After another single rest, the choir enters on a B major chord, then push forward into resolution onto the tonic of E minor. Marked "pleading" in the score, the ascending half-step resolutions in the tenor and soprano sound particularly plangent. MacMillan follows this with a series of dominant harmonic relationships, though he avoids both the characteristic circle of fifths and the V^7-I (or i) chord progression of

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[73] James MacMillan, *Miserere*, (2011) Coro Records, CD COR16096.

conventional tonal theory in favour of a progression of dominant-function chords built on top of a descending scalar pattern. Within this overall pattern are nested others which reveal the traditional rules of counterpoint at work: on the scale of a single bar, for instance, the soprano and bass lines move in contrary motion, with the upper part descending through a third and the lower ascending though a fourth. Meanwhile, the middle voices fill in additional triadic notes. As the voices steadily descend in range they also decrescendo until the dynamic and harmonic structures come to rest, at *piano* for the former and on an ambiguous chord in the latter (see Example 3.4).

In the aural context of the previous ten bars, the first chord in bar 95 sounds like an E major triad with an added fourth scale degree, leading the listener to expect a 4-3 suspension that parallels the earlier resolution in bars 90-91; however, instead of the tenor's A♮ resolving to the G♯, it is the soprano's G♯ that moves down to an F♯. The result is that the second chord in bar 95 contains two elements of the expected E major chord and thus may be interpreted (perhaps with the help of the aural memory of the G♯) as an E major chord with two added colouristic seconds in the A♮ and F♯. An alternative interpretation hears the G♯ resolution to F♯ as functional rather than colouristic, creating a seventh chord on B with an added fourth scale degree that MacMillan refuses to resolve.

Example 3.4 James MacMillan, *Miserere*, bars 92-96

This interpretation is confirmed in the next section, written in the traditional manner of responsorial chant in the key of B minor. It is here that MacMillan first quotes the Gregorian chant familiar from Allegri's *Miserere*, though he disguises the reciting tone within lush four-part harmonisation. The alternating phrases of the chant are passed between the basses/tenors and altos/sopranos, ending with the psalmist's near-desperate request "cast me not away from thy holy face, and take not thy holy spirit from me" in the upper voices. The full bar of silence that follows is both the longest period of silence in the entire work and an apt representation of the divine silence in the face of human sin that punctuates the Biblical narrative both in the Psalms and, most dramatically, at the point in the Passion narrative where Jesus cries out "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

When the voices return it is in an echo of the opening, although this time MacMillan employs the alto and tenor voices in place of the earlier tenor and bass timbre and the tonal centre has shifted to from E minor to A minor. The repetition of the interpretive marking "desolate and cold" and the vocal contour reinforce the idea that we have arrived at the beginning of the A'

section in a large ternary form, but just as this seems to be confirmed by the appearance of the soprano singing the same melody as was premiered by the alto, the music drives forward into a full-throated cry for deliverance: "deliver me from blood guilt, O God, thou God of my salvation". Marked "eruptive" in the score, the punchy vocals of the tutti ensemble replace the soprano duet in the analogous position in the first section in a moment of high drama and tension before dissolving into unmeasured chant. At this moment, MacMillan quotes Allegri again, this time recycling the earlier composer's chant tune in unison (compare Example 3.5 and Example 3.6). For listeners familiar with the Allegri, these six notes offer an undeniable link between the two compositions.

Example 3.5 MacMillan, *Miserere* bars 146-150, bass vocal line only

Example 3.6 Gregorio Allegri, *Miserere*, plainchant vocal lines (chant tone VII, 2)

The four verses MacMillan sets in this unmeasured style offer praise to God in the psalmist's anticipation of His mercies, opening with the call in the tenors: "O Lord, thou wilt open my lips" from verse seventeen. Each verse is

assigned to a single voice part, but after the words are intoned in unison, a soloist breaks away from the rest of the singers into a wordless vocalise that provides a seamless transition to the next verse. As the section progresses, the harmonic backdrop for the solo voice parts deepens as each previous set of singers comes to rest on a drone pitch after their verse. At the close of verse twenty, the result is a harmonically rich chord consisting of C♯ in the basses, A in the tenors, B and D♯ in the altos, and G♯ in the sopranos in bar 163 (see Example 3.7).

Example 3.7 MacMillan, *Miserere*, bars 161-164

From this shimmering chord the altos resolve downwards, first to a unison B, then to A and to G♯, thereby leading the re-entrance of the others on a radiant E major chord in bar 165. Now comes the final iteration of the initial melody, transformed from its previous desolation into a chorale overflowing with warmth. The exaltation of mood thus engendered hinges on the promise of the text: "Then shalt thou accept the sacrifice of justice" says the psalmist, implying both a confidence in God's merciful character and an

acknowledgement that mercy does not negate the need for the confession, penitence, and cleansing of the sinner. The closing line of the psalm then turns the promise into an acknowledgement of reciprocal action on the part of the sinner, for it is the sinner who will offer sacrifices. It is this fragment that MacMillan chooses to repeat at the very end in a reaffirmation of the psalmist's (and perhaps by extension any sinner's) duty to offer sacrifices of righteousness to God. In the final two bars of the piece, he repurposes a conventional dominant-tonic cadential gesture to give musical echo to the text's closure.

3.5 Affective structures in the *Miserere*

Each of the works discussed in this chapter is structured around a particular text and in each case the composers have chosen to set the text in such a way as to emphasise certain elements. Situated in the aural context for both contemporary works is the inescapable Allegri setting with its simple cyclic alternation between polyphonic and plainsong verses. The constraints of this structure mean that Allegri's setting minimizes the connection between the text and the musical drama; verses are set to whichever musical pattern comes next rather than being set with an ear to either their structural significance in the psalm text or to their affective pungency. The famed high C occurs in the middle of a melisma on the penultimate syllable in the appropriate verses regardless of linguistic significance, yet it stands out as emotive not only on the basis of its pitch and attendant impressions of ethereality, but also because of the elegant (if possibly historically inaccurate) harmonic and melodic contours that lead into and out of the single high note. Therefore, whether or not one accepts Byram-Wigfield's dramatic restructuring of the iconic *Miserere*, the compositional drama of the work is woven into the individual sections in the form of suspensions, unexpected dissonances, and the graceful leaps and runs that set off the polyphonic choral sections.

Like Allegri, MacMillan segments his composition along the verses of the psalm, but instead of a rigid pattern he works within a flexible framework

that minimises the divisions between verses. Most commonly, a new section of the psalm text is signalled by a change in performing forces, as when the soprano parts enter at verse five, but even as listeners recognise the change in vocal register MacMillan maintains forward momentum and continuity by eliding the vocal phrases through lengthy held notes. These overlapping lines offer a stark contrast to the more overt versification of both Pärt and Allegri. The constant motion is paralleled by MacMillan's characteristically flowing, lyrical melodies, themselves one of the work's most striking features, set as they are within a sound world and performance setting that predisposes the listener to anticipate chant-like stepwise motion. Other distinctively MacMillan-esque elements include frequent grace notes decorating the melodic line and an astonishing variety of rhythmic patterns packed into apparently straightforward metres such as 4/4 and 3/4.

In comparison with some of his other sacred works, including the *Tenebrae Responsories* that share not only *Miserere*'s Good Friday associations but also recording space on the album by The Sixteen, MacMillan's harmonic language seems curiously restrained. Colour is found primarily through melodies which dip in and out of chromaticism without ever seeming to come unstuck from an underlying tonal stability. As I suggest above, one of the most dramatic moments is MacMillan's setting of the psalmist's request for purification in verse ten "Asperges me", wherein the alternation of tension and release created by the dominant-tonic harmonies invests the words with special fervour. Along with this melodic and rhythmic fluidity comes a wealth of expressive markings, including a striking set of character markings beginning with the afore-mentioned "desolate and cold" which accompanies the first two iterations of the opening tune and including "keening, crying" upon the entrance of the sopranos on "Amplius lava me" and "wistful" for the solo vocalises in the plainchant. Although these designations are not immediately available to the listener not following along in the score, they are nonetheless key clues to the performed emotional trajectory. Apart from moments where MacMillan highlights the text's urgency, the piece follows the overall structure of the psalm text in its orientation towards the final verse,

which represents the psalmist's assurance of forgiveness. From the initial desolation engendered by the confession of sin the psalmist is brought back to divine favour, ending with the full chorus singing "with devotion" of their redemption.

In contrast to both Allegri's and MacMillan's settings Pärt's *Miserere* is not solely reliant on the psalm to give the composition its textual structure. The insertion of the Dies irae means that Pärt sets not one but two texts that have historical traditions of solemn usage at times of contemplation and reflection; in addition to their analogous performance contexts, the texts share a concern with the relationship of the human and the divine Judge. Although the initial stanza of the Dies irae is by far the best known, the poem as a whole can be separated into three sections. The first seven stanzas, which Pärt uses for his mensuration canon, depict the Last Judgement, the day in which God as the righteous Judge will "make a stern reckoning" with the world. The matter-of-fact description of the Last Judgement of the first six shifts abruptly in the seventh stanza, where the third-person narrator dissolves into a first-person poetic speaker. The following ten stanzas record pleas for mercy and deliverance on behalf of the individual speaker, whilst the final two stanzas extend the request to humankind more generally, closing with the well-known "Pie Jesu Domine: Dona eis requiem. Amen". In his composition, Pärt sets only the first eight stanzas of the poem: the initial seven (ending with the first appearance of the poetic "I") appear as part of the mensuration canon, whilst the eighth stanza closes the entire work. As I mention previously, Psalm 51 also has nineteen verses, and although the poetic speaker remains the same throughout, the psalm can also be divided into three sections. Here, the first twelve verses are dedicated to the psalmist's supplication and acknowledgement of sins past and present. The following five verses sound a note of hopeful anticipation as the psalmist expresses gratitude for God's mercy. As in the Dies irae, the final two verses expand the vision of God's mercy to encompass Zion as well as the speaker. Thus, both the Miserere mei and Dies irae texts are primarily concerned with the character of God and the nature of

humankind and present parallel images of God as righteous Judge and of humankind as sinful beings who will be brought to account for their actions.

Musically, Pärt reflects and expands upon this relationship by crafting *Miserere*'s dramatic structure around the drama of the text. The result is an undulating sense of tension and release centred on three separate moments: the initial appearance of the Dies irae, the climax of the psalmist's pleas for forgiveness in verses fifteen to nineteen, and the closing stanza of the Dies irae. The distinctive treatment of the first of these has already been explored in some detail and Pärt likewise sets off the latter two sections by manipulating dynamics, tempo, vocal tessitura, and performing forces. Verses fifteen to nineteen of the psalm are demarcated on both ends by significant instrumental sections, the first of which, at thirty-eight bars, is larger than any of the verses that surround it. This is only the first of the superlatives found in this section, which include the loudest vocal dynamics of the psalm sections (*forte* increasing to *fortissimo*), fastest tempo indication (crotchet = 92), highest sung notes (C6 in the sopranos), and first entrance of the full complement of soloists (a cappella in verse sixteen, with the instrumental ensemble in verse eighteen). From these monumental outbursts, the sudden return of the creeping *piano* contours of verse nineteen is a shock, but a necessary one. Seen in conjunction with the text it becomes clear that in Pärt's conception, the crux of the psalm is not the frenzy of "deliver me from blood-guiltiness" nor is it the evocation of "burnt offerings", but rather it is the humble recognition that internal repentance is the psalmist's only hope of redemption.

From this emotional and aural roller coaster, the final two psalm verses seem like a dénouement as the voices and instruments recede into quiet; however, Pärt reserves a further change of pace for his closing statement. Like MacMillan he incorporates a change of tonal centre, but whilst MacMillan reasserts his initial tonic of E but shifts from the minor to the major mode, Pärt remains resolutely in the minor mode, but brings his tonal structure in a full circle by descending the single step from the F minor which has held sway since the end of the Dies irae interpolation to the E minor which opened the

piece. He also brings back the canonic texture that characterised the earlier Dies irae material, but with a gentler cast created by a very slow tempo, and sparse accompaniment of the slowly-moving vocal lines by the most resonant instruments of the ensemble: organ, electric bass, tam-tam, and orchestral bells. Although the opening words of the stanza "King of awful majesty" serve as a reminder of God's otherness, it is not the awe-inspiring ruler whom Pärt highlights here, but the "fount of mercy" who is the only being whom the "poor wretch" may ask to plead for him or her.[74]

Paul Hillier argues that *Miserere*'s overall tripartite construction should be seen from the inside out, beginning with the Dies irae interpolation (which began as the free-standing, but never published, work *Calix* in the 1970s). According to Hillier, the psalm itself "[provides] a meaningful-context for the terrors of the *Dies irae* ... creating a more personal preparation for the transformative vision of the final section."[75] The relationship between the Miserere mei and the Dies irae texts is crucial to the overall dramatic structure of the work, but I believe Hillier misreads both the direction of influence and the overall purpose for combining the two elements. Although the compositional idea for the Dies irae section predates the composition of *Miserere* by a decade, it is the psalm's prayer of penitence in the outer sections that is the core of the work and the Dies irae serves to frame that prayer in the context of the impending global Day of Wrath. This resonates with Nora Pärt's suggestion that the Miserere mei is central not only to this work but to the entirety of the Christian tradition within which her husband operates: "Here we are forced to ask the question: if the greatest prophet of the Judeo-Christian tradition [i.e., David] was capable of such crimes, what is a man capable of, any one of us? What dark depths does mankind carry within

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[74] Pärt has drawn a contrast between the warmth of this reconciliation and Mozart's *Requiem* setting of the same stanza, in which the latter "lets his *Rex tremendae majestatis* vibrate with the sound of terror", in Restagno, "Arvo Pärt in Conversation", 70.

[75] Hillier, *Arvo Pärt*, 161.

himself?"[76] These eternal questions touching on the nature of human guilt and confession, divine forgiveness and redemption lie at the heart of *Miserere*.

3.6 Selling the sacred in a secular world

I have already mentioned how MacMillan's *Miserere* has been carefully positioned through performance as both a partner and a successor to the Allegri *Miserere*, but the framing of Pärt's and MacMillan's works as both sacred and quasi-sacramental extends far beyond comparisons with the older composition. Understanding how the *Misereres* can embody these multivalent meanings for listeners requires not only an understanding of the sacred traditions from which they arise and the structural elements they employ, but also a clarification of the broader context in which they are perceived. In his book *Music and Urban Geography*, Adam Krims offers a pertinent reminder that "music occurs within, and is conditioned by, a wide range of activities and circumstances that are not in themselves 'artistic'."[77] Krims is concerned with offering a Marxist approach to music that critiques the typical 'cultural studies' strain of musicology. Although his questioning of the "scope and character of [the] overall significance" of human subjects limits the application of his argument for the purposes of this chapter, his case for the pervasive influence of capitalism on music marketing, recording, and performance is persuasive.[78]

In comparison to the MacMillan, Pärt's score is barren of performance indications, relying instead on numerical tempo markings and dynamics to hint at interpretive choices. The sole emotive marking *tranquillo* is given to the instruments, not the voices. Although Pärt's scores are frequently sparse in

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[76] Nora Pärt, in Restagno, "Arvo Pärt in Conversation", 72.

[77] Adam Krims, *Music and Urban Geography* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 127.

[78] Ibid., 59.

compositional directions, in order to sustain movement and interest over the course of a work as large as *Miserere* he must rely on the expertise and sensitivity of his performers, which in the case of *Miserere*'s premiere and the (as of August 2015) only official recording are the work's dedicatees: Paul Hillier and the Hilliard Ensemble. Pärt's relationship with the Hilliard Ensemble began in 1985 when on a "dreary September day [the ensemble] arrived at a remote East London church for a fairly routine BBC recording".[79] The little-known composer was in attendance along with the founder of ECM Records, Manfred Eicher. Eicher was already the producer of the Hilliard Ensemble and had been a promoter of Pärt's work since 1980, when he famously stopped his car to listen for half an hour to a radio broadcast of some unknown "angel music" which turned out to be the composer's *Tabula Rasa*.[80] In bringing together the Hilliard Ensemble and Pärt, Eicher initiated a working relationship that was to last for nearly thirty years until the Hilliard Ensemble disbanded in 2014. For his part, Pärt has said of the trio's relationship that "*Miserere* would not have come about without the help of the Hilliard Ensemble" and that "my contact with ECM is beyond categorization: it is a natural supplement to my composing."[81]

In 1984, Eicher introduced Pärt to the Western world by inaugurating ECM's New Series with a recording of Pärt's *Tabula Rasa*; however, Eicher and ECM are also responsible for popularizing a particular conception of the Estonian composer as associated with simplicity and purity. Nor is this limited to Pärt: Andrew Blake notes that the ECM sound as a whole emphasizes "nuanced clarity, with tasteful resonance sometimes added by the natural

[79] David James, "The Hilliard Ensemble: Saxes, Crump-Tenors, and Arvo Pärt", *The Guardian* 14 March 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/music/2014/mar/14/hilliard-ensemble-jan-garbarek-arvo-part-40-years-retiring (accessed 21 August 2015).

[80] Manfred Eicher, "Manfred Eicher in Conversation: Arvo Pärt's "Tabula Rasa" (ECM Podcast Vol. 1)", YouTube video, 6'17", https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eyAR3v0tpZw (accessed 21 August 2015).

[81] Pärt, in Restagno, "Arvo Pärt in Conversation", 67; Arvo Pärt, qtd. in Steve Lake and Paul Griffiths, eds. *Horizons Touched: The Music of ECM* (London: Granta, 2007), 381.

acoustic, sometimes by electronic aids, in performances that are usually edited to sound 'live'."[82] When Eicher is asked about his aesthetic, the affinities between the producer and this popular image of Pärt become obvious: "My preference is toward that which has to do with lucidity, transparency and the movement of sound. It's not only the notes but the thought behind them that matter."[83] ECM and the composers and ensembles they support are thus categorized as serious and even intellectual, but with a clearly-defined aesthetic. This is demonstrated in ECM's famously austere cover designs— themselves a visual analogue to their equally-renowned meticulousness in recording— and in their catchphrase "The Next Best Sound to Silence".[84] In Pärt's case, the "whiff of church incense" scented by Arthur Lubow is intensified by the use of photographs of the bearded composer which showcase contemplative poses, while Laura Dolp notes that Wolfgang Sandner's religiously-tinged rhetoric in the liner notes for the initial *Tabula Rasa* recording has had an outsized influence on subsequent interpretations.[85] Although both Pärts have at times expressed their frustration with this monastic image, it retains sufficient cultural cachet that articles on the composer frequently open with some variant of Tom Service's "I found Pärt to be the exact opposite of the forbidding taciturn figure that looms out of some

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[82] Andrew Blake, "Recording Practices and the Role of the Producer", in *The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook, Eric Clarke, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, and John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 52.

[83] Manfred Eicher, quoted in Stuart Nicholson, "Manfred Eicher and ECM Records: Lucidity, Transparency and the Movements of Sound", *Jazz Times*, June 2001, http://jazztimes.com/articles/20215 -manfred-eicher-ecm-records-lucidity-transparency-and-the-movements-of-sound (accessed 21 August 2015).

[84] Laura Dolp discusses ECM in "Arvo Pärt in the Marketplace", in *The Cambridge Companion to Arvo Pärt*, ed. Andrew Shenton, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 177–192. See also Lars Müller, ed., *Sleeves of Desire: A Cover Story* (Zurich: Lars Müller, 1996) and Lars Müller, ed., *Windfall Light: The Visual Language of ECM Records* (Zurich: Lars Müller, 2010) for pictographic explorations of ECM's visual style.

[85] Lubow, "Arvo Pärt: The Sound of Spirit"; Laura Dolp, "Arvo Pärt in the Marketplace", 182.

of his photos."[86] Given this perception of Pärt and the typically minimalist stylization of his recordings with ECM, the cover design for the album containing *Miserere* is striking: scrawled across a dull grey-green background, the word "Miserere" appears in a quasi-calligraphic font that seems to drip blood (see Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4 Cover of *Miserere* (ECM records 1430)

 To view this image, please consult the copy of the thesis held in the University Library, University of Cambridge.

Although the names of composer, performers, and the tracks on the album (along with *Miserere* the album contains *Festina Lente* and *Sarah was Ninety Years Old*) appear in the clean sans-serif font more usual for ECM New Series,

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[86] See Restagno, *Arvo Pärt in Conversation*, 61–62; Tom Service, "Composer Arvo Pärt: Behind the Beard", *The Guardian*, 6 January 2011 http://www.theguardian.com/music/ tomserviceblog/2011/jan/06/arvo-part-interview (accessed 17 November 2014).

the implied violence of this cover hints at the unusual listening experience that awaits the listener.

MacMillan's *Miserere* was also recorded by a label well-acquainted with and sympathetic to the composer; CORO Records was founded in 2001 by Christophers and The Sixteen in order to promote the choir's recordings. The album cover for *Miserere* is likewise significant: underlying the names of the composer and pieces contained on the album is an oil painting by Willie Rodgers entitled "Easter Sunday" (see Figure 3.5). In the foreground of the painting, a group of stylized figures mill about in what appears to be an art gallery, whilst in the background, extending off the frame, a painting shows Christ's crucifixion. As a piece of art, the painting-within-a-painting is at once an object of spectacle and yet ignored by the crowd who have come to see it. Here, Rodgers seems to play off the idea of art-as-religion; on the most important day of the Christian calendar his crowd of onlookers has come to a gallery rather than a church. From another perspective, perhaps the crucial element is that the crowd has lost interest in the crucifixion now that the day of resurrection has come. For MacMillan, who has said that he is "drawn again and again to the Passion ... drawn by the sacrificial aspect of the great Christian narrative", the latter perspective may hit close to home.[87]

A glance at the recording information for these CDs reveals another similarity in that both Misereres were initially recorded in London churches: Pärt's at St. Jude-on-the-Hill and MacMillan's at St. Giles Cripplegate. This is at once apropos to the sacred character of the works and indicative of a shared recording aesthetic that prioritises resonance and its accompanying sense of aural space and sacrality. This is a common aesthetic for both sacred and secular classical vocal music and yet it frequently represents an aural space that is unachievable under normal circumstances, or what Krims calls an "abstract musical soundstage". At the extreme, it is possible that "rather than simply establishing authenticity or suggested a sacred environment, the

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[87] MacMillan, "God, Theology and Music", 19.

recorded space decorporealizes ... the singers' voices". According to Krims, the goal of this recording style is not to accurately represent the experience of hearing a concert of the work in question, but to "[invoke] the goal of private, indoor listening."[88]

Figure 3.5 Cover of *Miserere* (CORO Records 16096)

To view this image, please consult the copy of the thesis held in the University Library, University of Cambridge.

The combination of abstraction and interiority suggested by this style of recording suggests a further connection, this time to Paul Hillier's commonly-quoted description of Pärt's music as a "sounding icon". Hillier asserts that there is a difference between "an image which dramatically or aesthetically affords us a glimpse of the subject, and the formulation of a picture which participates directly in the subject, rendering it present by

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[88] Krims, *Music and Urban Geography,* 136, 144.

venerating the prototype."[89] Following up on the relationship between icons and contemplation, Robert Sholl offers a brief, but suggestive, explanation of how icons as "ideal and idealist representations" inspire the contemplator to "bridge the gap between representation and reality".[90] The emphasis on contemplation in these quotations suggests an immediate affinity with Pärt's work, but MacMillan's *Miserere* clearly demonstrates a similar approach. In the light of this visual metaphor, the ethereality of both of the *Miserere*s' idealistic recording aesthetics serves to separate sound from its physical and material origins, and thereby creates an ideal of the transcendent that points the properly-contemplative listener towards a conception of God as transcendent. In turn, this focusing of attention on the transcendent opens an expressive space for the sacramental.

3.7 Transubstantiating the musical

Neither Pärt nor MacMillan suggests that a performance of one of their *Misereres* is equivalent to a sacramental act; nevertheless, the pieces draw on the sacramental traditions of confession without being either liturgical or explicitly sacramental. From the perspective of the composer, then, performance is a symbol referring back to the sacrament rather than the enactment of a sacrament. Reflecting on the relationship between the personal significance of music and performance, Pärt puts it this way: "my music can be my inner secret, even my confession. But what is my confession? I don't confess in the concert hall, in front of an audience. It is directed at higher instances."[91] Unlike William Fitzsimmons's emphasis on personal communication with his audience, Pärt here seems to discount the listeners as

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[89] Hillier, *Arvo Pärt*, 3.

[90] Sholl, "Pärt and Spirituality", 144.

[91] Arvo Pärt, interview with Martin Elste, "An Interview with Arvo Pärt," *Fanfare* 11, no. 4 (March–April 1988): 338.

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fellow-participants, preferring to frame his music as a confession of the inner self to a transcendent God. Music as a sounding icon "asserts the interpenetration of God and the world"[92] and is therefore a potential vehicle for the sacrament of confession when conceived as mediating object between an individual and God.

The separation of Pärt's religiously-oriented compositions from communal acts of worship perhaps can be traced to the distinctive position of music within the Orthodox tradition, which mandates that only music that has been approved by religious authorities is acceptable for liturgical use. Nevertheless, Pärt acknowledges that religion permeates his work from the large-scale structures: "I close my eyes, I make gestures. I myself don't know if they are Catholic or Orthodox. If these gestures are genuine, that is everything", to the small-scale structures of tintinnabuli: "Sometimes I say—it is not a joke, but also it is as a joke taken—that the melodic line is our reality, our sins. But the other line is forgiving our sins."[93] Pärt's fellow Orthodox composer Sofia Gubaidulina comments on the position of the composer within the Orthodox church thus: "we can write religious works, but only as our own fantasy. We never aspire to bring them to the church." Yet, in place of the church, Gubaidulina suggests the concert hall as a place where religion and art coincide, saying, "But I strongly want to participate. I feel a great desire to realize my religious needs within art."[94] In this interview, Gubaidulina continues by describing the personal significance of the Eucharist and particularly of the moment of transubstantiation, when, in her words, "the

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[92] Hillier, *Arvo Pärt*, 3.

[93] Pärt, quoted in Kazimierz Plokson, "Arvo Pärt—Composer of the 'Borderland': Between the Orthodox East and the Catholic West," *The 20th Century and the Phenomenon of Personality in Music: Selected Papers/39th Baltic Musicology Conference* (Riga: Latvijas Komponistu savieniba: Musica Baltica, 2007), 68; Pärt, quoted in Lubow, "Arvo Pärt: The Sound of Spirit".

[94] Vera Lukomsky and Sofia Gubaidulina, "'The Eucharist in My Fantasy': Interview with Sofia Gubaidulina", *Tempo*, New Series, no. 206 "Power, Politics, Religion...And Music" (Sep. 1998): 31.

congregation is not just receiving grace, it really dies calling for the Holy Spirit. … For me it is the most holy, most necessary in my life. In each of my works I experience the Eucharist in my fantasy."[95] Here, as in Pärt's own work, the line separating the (merely?) sacred and the sacramental becomes blurred.

It is instructive to note that transubstantiation is also one of MacMillan's most striking descriptions of music. When describing his own compositions, MacMillan uses this phrase most commonly to refer to the transubstantiation of an extra-musical impulse into musical language, but several authors connect MacMillan's interpretation with Gilbert Márkus's more general remarks on the nature of art:

> It's about how art transforms, taking the substance of daily life and offering a symbol which transforms and transubstantiates the patterns of human toil and loss. … People are still unemployed and their marriages are breaking up and people are dying and everything is the same, and yet everything is different through this ritual transformation, or artistic transformation.[96]

Whilst Márkus's comments on the power of art are not unusual within music commentary, the connection he makes with religious ritual emphasizes the religious origins of the language used to describe experiences with music. Beyond the obvious (such as transubstantiation) are a multitude of concepts having to do with the transcendent, the ineffable, and the inspirational that are borrowed from religious language. These descriptors also have clear ties to a typically Romantic aesthetic glorifying art as religion. That Romantic art-religion still maintains a grip on classical performance culture is evidenced by such tropes as the near-deification of the composer (and to a lesser extent the conductor or soloist) as mediator of the transcendent experience and a concert tradition that demands a silent, attentive audience sitting in darkness in a consecrated space. These ideas are so deeply ingrained that a guide to

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[95] Ibid., 32.

[96] Father Gilbert Márkus OP, quoted in James MacMillan, Julian Johnson and Catherine Sutton, "Raising Sparks", *Tempo* New Series, no. 202 (October 1997): 14.

concert-going published by Naxos claims, with no hint of self-consciousness, "we need ritual to help performers and audience get into a musical frame of mind, and to contain the power released by the music."[97] Speaking in 1959 of this replacement of religion with capital-A Art, Igor Stravinsky said "When I call the nineteenth century 'secular' I mean by it to distinguish between religious-religious music and secular-religious music. The latter is inspired by humanity in general, by art, by Übermensch, by goodness, and by goodness knows what. Religious music without religion is almost always vulgar."[98] In an article entitled "God, Theology, and Music," MacMillan likewise laments, "The engagement between theology and culture, between religion and the arts is now such a faded memory for most people that a whole generation has grown up without an understanding of the true meaning and implication in the word 'inspiration'."[99] In a cultural context that seems to some to be drained of religious vitality, the unabashedly religious language MacMillan and Pärt use comes across not only as out-of-step with the dominance of secular language in discourse, but as an active attempt to reconnect the sacred and the musical.

As I have intimated already, this process is in some respects a restoration of religious themes within a musical culture still imbued with a Romantic religion of art, but it appeals to people who consider themselves non-religious as well as those who openly declare their interest in religion. MacMillan acknowledges this by saying "That kind of language [e.g., transformation] about music can be used allegorically sometimes by people you could describe as sceptical about religious matters, but have a love of music, and fall back, or come back, to a quasi-liturgic, quasi-theological language or terms of definition in order to engage with the wider impact

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[97] Naxos.com, "How to Enjoy a Live Concert", http://www.naxos.com/education/enjoy2_concertrituals.asp (accessed 22 July 2015).

[98] Igor Stravinsky, quoted in Robert Craft, *Conversations with Igor Stravinsky* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1959), 141.

[99] MacMillan, "God, Theology, and Music", 21.

music can make."[100] Of course, to say that the experience of a piece of music is 'spiritual' or even 'transformative' is not to say that it is religiously significant, and at times it seems as though commentators have failed to heed C.S. Lewis's warning about rhetorical inflation: "Don't use words too big for the subject. Don't say 'infinitely' when you mean 'very'; otherwise you'll have no word left when you want to talk about something *really* infinite."[101] One area in which this struggle for a language that feels commensurate with a musical experience is particularly notable is in online reviews of recordings of Pärt and MacMillan.[102] Characteristic is the Amazon review of the Hilliard Ensemble's recording of Pärt's *Miserere* by E. Walling, also known as Loploploploplop[103]:

> This is devotional music by a devotional man but do not be mislead by the apparently pristine and pious intent ... Part's music is clandestine as far as one can allow intellectually, and albeit religiously bound, it withholds an identity so profoundly unattainable elsewhere that is almost torturous to subject ones ear to it.
>
> One does not find in Part, the pastoral reconcilement nor the vexatious Avant Gardism that might be expected from an Eastern European War Child. The silence, indeed the echo of nothingness imbued in that swarthy, infinite space is intoxicating to the very pinnacle of obsession.

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[100] MacMillan and McGregor, "James MacMillan: A Conversation and Commentary", 74.

[101] C.S. Lewis, letter to Joan Lancaster, 26 June 1956, in *Letters to Children*, ed. Lyle W. Dorsett and Marjorie Lamp Mead (London: William Collins Sons, 1985), 63–64.

[102] In this section I have included quotations from reviews drawn from Amazon.com and Amazon.co.uk for the recordings I discuss. As of May 2015 there were twelve customer reviews of Arvo Pärt, *Miserere*, CD ECM New Series 1430 on amazon.com and an additional nine reviews on amazon.co.uk. For James MacMillan, *Miserere*, with Harry Christophers and the Sixteen, CD, Coro Records 16096, amazon.com included six customer reviews, while amazon.co.uk included nine reviews. As with earlier reviews, I transcribed these sources manually, but in this section I was particularly interested in those reviews that drew on images of transcendence or the sacred as part of their interpretations of the music.

[103] The possible reference to the artist Max Ernst and his alter-ego Loplop the Bird Superior (or indeed to Surrealist or Dada art more generally) is intriguing; alas, no further information about the origins of E. Walling's handle is evident from his—or her—comments.

> What one is able to attain is the diaphanous awareness of a profound absence. However this absence is interpreted is, ultimately, the prerogative of the listener.[104]

Embedded in this admittedly abstruse language is evidence of Walling's attempt at explicating an extraordinary encounter with music. Likewise, Nan Eckardt invokes the idea of the sublime in her review of MacMillan's "answer to the Allegri Miserere", claiming, "[i]t is inexplicable—the final key changes and resolution move me tears almost every time."[105] Other reviewers describe listening to Pärt and MacMillan's work as "a musical miracle", "a glimpse of the source of all things", and "the most extraordinary spiritual experience".[106] Many are keen to defend Pärt, in particular, from the Fiskian idea that his music is uniformly serene, with Lady Fancifull arguing of *Miserere* on Amazon: "this is not an easy or comforting piece, if you surrender to it you will encounter despair and isolation but it also journeys towards profound connection."[107] YouTube user Morphiend homes in on *Miserere*'s Dies irae interpolation, saying:

> This is a composition made from storm and fury. It's divine retribution for old, dead sins and broken words. The choristers' atonal, dissonant voices break through the subtle, gentle introitus with the profane bellowing of a Biblical passage so

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104 Loploploploplop, "The Beauty of Absence", review of Arvo Pärt, *Miserere*, CD ECM New Series 1430, 8 June 2003, http://www.amazon.com/Part-Miserere-Arvo/dp/B0000031W6 (accessed 13 May 2015).

105 Nan Eckardt, "MacMillan—and The Sixteen—in top form", Amazon review of James MacMillan, *Miserere*, with Harry Christophers and the Sixteen, CD, Coro Records 16096 (2011), 26 May 2015, https://www.amazon.co.uk/d/Motets-Anthems/Macmillan-Miserere-Tenebrae-Responsories-Strathclyde/B005TK1T3I/ref=sr_1_6?s=music&ie=UTF8&qid=1499955962&sr=1-6 (accessed 27 May 2015).

106 David Vernier, editorial review; Alejandra Vernon, "make me to hear joy and gladness", Amazon review, 26 July 2000; "A customer", "An Untamed and Dangerous Beauty", 26 September 1998, reviews are of Arvo Pärt, *Miserere*, CD ECM New Series 1430, http://www.amazon.com/Part-Miserere-Arvo/dp/B0000031W6 (accessed 13 May 2015).

107 Lady Fancifull, "Intensely sublime; Lyrical and romantic; Experimental minimalism", review of Arvo Pärt's *Miserere*, CD ECM New Series 1430, http://www.amazon.co.uk/ Pärt-Miserere-Festina-lente-Ninety/dp/B000024ZBC/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1431525425&sr=8-1&keywords=arvo+part+miserere (accessed 13 May 2015).

immense in its conveyed gravitas, that it makes Mozart's "Dies Irae" sound like a fucking Dora the Explorer sing-a-long.[108]

Even though each of these commentators is describing the experience of listening to the *Miserere* in the uniquely modern medium of the recording, the echoes of Wennerberg and Ingres are clearly heard in this twenty-first century language.

As I suggest at the opening of this chapter, these religiously-tinged reactions are not the only possible ones to this music. Indeed, the aesthetic experience is as frequently commented upon as any spiritual one. Some of the oft-quoted evaluations of Pärt include those of Gidon Kremer: "It's a cleansing of all the noise that surrounds us", and R.E.M's Michael Stipe: "I was attracted to the unbelievable calm and brilliance of his music ... It brings one to a total meditative state. It's amazing, amazing music."[109] Meanwhile, MacMillan draws compliments for his "austerely beautiful work", "music of meaning and beauty" and "breathtaking perfection".[110] Moreover, some commentators are quick to note that their appreciation of the music's beauty exists despite their own lack of religious belief. Harry Christophers believes that this breadth of appeal stems from an authenticity and quality of performance that speaks to a broad spectrum of music listeners, arguing, "If you have total faith in what you

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[108] Morphiend, YouTube comment on Rad Chad, "Arvo Pärt–Miserere", YouTube video, 35'31", 29 August 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GVfK2PmRXSI (accessed 13 May 2015).

[109] Quoted in Lubow, "The Sound of Spirit".

[110] Robert Hugill, concert review, http://www.planethugill.com/2013/04/the-sixteen-choral-pilgrimage-2013.html (accessed 26 July 2015); JP, "Beautiful", Amazon review of James MacMillan, *Miserere*, with Harry Christophers and the Sixteen, CD, Coro Records 16096 (2011), 18 March 2012; Whatmabel, "Choral perfection", Amazon review of James MacMillan, *Miserere*, with Harry Christophers and the Sixteen, CD, Coro Records 16096 (2011), 11 November 2013, https://www.amazon.co.uk/d/Motets-Anthems/Macmillan-Miserere-Tenebrae-Responsories-Strathclyde/B005TK1T3I/ref=sr_1_6?s=music&ie=UTF8&qid=1499955962&sr=1-6 (accessed 20 May 2015).

are doing and you are doing it really well then people will come."[111] Meanwhile, Sasha Drozzina suggests that the appeal is something more fundamental:

> In this modern day and age, we shy away from discussing certain topics, such as religion. Arvo Pärt continues to speak about it for us in his music. What is most significant is that he does it without an agenda, without being pushy, often even without words, yet the meaning remains clear. Transcendence is possible, despite the fact that the shape it takes varies from individual to individual. Tonight, the chances are that we all experienced our own form of spiritual enlightenment, and not one walked away feeling indifferent.[112]

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *</p>

In his book *Arvo Pärt: Out of Silence*, Peter Bouteneff describes a performance of Pärt's 2009 composition *Adam's Lament* in which, at the composer's behest, he arranged for the piece's text (sung in Russian) to be projected in English translation onto the rear wall of the stage and in time with the performers. Afterwards, one of the audience members accused Bouteneff of 'tricking' the audience, saying:

> You devastated all of us! You projected that text, and because it was set to this amazing music, we could let it in—we were defenseless. ... It cuts through all the cynicism, the "meta" of the twenty-first-century listener, for whom every interaction has to be mediated. That existential dread, the feeling of being a wretch—that feeling is actually at the core of the postmodern

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[111] Harry Christophers, quoted in Kathy Evans, "The Sixteen performs James MacMillan's Powerful Miserere", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 February 2015 http://www.smh.com.au/ entertainment/music/the-sixteen-performs-james-macmillans-powerful-miserere-20150217-13e8zr.html (accessed 26 July 2015).

[112] Sasha Drozzina, "The Music of Arvo Pärt at Koerner Hall", concert review, 4 October 2013, *Bachtrack* http://bachtrack.com/review-toronto-arvo-part (accessed 15 July 2015).

noise, and coming face to face with it, without a place to hide—
this was unspeakably powerful.[113]

The text of *Adam's Lament* is a poetic imagining of the pain of paradise lost by the Orthodox St. Silouan of Athos. Like the 51st Psalm, it has at its core the cry "Have mercy upon me, O God". Thus, although the audience for *Adam's Lament* certainly appreciated the composition on an aesthetic level, they were also confronted with an exposition of human guilt that has inescapably religious ramifications. While the precise responses of individuals at the myriad of concerts featuring either *Adam's Lament* or any of the *Miserere*s are uncountable and unknowable, the range of reactions is bounded on the one side by those who connect their listening experience with the age-old sacraments of the Christian church and on the other by those who hear an object for aesthetic contemplation. In between these extremes are those who may hear one, the other, or both.

Mellers defines the function of great art as analogous to the function of Scripture, where "in being uttered, the Word becomes a life-giving force to men".[114] In the face of Western cultural contexts in which the popular experience of religious ritual cannot be presumed, MacMillan and Pärt (and others like them) are re-embodying the rituals of the sacred within the secular space of the concert hall. In doing so, they transubstantiate their own sacramental traditions in such a way as to allow all who have ears to hear, to hear the Word uttered in music.

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[113] Limor Tomer, quoted in Peter C. Bouteneff, *Arvo Pärt: Out of Silence* (Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2015), 67.

[114] Mellers, "Arvo Pärt, God and Gospel" 48.

4 VOICING THE PAST: PERFORMATIVE APOLOGY IN AUSTRALIA AND SOUTH AFRICA

> The proceedings are concluded with the anthem. I stand, caught unawares by the Sesotho version and the knowledge that I am white. ... And I wade into song—in a language that is not mine, in a tongue I do not know. It is fragrant inside the song, and among the keynotes of sorrow and suffering there are soft silences where we who belong to this landscape, all of us, can come to rest.
>
> —Antjie Krog, *Country of My Skull*[1]

[1] Antjie Krog, *Country of My Skull*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1999), 285–286.

At 9:09am on 13 February 2008, a blond, bespectacled man stood before the
Australian Parliament and declared as the first order of business a motion:

> That today we honour the Indigenous peoples of this land, the
> oldest continuing cultures in human history. We reflect on their
> past mistreatment. ... We apologise for the laws and policies of
> successive Parliaments and governments that have inflicted
> profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow
> Australians. We apologise especially for the removal of
> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their
> families, their communities and their country. For the pain,
> suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their
> descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry. To
> the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the
> breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry. And for
> the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people
> and a proud culture, we say sorry.[2]

This speech by then-Prime Minister Kevin Rudd was quickly memorialized as
the 'National Apology', and it followed more than a decade of public advocacy
for a formal governmental apology to Indigenous Australians by bodies such
as the National Sorry Day Committee. Later that same day, nearly two
thousand miles away in Perth, Western Australia, community choir Madjitil
Moorna took to the stage in a public celebration of the government's apology.
Accompanied by a single guitar, the choir launched into "Sorry Song": a
composition by Kerry Fletcher that had become emblematic of the movement
advocating for an apology over the previous decade. The four-minute
performance was greeted with riotous applause from an audience who not
only stood respectfully as the music began, but also joined in with the choir on
the final chorus.[3]

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[2] Kevin Rudd, "Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples", 13 February 2008.
Transcript, video and audio recordings available at: http://www.australia.gov.au/about-
australia/our-country/our-people/apology-to-australias-indigenous-peoples (accessed 9
November 2015).

[3] Madjitil Moorna, "'Sorry Song' to Stolen Generations, Apology Day Australia, Auslan",
YouTube video, 9'08", 1 November 2009 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4s93lxO3yBQ
(accessed 4 November 2015).

Two months later and half a world away, the Market Theatre in Johannesburg, South Africa was the site for the performance of a musical work radically different in construction but driven by similar factors. The work in question, Philip Miller's *REwind: A Cantata for Voice, Tape and Testimony*, is a haunting multimedia work that combines choir, vocal soloists, and string ensemble with recorded sounds and visual imagery. Unlike Madjitil Moorna's performance of "Sorry Song", the Johannesburg performance of *REwind* was prefaced by no official government action, but as a composition that directly confronts the legacy of apartheid in South Africa any performance of *REwind* is fraught with emotion and history. *REwind* weaves together elements of religious and secular genres, spoken word and sung vocalisations with audio and visual effects, to create a multimedia performative space in which performers and audiences confront multiple narratives of guilt, forgiveness, and reconciliation. In contrast to the straightforward narrative of apology and reconciliation offered by Fletcher's "Sorry Song", the uncertainties represented in Miller's *REwind* cantata reflect the complexities inherent in reframing traumatic pasts in the context of national reconciliation efforts.

Throughout history, governments have perpetuated horrific violence on the people and lands under their control, but the idea that they, or their successors, might officially apologise or make restitution for their actions (or in some cases, inaction) is a relatively new one. The trend is particularly noticeable where governments have presided over mass inhumane actions directed at civilian populations which may be variously characterised as crimes against humanity or genocide.[4] The first charge of committing "crimes … against humanity" is believed to be in a 1915 statement by the governments

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[4] According to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, genocidal acts are those "committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group", whilst crimes against humanity are acts "committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population". The full text of the Rome Statute is available from the International Criminal Court: https://www.icc-cpi.int/nr/rdonlyres/ea9aeff7-5752-4f84-be94-0a655eb30e16/0/rome_statute_english.pdf (accessed 18 April 2017).

of Great Britain, France, and Russia declaring the Ottoman government responsible for the massacres of Armenian civilians taking place in Turkey, and the first prosecutions to take place using this rubric occurred in 1945–1946 at the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg.[5] Many organisations now describe the Ottoman Empire's extermination of ethnic Armenians by using the term 'genocide', but this term post-dates that event. Raphael Lemkin coined the word genocide in 1943, but although it appears as a descriptive term in indictments at the Nuremberg Trials, the first tribunal to prosecute genocide as a specific crime was 1993's International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

The intervening seven decades since the Nuremberg Trials have witnessed numerous instances of political and military leaders being tried for such acts, but some countries that have suffered mass violations of human rights have chosen another route: that of transitional, rather than retributive, justice. Transitional justice is an emerging field encompassing the "full range of processes and mechanisms associated with a society's attempt to come to terms with a legacy of large-scale past abuses, in order to ensure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation."[6] Some of the most visible mechanisms of transitional justice are truth-seeking initiatives such as the "truth commission", which is an official governmental inquiry that investigates patterns of past abuses. According to documentation by Amnesty International, more than forty non-judicial truth commissions have been established around the world since the 1970s; new commissions appear

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[5] The history of the phrase "crimes against humanity" extends back well into the nineteenth century, where it was applied first to the slave trade, and later as a description of the Belgian government's actions in the Congo. The phrase "laws of humanity" also appears in Martens clause of the Hague Convention of 1899, but the Hague Conventions specifically apply only to conditions of war between States and therefore do not cover actions taken by a government against its own civilians. See Roger S. Clark, "History of Efforts to Codify Crimes Against Humanity", in *Forging a Convention for Crimes Against Humanity*, ed. Leila Nadya Sadat (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 8–27.

[6] United Nations, "United Nations Approach to Transitional Justice", Guidance Notes of the Secretary-General, http://www.unrol.org/files/TJ_Guidance_Note_March_2010FINAL.pdf (accessed 12 January 2016).

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regularly, with both Nepal and Sri Lanka announcing the creation of such bodies in 2015.[7] The purpose of such non-judicial commissions varies by location, but a common model, exemplified by Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2001–2003) and Timor-Leste's Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (2002–2005), attempts to bring out the truth about human rights violations undertaken by repressive states or by non-state actors as a means of encouraging reconciliation between various ethic, religious, or social groups. Against this backdrop of transitional justice movements are two truth-seeking initiatives of particular importance to this chapter: first, the government inquiry into the so-called Stolen Generations in Australia and second, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa (hereafter TRC).

The first of these took as its subject the separation of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, and mixed race Australian children from their families and communities between the late nineteenth century and the 1970s. These removals were often justified in terms of child welfare, but the belief that mixed-descent children could be assimilated into white Australian society while the full-descent Indigenous population was dying out led to widespread racial profiling that, at least in some cases, resulted in children being fostered by white families in purposeful ignorance of their heritage.[8] First termed the "Stolen Generations" in a pamphlet written by historian Peter Read in 1981[9],

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[7] Dewan Rai and Darshan Karki, "TRC Has Been Formed To Restore Justice System, Reconcile Society", *The Kathmandu Post*, 16 February 2015, http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2015-02-16/trc-has-been-formed-to-restore-justice-system-reconcile-society.html (accessed 22 September 2015); Reuters, "Sri Lanka To Set Up A South Africa-Style Truth And Reconciliation Commission", *The Guardian*, 15 September 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/ world/2015/sep/15/sri-lanka-to-set-up-a-south-africa-style-truth-and-reconciliation-commission (accessed 22 September 2015).

[8] See *Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families*, https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/pdf/social_justice/bringing_them_home_report.pdf (accessed 9 November 2015).

[9] Peter Read, "The Stolen Generations: The Removal of Aboriginal children in New South Wales 1883–1969", 4th edition, New South Wales Department of Aboriginal Affairs

the moniker has become a rallying point for political activists concerned with lingering social inequality and injustice. Although much about the history of the Stolen Generations remains controversial, it is clear that such removals weakened family and tribal structures in ways that continue to reverberate in Indigenous society.

Several decades of activism by and on behalf of Indigenous people gathered steam in the 1990s. The process began with the landmark *Mabo v Queensland* high court judgement in 1992 that rejected the doctrine of *terra nullius* and acknowledged native land title in Australia and continued with the impassioned 'Redfern' speech in which then-Prime Minister Paul Keating acknowledged the impact of the settler's arrival on Indigenous ways of life.[10] This was followed by the establishment of the government's Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission to study the history of Indigenous child removals. On 26 May 1997 the Commission published a report, entitled *Bringing Them Home*, which called upon the government to make a formal apology to the victims of child removal policies; it would be another decade before the government took that step. In addition to the official apology, the report recommended that an official day be set aside for communities to acknowledge the impact of forced removals and, in 1998, a coalition of

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(2006), http://dmsweb.daa.asn.au/files/Recognition_of_Overseas/Reading%207_StolenGenerations.pdf (accessed 15 February 2016).

[10] *Terra nullius* [no man's land] is an official designation under international law that signifies a territory that is not claimed by any state or to which the previous sovereign has relinquished sovereignty. One current example are the parts of Antarctica that remain unclaimed. When the British arrived in Australia in 1788, the country was officially considered barren, uncultivated, or settled by uncivilised peoples, and therefore belonging to no one. The application of *terra nullius* meant that the settlers did not make treaties with the Indigenous peoples regarding land or other rights, but rather claimed the land outright, with the result that disputes over land use became the basis of numerous court cases from the early nineteenth century. The *Mabo* judgement held that native customs, including land claims, were not superseded by English law. Keating's 'Redfern' speech took place in Redfern Park in New South Wales at the launch of the 1993 International Year of the World's Indigenous People. In it, Keating acknowledged, "We took traditional lands and smashed the traditional way of life. We brought the diseases. The alcohol. We committed the murders. We took the children from their mothers. We practised discrimination and exclusion." Transcript available at https://antar.org.au/sites/default/files/paul_keating_speech_transcript.pdf (accessed 12 July 2017).

community groups took the suggestion forward in what would become an annual commemorative event known initially as National Sorry Day before being renamed National Healing Day in 2005. Commemorations of the National Apology and National Sorry/Healing Day—as well as the official Reconciliation Week which follows the latter, from 27 May to 3 June—join older initiatives such as NAIDOC (National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee) Week as important landmarks in Australia's journey of reconciliation; however, it is the opportunity they provide for Australians to perform acts of apology, forgiveness, and reconciliation that is of relevance to this chapter. This chapter examines "Sorry Song" as a prelude to a more expansive exploration of *REwind*.

4.1 Singing "Sorry" across the land

Amongst many other efforts, Kerry Fletcher's "Sorry Song" stands out as a means of performing reconciliation in Australia by virtue of its strong associations with official symbols of reconciliation and its clarity of message. Western Australian composer and Indigenous rights activist Fletcher[11] wrote "Sorry Song" in 1998, and according to the accompanying website (http://www.sorrysong.com.au), it was "written for the Stolen Generations of Aboriginal Australians and Torres Strait Islanders and dedicated to all First Nations people whose lives have been affected by the policy of Indigenous Child Removals". At the same time, it was written "on behalf of all of us whose hearts ache when we think of the pain those children and communities

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[11] Fletcher's musical profile is difficult to categorize. In addition to her activities as a composer, she has been a member of a number of different musical groups in Western Australia, including most unusually Flute 'n' Veg, a now-defunct group she founded with Alain Thirion that created and played tuned flutes, pan pipes, and other instruments constructed out of vegetables, with the goal of both creating interesting music and teaching audiences about the importance of healthy eating. More information available at http://www.flutenveg.com (accessed 22 October 2016).

suffered and the pain which they still endure today."[12] Its premiere took place on the first-ever National Sorry Day, 26 May 1998, and it remains a feature of many musical performances both on National Sorry/Healing Day and at other points during the annual National Reconciliation Week.

As a piece of music "Sorry Song" is straightforward, yet adaptable. Fletcher's original lyrics were divided into three verses interspersed with a simple chorus; however, the actual form of the song as performed is flexible, with varying notated and recorded versions for solo voice (see Example 4.1) or mixed chorus, and featuring different numbers of repeats in circulation. The accessible, popular-style musical accompaniment harmonises the melody with three chords (G major, F major, and C major in the published score) that can likewise be performed by a variety of instruments.

Example 4.1 Kerry Fletcher, "Sorry Song", solo voice version, bars 1-23

This simplicity of construction contributes to the song's prominence: in addition to featuring regularly in commemorative reconciliatory events, it was

[12] Kerry Fletcher, "Sorry Song", description available on http://www.sorrysong.com.au (accessed 9 August 2015).

selected for inclusion in the 2007 edition of *Sing!,* an educational resource aimed at primary school age children across Australia.[13] After the National Apology in 2008, Fletcher modified the song to include another verse and chorus sung to the same melody as the original text, thereby reflecting the perceived importance of the government's actions (see Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1 Text of "Sorry Song"

Verse 1

If we can now say that we're sorry
To the people from this land.

Verse 2

They cry, they cry, their children were stolen,
They still wonder why.

Chorus 1

Sing, sing loud, break through the silence,
Sing sorry across this land.

Verse 3

We cry, we cry, their children were stolen,
Now no-one knows why.

Chorus 1 (repeat)

Sing, sing loud, break through the silence,
Sing sorry across this land.

Verse 4 (added 2008)

We sing with our hearts, "Respect for each and ev'ryone,
Together, with hope burning strong"

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[13] *Sing!* 1975–2014 Song Index,
http://www.abc.net.au/learn/sing/content/Sing!%201975-2014%20song%20index.pdf
(accessed 30 August 2015).

Chorus 2 (added 2008)

Sing, sing loud, we've broken the silence,
Let "sorry" start healing our land.

Like the National Apology itself, Fletcher's composition has not been uncontroversial, and in 2007 one school in New South Wales banned the song after a parent complained of inappropriate political indoctrination.[14] Concerns over the song's political agenda echo wider concerns about how to teach Australian history, and particularly criticism of what is known as the "black armband view of history", a view which former Prime Minister John Howard characterised as "reflect[ing] a belief that most Australian history since 1788 has been little more than a disgraceful story of imperialism, exploitation, racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination."[15] Although the song operates within a heavily politicised milieu, Fletcher herself claims that it is not political but personal: "the song is about personal tragedy in our community. I've witnessed the confusion and pain that were caused by the removal of children, and I think this song speaks of an important truth."[16] Many have agreed with the composer, for in spite of the opposition, "Sorry Song" is a familiar part of educational activities aimed at teaching students about reconciliation efforts in Australia. Examples of the didactic use of "Sorry Song" can be found in YouTube videos showing groups of students spelling out 'Sorry' on a field or showing the hands of a child slowly unfolding to reveal

[14] Mark Tobin, "School bans 'Sorry Song'", *The World Today*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 11 July 2007, http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2007/s1975739.htm (accessed 20 August 2015).

[15] The 'black armband of history' is a phrase originating with historian Geoffrey Blainey in the 1993 Sir John Latham Memorial Lecture; John Howard's explanation is taken from his speech "The Liberal Tradition: The Beliefs and Values Which Guide the Federal Government" at the 1996 Sir Robert Menzies Lecture, http://www.menzieslecture.org/1996.html (accessed 4 November 2015).

[16] Kerry Fletcher, quoted in Mark Tobin, "School Bans 'Sorry Song'", *The World Today*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 11 July 2007 http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2007/s1975739.htm (accessed 20 August 2015).

palms emblazoned with the Aboriginal symbol of the hibiscus, or desert rose, and the words 'sorry today' painted on her fingertips; in both videos, the musical accompaniment of "Sorry Song" frames the message of the physical gestures.[17]

Despite the song's lyrical simplicity, several important themes can be teased out of "Sorry Song", the first of which is the opposition between silence and speaking about the past. The emphasis is on the difficulty of speaking out, as evidenced by the hesitance of verse one's opening "if". Although it is initially those who need to apologise who experience the difficulty of speaking, in verse two the same difficulty of speech is translated into wordless crying by those who have lost children. In verse three, this lack of language expands to encompass the official silence that cloaks the past, thereby preventing both speech and knowledge about the past, so that now "no-one knows why" these terrible things occurred. In contrast, the first chorus exhorts everyone to "sing loud" in order to "break through the silence". The difficulty of speech is given a counterpoint in the song's insistence on the necessity of apology as a means of moving forward. In the fourth verse and second chorus the act of saying sorry releases everyone from the tyranny of silence. Here, "Sorry Song" reflects the imperative of testimony evident from the *Bringing Them Home* inquiry, which claimed that "giving testimony, while extraordinarily painful for most, is often the beginning of the healing process."[18] Although "Sorry Song" affirms the value of sharing experience and making gestures of apology or reconciliation, Fletcher tellingly avoids any comment on what other elements (for instance, reparations) might be considered as part of an official apology.

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[17] Butupa, "National Sorry Day 2015, Australia Giant Human SORRY, Australia says sorry", YouTube video, 2'34", 8 February 2008, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bhYPfsDB-LA (accessed 4 November 2015); Butupa, "National Sorry Day 2015-'Sorry Song' Australia", YouTube video, 1'11", 8 February 2008, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xvRFvSt3JAA (accessed 4 November 2015).

[18] *Bringing Them Home*, 17. https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/pdf/social_justice/bringing_them_home_report.pdf (accessed 9 November 2015).

Instead, she chooses to focus on acts that can be taken up by both individuals and communities: apologies refracted through song.

In the context of the focus on mutual healing and reconciliation in "Sorry Song", one of the most striking and problematic linguistic characteristics of Fletcher's lyrics in the first three verses is their very one-sidedness. The consistent opposition between first- and third-person language implies a division between an Indigenous "they" and a non-Indigenous "we" that reinforces the perception of Indigenous experience as being 'other' to that of non-Indigenous Australians. Furthermore, the song maintains a division of Australian society into those who are helpless in the face of power ("they cry", "they still wonder why") and those who, by virtue of the magnanimous gesture of apologising, can bring healing to the nation. This is emphasized when, in a striking instance of lyrical empathetic identification (a less generous interpretation might suggest a certain level of appropriation), the emotional devastation of the break-up of families visited upon the Indigenous community in verse two is transferred to the (implicitly non-Indigenous) "we" in verse three. As a song written by and on behalf of white Australians, the tension between "we" and "they" accentuates the way past experience continues to divide present society even as the lyrics hold out a hope for a future "we" that encompasses Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians alike.

The racialised nature of this division is particularly surprising given that the performance ideal for "Sorry Song" seems to be of either local communities or groups of schoolchildren singing together, and many of these groups include participants of Indigenous heritage. Madjitil Moorna even lists the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members as one of the choir's goals, and all of Madjitil Moorna's musical leadership are Indigenous.[19]

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[19] Madjitil Moorna, "Aims and Objectives", http://www.madjitilmoorna.org.au/aims-and-objectives (accessed 12 January 2016); Arun Raj, "Madjitil Moorna Choir", YouTube video, 4'34", 16 December 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pD_hCA4WY28 (accessed 4 March 2016).

Likewise, a newspaper article covering the performance by Ainslie School Voices on the lawns of Australia's Parliament House just a few weeks after the National Apology in 2008 highlighted the fact that the school's first Indigenous vice-captain would be taking part in the performance.[20] In the context of continuing arguments over the best ways to address Australia's legacy of racial discrimination, lyrical structures that privilege the experience and emotional perspective of non-Indigenous Australians raise questions regarding the power relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples that continue to have an impact on Australian society.

It is reasonable to counter this by suggesting that the focus of "Sorry Song" on non-Indigenous Australian experience is a natural result of the song's existence within a frame of apology, itself an overture made by non-Indigenous toward Indigenous peoples in Australia. Furthermore, the lyrical division into ethnic groups is erased in the fourth verse when the key value of respect for every person is propagated by the act of all Australians singing together. In this sense there are two different kinds of 'we' present in the song: the white Australian 'we' whose act of apology allows them to come together with their Indigenous counterparts into a new and non-racialised Australian 'we'. Given that Fletcher added the fourth verse to "Sorry Song" after the Prime Minister's formal apology, it seems clear that singing together is one of the hoped-for outcomes of the act of apology and by virtue of its placement in the lyrical structure the emphasis on the communal act of singing sorry provides the song with its rhetorical climax.

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[20] Ping Lo, "Saying Sorry in Song", *ABC Canberra*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 26 February 2008, http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2008/02/12/2161032.htm?site=canberra (accessed 20 August 2015).

4.2 Enacting reconciliation in Australia

This insistence on the value of communal acts of apology as a means of bringing together disparate groups resonates with Fletcher's work as an advocate for musical reconciliation. Although Fletcher herself is not of Indigenous heritage, she has been actively involved in efforts to increase representation and rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Many of her works feature the voices and musics of Indigenous Australians within the soundscapes they inhabit, from the recordings of Nyoongah children playing at a waterhole on "Desert Mischief" to the music of the Wongi on "Free Time". Her 2012 CD *Songs in the Landscape* includes these in addition to "Cave Song", a radiophonic composition combining various vocal performances with ambient sounds recorded in a Western Australia cave.[21] One of Fletcher's latest compositions, "Let's Recognise", is set up as a companion to "Sorry Song" and advocates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to be recognised in Australia's Constitution in a variety of ways. Like "Sorry Song", "Let's Recognise" is a simple composition that might be adapted to a variety of contexts and thereby serves to bring an important issue before a wider public. Nevertheless, the very simplicity that allows "Sorry Song" to be sung by schools and community groups across Australia also necessarily focuses on a straightforward narrative of apology at the expense of a more highly nuanced understanding of Australian history.

The YouTube video of Madjitil Moorna's performance in Perth, Western Australia, on the occasion of the National Apology offers a different means of analysing the impact of "Sorry Song". As mentioned above, the performance took place on 13 February 2008 in Wellington Square as part of the Perth telecast of the prime minister's apology. The choir's performance was introduced first by Bringing Them Home Committee (Western Australia) co-convenor Rev. Dr. Ian Robinson, then by human rights activist and choir

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[21] Adele McCarthy, "Sound Art: Challenging Anthropocentrism and the Objectification of Nature", *PAN: Philosophy, Activism, Nature* 4 (2007): 16–22.

member Robyn Slarke.[22] From the initial welcome speech, the tone of the performance is one of respect and celebration: Slarke begins by welcoming the "elders, members of the Stolen Generations, distinguished guests, citizens, activists, and friends", and bursts of applause punctuate both speakers' introductions. Slarke's specific inclusion of Aboriginal elders in her welcome reflects the widespread movement to recognise Australia's Indigenous heritage at important events. As her introduction continues, she speaks directly to those of Indigenous heritage in a noteworthy address that sheds some light on how the performance of "Sorry Song" was perceived, saying: "On this momentous day, we are honoured to sing and to bear witness to you, the Stolen Generations and your families, and all First Nations peoples whose lives have been torn apart by the policy of indigenous child removals." As a representative of a mixed-ethnicity choir speaking to a mixed-ethnicity audience, Slarke's division between "we" and "you" invokes performance as an opportunity for bilateral communication that involves everyone, regardless of ethnic heritage. The impulse to bear witness to the suffering of Australia's Indigenous community through music frames "Sorry Song" as both a gesture of apology offered by one social group to another and as an opportunity for members of choir and audience to reach across the social divisions that separate Australian society and sing together.

This interpretation of "Sorry Song" is strengthened by choir Madjitil Moorna's well-known commitment to bringing together non-Indigenous and Indigenous people in performance. Billed as "singers of Noongar [the local Aboriginal people in Perth] songs", Madjitil Moorna comprises both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, including some members of the Stolen Generations. The choir reflects its community origins in appearance and demeanour: although the singers in this video are attired all in black

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[22] Bringing Them Home Committee (Western Australia) is an activist group "working towards the recognition and healing of the pain caused by the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families." "Bringing Them Home (WA): Aims and Objectives", https://bringingthemhomewa.com/aims-objectives/ (accessed 15 February 2016).

clothes with yellow scarves bearing Aboriginal symbols, a marked preference for short-sleeved or sleeveless tops is likely a concession to the summer heat and the lack of standardisation in dress creates the impression that choir members have worn everyday clothes (see Figure 4.2). For this performance in Perth, the group also included five primary school children who perform in Australian Sign Language alongside the singers.

Figure 4.2 Photo from performance of "Sorry Song" in Perth, 13 February 2008.[23]

To view this image, please consult the copy of the thesis held in the University Library, University of Cambridge.

As the choir begin "Sorry Song", the audience responds by spontaneously rising to their feet and remaining standing throughout the performance; from 2'10" to 2'15" on the YouTube video, it is possible to hear an audience member comment "be upstanding … and upstanding we are."[24] As the song moves to its conclusion a few minutes later the choir moves forward with gently swaying outstretched arms and the audience mirror the choir's behaviour (roughly 6'10"-6'36" on the YouTube video). As the song ends, the audience breaks into riotous applause, ending the performance with the rather incongruous visual

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[23] Photo is courtesy of Butupa, available at https://www.flickr.com/photos/25792994@N04/2574669353/in/album-72157605682754813/ (accessed 15 January 2017).

[24] Madjitil Moorna, "'Sorry Song' to Stolen Generations, Apology Day Australia, Auslan", 2'10"–2'15", YouTube video, 9'08", 1 November 2009 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4s93lxO3yBQ (accessed 4 November 2015).

juxtaposition of behaviour associated with a sort of musical ecstasy
engendered at concerts and the low-key performance style of the choir.

It may be easy to dismiss the musical euphoria seen during this
performance (along with Slarke's claim for Madjitil Moorna as a powerful force
for change) as naïve emotionalism driven by the 'high' of a significant political
victory, but this video nevertheless demonstrates how "Sorry Song's"
performative apology can be framed as a means of (at least temporary)
reconciliation between social groups as communities join together.
Furthermore, the inclusion of schoolchildren in this performance emphasizes
the importance of educating future generations to engage with the frequently
painful past. From Fletcher's relatively simple composition and unified
narrative of apology we turn to a more complex imagining of the tangled
relationship between guilt, forgiveness, and reconciliation that was played out
in South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission and embodied in
Philip Miller's *REwind: A Cantata for Voice, Tape and Testimony*.

4.3 Rewinding the news

Amongst truth commissions, South Africa's TRC is widely considered by the
international community as one of the most successful and innovative
applications of transitional justice principles to date, although views on the
TRC's efficacy are decidedly mixed among South Africans themselves.[25]
Established in 1995 by the post-apartheid government headed by Nelson
Mandela, the TRC was conceived as "contributing to a shared
acknowledgement by all South Africans of what happened in the apartheid

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[25] James Gibson cites a 1998 survey by South African newspaper *Business Day* that
suggested "nearly two-thirds of the public believed that the truth and reconciliation process had
harmed race relations in South Africa". Gibson's own 2000–2001 study reveals that virtually all
South Africans agree on the importance of learning from the past, but that roughly 75% of
whites, Coloured, and Asian South Africans and nearly 60% of black South Africans agree that
"It's better not to open old wounds by talking about what happened in the past". Gibson,
Overcoming Apartheid: Can Truth Reconcile a Divided Nation? (New York: Russell Sage
Foundation, 2004), 10, 46.

years, in both repression and resistance ... this shared acknowledgement thus involves the public recognition of the painful truth about the past *and* about human nature"; in James Gibson's words, "this is not just a chronicle of who did what to whom; instead it is an authoritative description and analysis of the history of the country."[26] As a key part of this mission, the Commission was given a broad mandate to "[establish] as complete a picture as possible of the nature, causes and extent of gross violations of human rights"[27] that took place over a thirty-four year period from 1960–1994, thereby encompassing thirty years of white minority rule as well as the transitional period after the fall of apartheid. Although the TRC covered a far greater number of abuses than the Australian *Bringing Them Home* inquiry did, it operated under the same tenet of exposing past abuses for the sake of promoting reconciliation on both individual and national levels within a diverse nation. To this end the TRC was committed to several different types of activities: providing opportunities for victims to relate their stories, investigating and passing judgement on amnesty applications from perpetrators, facilitating reparations to victims, reporting the results of such investigations to the country, and making recommendations for the future prevention of human rights abuses.

The structure of the Commission itself was divided into three committees: a Human Rights Committee, an Amnesty Committee, and a Reparations and Rehabilitation Committee. The first two committees received most of the public's attention, fuelled by a series of public hearings that took place in locations across the country that were the subject of daily radio and television broadcasts. From its origins in the consultative period in 1994 to the publication of the seventh and final volume of the report in 2003, the TRC

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[26] Charles Villa-Vicenco and Wilhelm Verwoerd, "Constructing a Report: Writing Up the Truth", in *Truth v. Justice: The Morality of Truth Commissions*, ed. Robert I. Rotberg and Dennis Thompson (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 279; Gibson, *Overcoming Apartheid*, 7.

[27] South African Parliament, *Promotion Of National Unity And Reconciliation Act 1995*, Act 95-34, 26 July 1995, http://www.justice.gov.za/legislation/acts/1995-034.pdf (accessed 20 August 2015).

lasted nearly a decade, investigated almost twenty-two thousand testimonies of victims, and received roughly seven thousand applications for amnesty. It was an internationally significant undertaking with an even greater ambition: to find a means of "reconciliation between the people of South Africa and the reconstruction of society … there is a need for understanding but not for vengeance, a need for reparation but not for retaliation, a need for *ubuntu* [a Nguni term meaning 'humanity towards others'] but not for victimization; … in order to advance such reconciliation and reconstruction amnesty shall be granted in respect of acts, omissions and offences associated with political objectives committed in the course of the conflicts of the past".[28] As Chairperson Archbishop Desmond Tutu said on the first day of hearings before the Human Rights Violations Committee:

> We are charged to unearth the truth about our dark past; to lay the ghosts of that past so that they will not return to haunt us. And that will contribute to the healing of wounded and traumatised people—for all of us in South Africa are wounded people—and in this manner promote unity and reconciliation.[29]

In the popular imagination outside South Africa the TRC revolves around a limited number of people, most notably Nelson Mandela, the newly elected President of South Africa; Archbishop (now Emeritus) Desmond Tutu, the TRC's chairperson; and, to a lesser extent, Afrikaans-language poet and journalist Antjie Krog. Although all three have written about the TRC, whether as part of their official duties (Mandela's presidential speeches and writings), biographies (Tutu's *No Future Without Forgiveness*), or personal accounts (Krog's *Country of My Skull*), it is the last of these—which in Krog's term "quilts" together testimony, autobiography, fictional narratives, and poetry into a potent account of a TRC at once personal, public, and political—that has come to epitomise the TRC for many. The experiences Krog relates

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[28] Ibid.

[29] Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness* (London: Random House, 2000), 87.

thereby help to shape our understanding not only of the TRC itself but also of the cultural and artistic context in which Miller's *REwind* likewise reverberates.

On the surface, *Country of My Skull* is an account of Krog's two years working as a journalist covering the TRC for the South African Broadcasting Corporation, but its roots go much deeper into questions of identity, guilt, and memory within modern South Africa. Throughout, Krog wrestles with what it means to be confronted day after day by a past permeated by pain, the totality of which threatens to destabilise not only her personal identity as an Afrikaans woman but also the fragile political arrangements of the new South Africa. A small but telling consequence of this struggle is evident in her self-presentation. During her journalistic coverage of the TRC, Krog used her married (English) surname of Samuel and she chose to write *Country of My Skull* in English, but she published it using the unmistakably Afrikaans surname under which she initially became famous as a poet. Since its publication, the book has been accused of ethical violations in its treatment of various elements—as Krog acknowledges at the close, "I have told many lies in this book about the truth"—yet, at the same time, it has been fêted by many as a seminal work on the TRC.[30] Despite its inevitable weaknesses, Krog's work provides an evocative introduction to the complexities surrounding not only the TRC, but also the transitional efforts in South Africa more generally, and as such it is an important part of the artistic frame through which we comprehend this period.

Although the backdrop provided by *Country of My Skull* is undoubtedly important, Krog's influence on Miller (and thereby on *REwind*) extends far

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[30] TRC testificant Yazir Henry accused Krog of misrepresenting him in "Reconciling Reconciliation: A Personal and Public Journey of Testifying Before the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission", in *Political Transition: Politics and Cultures*, ed. Paul Gready (Sterling, VA: Pluto, 2003), 266–267. For other criticisms of Krog see *inter alia* Ashleigh Harris, "Accountability, Acknowledgement and the Ethics of 'Quilting' in Antjie Krog's *Country of My Skull*", *Journal of Literary Studies* 22, no. 1-2 (June 2006): 27–53 and Laura Moss, "'Nice Audible Crying': Editions, Testimonies, and *Country of My Skull*", *Research in African Literatures* 37, no. 4 (Winter 2006): 85–104; Antjie Krog, *Country of My Skull* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1999), 281.

beyond the scene set by her writing. According to Catherine Cole, Krog approached Miller with the suggestion of a memorial piece after coming across his soundtrack for Ian Gabriel's 2004 film *Forgiveness*, which recounts the story of a white ex-police officer come to seek absolution from the family of a black South African man he murdered.[31] Krog herself traces her desire for a commemorative musical work back to the time immediately after the TRC finished its initial set of hearings in 1998, recalling: "it felt crucial in some way to honour these testimonies, to prevent them from disappearing into the exploitative amnesia of a country battling to find itself after centuries of racism."[32] Although she does not mention Gabriel's film as a specific point in favour of Miller, she expands on her search for an appropriate composer in an article for the arts journal *Klangzeitort*, where she explains that she was initially looking for a composer who could "be contemporary and at the same time, be able to work deeply with rural solo and choral South African traditional music" in part because, as she wryly acknowledges, "the mere thought of an American composer busy collecting TRC material for a full blown *musical* left me speechless with horror and spurred the search for another route!"[33] Miller, whose early work includes albums of choral music from the struggle movement (*Shona Malanga*) and South African lullabies (*The Thula Project*), combined the necessary deep knowledge of South African music with a contemporary sensibility evidenced by his postgraduate studies in electro-acoustic composition at Bournemouth University.[34] Likewise, by virtue of his personal heritage, Miller also sidesteps some of the potential

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[31] Catherine Cole, "Dragons in the Living Room: Truth and Reconciliation in Repertoire, 2006", in *Performing South Africa's Truth Commission: Stages of Transition* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009), 137.

[32] Antjie Krog, "Preparing for Newness (Part Two)", *Klangzeitort* (October/November 2015): 3.

[33] Ibid., 4.

[34] Philip Miller, "Biography", http://www.philipmiller.info/biography/ (accessed 20 April 2014).

ethical issues latent in asking a white composer for a commemorative work on the TRC. Miller was born in London in 1964 to an English father and South African mother but he grew up in Cape Town and, prior to his post-graduate studies at Bournemouth, he was a criminal lawyer and a self-taught musician. He is also of Jewish heritage and thus, for reasons of age, upbringing, and religious background he stood at some remove from the apartheid-era circles of influence—in a privileged, but also marginal, position in white society.

In the mid-2000s, Miller was a moderately well-known composer for films and television both in South Africa and abroad, but he has since become increasingly known for ambitious collaborative projects that tackle deep-seated social issues. In addition to composing soundtracks for recent films such as *White Lion* and *Black Butterflies* and television series for HBO (*The Girl*) and the BBC (*The Borrowers*), he has continued to develop his long-standing collaboration with South African visual artist William Kentridge, culminating in the multimedia chamber opera *Refuse the Hour*, which has played at venues stretching from New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art to London's Tate Modern to Perth's International Arts Festival.[35] Although a number of these projects are evidence of Miller's deep interest in musical explorations of social issues facing South Africa, in the case of *REwind* the encouragement of Krog can hardly be overstated. It was Krog who first proposed that Miller write a work for the tenth anniversary of the TRC; she also provided the composer with her personal tapes of TRC testimony; and, according to some reports, it was she who suggested that the piece in question be a cantata modelled on an analogous composition from Chile.[36] Most

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[35] Philip Miller, "Refuse the Hour", http://www.philipmiller.info/projects/refuse-the-hour/ (accessed 20 April 2014); Miller, "Biography", http://www.philipmiller.info/biography/ (accessed 20 April 2014); Leigh Hill, "Journey to the Edge of Science and Art in 'Refuse the Hour'", *Out in Perth*, Perth, Western Australia, 11 February 2016, http://www.outinperth.com/journey-to-the-edge-of-science-and-art-with-refuse-the-hour/ (accessed 20 November 2016).

[36] Charlene Scott, "Cantata Recalls Wounds of Apartheid", National Public Radio, *Weekend Edition*, 22 October 2006,

significantly, it was in listening to Krog's tapes that Miller discovered the

soundworld of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and of what would

become *REwind*:

> In between the sounds of the fragile tape stretching and
> spooling, I started to hear ... a world of vocal shards, sighs, gulps
> for air, feedback from the microphones, clearing of throats, sips
> of water during moments when the speakers lost their speech.
> All these sounds seemed to have their own grammar and created
> and served as signifiers to me.[37]

Thus, although Krog had no official hand in the creation of *REwind*—the

commission itself came jointly from the South African Spier Arts Trust, the

United States-based institutions of the BRIC Celebrate Brooklyn! Performing

Arts Festival, the '62 Center for Theater and Dance at Williams College, and

the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art—it might be said that her

influence can be felt throughout the piece.[38]

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http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6362645 (accessed 1 September 2015).

[37] Philip Miller, "Disrupting the Silence: The Past and Transnational Memory", lecture given as part of the Vice-Chancellor's Lecture Series on Trauma, Memory, and Representations of the Past (University of the Free State), 29 April 2015. Text available http://apps.ufs.ac.za/media/dl/ userfiles/documents/News/2015/2015_04/Rewind%20Lecture%20by%20Philip%20Miller.p df (accessed 20 October 2015); YouTube video of lecture available https://www.youtube.com/ watch?v=qGfQR9ISmK8 (accessed 9 November 2015).

[38] I have as yet been unable to trace the precise channels through which Miller received the commission for *REwind*, but it seems as though his work with William Kentridge, rather than with Antjie Krog, is more likely to have led to the commission. Spier is a wine grower in Stellenbosch who regularly funds artistic endeavours, but the connections between Miller and Celebrate Brooklyn, Williams College, or the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art remain hazy. On the American side, Rachel Chanoff, curator of Performing Arts and Film for the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, Director of Programming at the '62 Center for Theater and Dance at Williams College, and Artistic Director of the BRIC Celebrate Brooklyn! Festival provides the link between the three institutions, while David Eppel, Professor of Theater at Williams College, is also an important figure. The two performances of *REwind* at Williams College in 2007 took place in conjunction with a series of lectures and exhibitions on the arts and social justice. Other participants included Gerhard Marx and William Kentridge. See http://theofficearts.weebly.com/rewind.html and http://62center.williams.edu/events/artists-talk-by-philip-miller-on-william-kentridge-when-musicians-and-artists-collaborate/ (accessed 4 November 2016) for more information.

In his discussions of the process of listening to Krog's tapes, Miller consistently picks out the testimony of Eunice Tshepiso Miya as one of the most significant of these "vocal shards". Miya's son Jabulani was one of the Gugulethu Seven, a group of young activists ambushed and killed by South African security forces in 1986. In her testimony before the TRC, Miya recalled the horror of discovering via television news that her son had been killed and exclaimed: "I prayed I said oh no Lord! I wish this news could just rewind." From the combination of that evocative fragment of testimony with the mechanical sound of rewinding and fast-forwarding Krog's cassette tapes, Miller began building on the idea of what it means to say and unsay the past. From these few seconds of testimony came a large-scale work in seventeen movements that lasts about seventy minutes in performance and involves between eighty and one hundred on-stage performers.

REwind premiered in Cape Town's St. George's Cathedral on 16 December 2006. Although the significance of this place and date is not well-known outside of South Africa, both the church and December 16th have emotional resonance for many South Africans. Prior to 1994, the 16th of December was a public holiday officially known as either the Day of the Covenant or the Day of the Vow. Under the rule of the National Party it commemorated the Battle of Blood River: a major military victory by Afrikaner *Voortrekker* over the army of Dingane Zulu in 1838. As an annual celebration intertwining nationalist, religious, and cultural elements, The Day of the Vow possessed significant cultural cachet for many Afrikaners. In part due to its symbolic importance, the date was a frequent flashpoint for protests against white minority rule in South Africa throughout the twentieth century, and in 1961 it took on added significance when the military wing of the African National Congress, uMkhonto weSizwe (Spear of the Nation), announced its existence with a series of bombings and acts of sabotage against government buildings. After the end of apartheid, the South African government re-interpreted the holiday as a National Day of Reconciliation, with Mandela declaring that although "the past had made December 16th a living symbol of bitter division", the Day of Reconciliation would provide the opportunity for

all to "re-affirm our solemn constitutional compact to live together on the basis of equality and mutual respect."[39]

Although Miller's choice to premiere a secular work in a church is not ordinarily a cause for raised eyebrows, the location of *REwind*'s premiere is significant as yet further evidence of South Africa's deep religious roots. St. George's Cathedral's particular connections with *REwind* and the TRC are bound up in the history of the Anglican Church in the anti-apartheid movement. The Cathedral is the seat of the Anglican Diocese of Cape Town, and its leader is both the Archbishop of Cape Town and the primate of the Anglican Church in Southern Africa. Desmond Tutu presided there from 1986 to 1996—a decade spanning some of the darkest days in South Africa—but even before Tutu's arrival as the first black person to hold the post of Cape Town's archbishop, the Cathedral and the Anglican Church in South Africa possessed an important history of anti-apartheid activism. Although a comprehensive religious history of South Africa lies outside the scope of this chapter, the influence of religion in South African society and particularly its shaping effect on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is a key thread in this argument. The decision to premiere *REwind* on a national holiday devoted to reconciliation in a Christian cathedral known for its efforts to bring together disparate elements of South African society deliberately links *REwind* to overarching political and religious narratives of guilt, forgiveness, and reconciliation from its inception.

Since *REwind*'s initial appearance in 2006, the work has gone through some modifications, particularly in terms of its staging. In this chapter, I will be referring primarily to the work as it was performed at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg in 2008, which is the basis of its current form. Throughout the remainder of the chapter I will make reference to three primary sources of

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[39] Nelson Mandela, message given on National Reconciliation Day, 16 December 1995 http://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/message-president-nelson-mandela-national-reconciliation-day-16-december-1995 (accessed 9 November 2015).

information about these performances: a live recording of the 2008 Market Theatre performances released on CD, a copy of the unpublished score graciously provided by the composer, and a documentary directed by Liza Key on the making of *REwind* entitled *REwind: A Documentary*.[40]

4.4 The framing of the past

By subtitling *REwind* "A Cantata for Voice, Tape and Testimony" Miller anchors the work within a particular generic space, albeit one that is increasingly diverse and diffuse. The origins of the cantata as a genre lie in the seventeenth century, when it signified a composition for one or two voices with instrumental accompaniment. Like its contemporary the oratorio it quickly came to signify a group of songs; this idea of the cantata as vocal (and later choral) chamber music would persist through the next two centuries in both secular and sacred formats. After the nineteenth century's focus on choral cantatas, the twentieth century saw a revived interest in cantatas that range from modest works for solo voice accompanied by a few instruments to grand compositions such as Schoenberg's *Gurre-Lieder* and Orff's *Carmina Burana*. Despite the variety amongst cantatas throughout the genre's history, perhaps the most iconic representatives of the genre today are the church cantatas of J.S. Bach, of which more than two hundred are extant. The typical Bachian structure of alternating recitatives and arias bookended by choruses, performed by four soloists, four-part choir, and small instrumental ensemble, remains a familiar model and one that finds resonance in *REwind*. Nevertheless, other influences have been suggested for Miller's choice of

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[40] Philip Miller, *REwind: A Cantata for Voice, Tape and Testimony*, CD, Johannesburg: Philip Miller, 2008; Philip Miller, *REwind: A Cantata for Voice, Tape and Testimony*, unpublished score; *REwind: A Documentary*, directed by Liza Key (Cape Town: Key Films, 2009). Performers at the 2008 Market Theatre: Soprano, Kimmy Skota; Mezzo Soprano, Sibongile Khumalo; Tenor, Arthur Swan; Bass, Kaiser Nkosi; The Gauteng Choristers; and the Rewind String Ensemble (Marc Uys, Waldo Alexander, Caius Oprea, Samson Diamond, Elizabeth Rennie, Tshepo Komane, Innocentia Diamond, and Kutlawano Masote).

generic designation that hint at the complex siting of *REwind* within the sphere of contemporary music.

4.4.1 Voices as the first instruments

The first of these influences came to Miller via his contact with Krog, who had come across the Chilean composition *Cantata por los derechos humanos* (*Human Rights Cantata*), which sparked the idea of an analogous South African musical tribute. *Cantata por los derechos humanos* was commissioned by the Archdiocese of Santiago and premiered in 1978 as part of the International Symposium on Human Rights. The composition by Alejandro Guarello Finlay uses texts by Chilean priest Esteban Gumucio Vives to encourage people to remember those who had their rights violated through arrest, torture, and forced 'disappearances' under Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship, which had begun in 1973. Although the Chilean truth commission (itself an important predecessor to South Africa's TRC) postdates Guarello's cantata by more than a decade and thus reverses the order found in South Africa, *Cantata por los derechos humanos* established a precedent for a politically-pointed musical exploration of human rights abuses. A second factor in favour of calling the work a cantata comes from Miller himself, who draws a connection between the genre and the format of South Africa's TRC hearings: "there was this interesting relationship that I started to think about between the hearings and the way the hearings were a form of cantata, a form of allowing people's voices to be heard."[41] The explicit link Miller makes between the TRC's goal of giving voice to those who had been rendered voiceless and the primacy of the voice within the cantata genre is illuminating.

Given that the term "cantata" implies a vocal genre, it is perhaps surprising that Miller singles out the voice yet again in his subtitle, but when positioned as a distinct actor alongside tape and testimony, the emphasis

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[41] Scott, "Cantata Recalls Wounds of Apartheid". NB: transcript to this story incorrectly identifies speaker as Mr Antjie Krog.

given to the voice highlights the confluence of the historical expectations of the cantata genre and the rich South African heritage of vocal music. Miller has mentioned the importance of the voice within South Africa on multiple occasions, saying in an interview with American radio station NPR: "Often people say, oh, the drum is the African instrument. It's not. In South Africa it's the voice. The voice is the first instrument."[42] He later points to the history of congregational singing and black South Africans' newfound appreciation for opera as further examples of the central position the voice occupies in South Africa's musical heritage. Under apartheid, the cultural significance of the voice gained political meaning with the anti-apartheid movement's incorporation of protest songs and chants in their tactics. *REwind* takes on several of these different forms of vocal music, from the hymn "Liza Lis'idinga Lakho" (Fulfil Your Promise) to the protest songs "Siyaya" (We Are Marching) and "Hamba Kahle" (Go Well), and I will examine the blend of recognizably South African traditions with the conventions of Western art music in more detail later in this chapter. Within *REwind*, the human voice is heard in multiple different contexts as the vocalisations of the large choir and the four vocal soloists are placed alongside and interact with the mechanically captured and disembodied voices of tape and testimony. The vocalists themselves inhabit a range of roles, from massed evocations of 'the people' through to specific deponents with a varying level of referential detail. The shifting nature of this embodiment highlights the multiple nature of the material.

Apart from the obvious connection between the subtitle and a musical tradition that emphasizes singing, the 'voice' of *REwind* can also be understood in metaphorical terms as a signifier of humanity and individuality. Although Tutu's coinage of "rainbow nation" to describe post-apartheid South Africa has since become a cliché, the country nonetheless encompasses a diverse range of languages, religions and ethno-cultural backgrounds. The

[42] Ibid.

TRC itself was committed to providing an opportunity for people to tell their stories in their own words; therefore, it provided deponents with the opportunity to give evidence in their native languages as well as providing for simultaneous translation into South Africa's eleven official languages. With this multiplicity of voices as backdrop, one of *REwind*'s characteristics is the presence of overlapping layers of voices and languages. At times this is confined to the mechanically reproduced tapes of TRC testimony wherein it is possible to hear both the deponent and an English-speaking translator, but at other moments a taped testimony containing one or more voices is combined with one or more vocalists to produce a dense, interlocking, and multilingual vocal texture.

4.4.2 *'Nice audible crying': recording stories*

In comparison with the multivalent resonance of the voice, the inclusion of tape and testimony in the subtitle seem at first more informative than symbolic, but once again, each of these terms sets up the musical work in particular ways. For instance, in his account of listening to Krog's cassettes for inspiration, Miller draws attention to the physicality of the sound of the tape being played and the emotional resonance created by the combination of the tape and Miya's desperate request for the undoing of the past. The shrill sound of the tape rewinding appears for the first time in that same third movement of the cantata, entitled "Rewind", where it is presented as one layer in a sonic texture that slowly builds from the sound of Miya gasping for breath to include eerie vocal swoops from the upper voices of the choir over pizzicato strings and taped fragments of Miya's testimony, complete with translator. In *REwind* the sound of the tape rewinding reappears at significant moments throughout the cantata, functioning as an aural signpost that reminds the audience of the archival nature of the testimony.

The combination of tape and instrumental textures in Miller's cantata is reminiscent of the work of Steve Reich, and particularly two of his compositions written for the Kronos Quartet: *Different Trains* (1988) and *WTC 9/11* (2010). The first of these uses fragments of interviews to contrast Reich's

childhood experience of cross-country rail travel with the contemporaneous experiences of European Jewish children caught up in the conflagration of the Second World War. The explosive *WTC 9/11* takes the use of archival taped material further by incorporating publicly accessible recordings from the North American Aerospace Defence Command and the New York Fire Department that chronicle the unfolding horror of that morning. A second connection between these pieces and *REwind* can be found in the persistent aural reminders of physical sounds these works share: the evocation of train whistles and sirens in *Different Trains* and the insistent pulsing beep of a phone left off the hook in *WTC 9/11*. In addition to the sound of the tape recorder, *REwind* also features other reminders of the tape's materiality and the physical nature of the events it records. The first selection of the cantata, "The Oath", is marked by feedback from microphones and repeated comments from commissioners, translators, and deponents regarding whether the electrical equipment used to transmit the testimony is working, whilst later on we hear the pops and clicks that remind us of the technical difficulties facing the Commission as they put together the apparatus needed to support the hearings taking place across a country with developing infrastructure. In this way, the tape can be said to be an active participant in the cantata; however, it is also a means of transmission for the voices of testimony.

It is the testimony that draws us here to listen, just as it was the testimony at the TRC that caused South Africans by the thousands to listen to the daily radio broadcasts of the public hearings.[43] Accordingly, after the scene-setting of the two opening movements nearly all of the cantata's remaining fifteen movements are dedicated to presenting a range of

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[43] It is one of the extraordinary features of the TRC that the radio broadcasts were continued over the course of the human rights violations hearings—a period of two years— funded in part by the Norwegian government. Radio had by far the greatest reach of any media in South Africa and the South African Broadcasting Company broadcast the hearings in isiZulu, isiXhosa, seSotho, seTswana, Afrikaans, English, and Venda, though high-profile hearings were also televised live. The SABC also produced a television series on the week's hearings known as the *Special Report.* These are available on the SABC website: http://www.sabctrc.saha.org.za/episodes.htm (accessed 12 July 2017).

testimonies (see Figure 4.3 for a list of all movements). Miller presents these testimonial stories in several different ways throughout *REwind*: although the taped recordings of the TRC hearings contain the preponderance of testimony, both the choir and the soloists take on the role of testifier at various times. This is most obvious in the middle section of the cantata encompassing the movements from "Rewind" to "Mrs. Plaatjies". Here, five movements for taped testimony and accompaniment (denoted by each title beginning with the word 'Rewind') alternate with movements in which the testimony is divided between the tape and one or more vocal soloists. The resulting oscillation between the two types can be seen as a nod to the traditional Bachian structure of recitative and aria, but it also allows Miller to incorporate a range of different testimonies. This multiplicity of testimony is of key importance: Miller mixes the words of people who might otherwise be classified as either black or white, victims or perpetrators, English speakers or those whose testimony is translated into English, women or men. Despite these apparent distinctions, each voice is that of a person whose life was marked by the violence and depravity that engulfed many segments of South African society. By devoting the largest portion of the cantata to this litany of testimony from all walks of South African life, Miller's composition reflects what the TRC itself acknowledged: "our country is soaked in the blood of her children of all races and of all political persuasions."[44]

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[44] Desmond Tutu, Foreword to *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report*, Vol. 1, The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (London: MacMillan, 1999), 1. http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/report/finalreport/Volume%201.pdf (14 December 2015).

Figure 4.3 Movements of *REwind: A Cantata for Voice, Tape and Testimony*

1. The Oath
2. Siyaya
3. Rewind
4. Edward Juqu
5. Rewind: The Goat
6. Hambe Kahle: The Bag
7. Rewind: The Bed
8. Offering of the Birds
9. Rewind: St. James Church
10. No Greater Than
11. Rewind: Memorial
12. Mrs. Plaatjies
13. Who's Laughing
14. Liza Lis'idinga Lakho
15. Liza Lis'idinga LakhoTrio
16. Tshwarelo
17. The Cry of Nomonde Calata[45]

4.4.3 Strings and screens

In addition to the musical components mentioned in the piece's title there are two elements of a performance of *REwind* that go unacknowledged. The final musical component, the string octet that provides the sole layer of instrumental texture, is the only part of the sonic ensemble not to feature in

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[45] On the CD, track sixteen is written as "Tswarelo"; I have followed the score here in rendering it "Tshwarelo". This and other minor spelling discrepancies reflect the variety of English transcriptions of non-English terms. Also, the CD lists eighteen tracks. The final one is entitled "Thula Sizwe"; this was an encore at the Market Theatre performance and is not a movement.

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REwind's title. Within the work, the strings function as harmonic and rhythmic backdrop for the more prominent vocal lines, incorporating what one *New York Times* reviewer called "the rocking sway of African music".[46] The same reviewer notes that Miller's prominent use of ostinati and "chugging rhythms" recall the work of Philip Glass and the so-called 'CNN operas' of John Adams. In addition, though aurally undetectable in the CD recording, is the visual display of video, still photography, and scrolling text created by Gerhard and Maja Marx that accompanies *REwind* in performance. These visuals are projected on a large, semi-transparent scrim that falls between the choir, seated towards the back of the stage, and the soloists and string players who sit and stand at the front. Depending on the nature of the visuals, the screen may obscure the audience's view of the choir behind, with the result that the performers shift in and out of focus: "visible and at other times semivisible or invisible, [they are] like ghosts."[47] The incorporation of such quasi-filmic visual elements into what is traditionally an unstaged genre opens up the range of communicative meanings afforded by the piece, and this chapter will return periodically to an examination of the interaction between sound and sight.

4.4.4 The TRC's signature tune

Throughout this discussion of the significance of the framing created by *REwind*'s title, the implication has been of not only a vocal-dominated but also a verbal-dominated musical texture; once again, this conforms to audience expectations for both cantatas and vocal music more generally. This expectation is turned on its head in the penultimate selection of *REwind*: entitled "The Cry of Nomonde Calata", it opens as a long-breathed, wordless

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[46] Steve Smith, "Bringing Life, Death and Sight to Sound", *New York Times*, 20 July 2007 http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/10/arts/music/10rewi.html?_r=1&adxnnl=1&adxnnlx=13 97405131-TUQbKU1k07Z9V5/aI3dlMw& (accessed 1 September 2015).

[47] Yvette Hutchison, *South African Performance and Archives of Memory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 65.

aria for the female soloists. The title's reference is to an iconic moment from the early days of the TRC when Calata, widow of assassinated activist Fort Calata, collapsed during her testimony with what commissioner Alex Boraine called a "primeval and spontaneous wail from the depths of her soul … it was that cry from the soul that transformed the hearings from a litany of suffering and pain to an even deeper level."[48] Krog, describing that cry through the words of the (fictional) Professor Kondlo, suggests that this moment "is the beginning of the Truth Commission—the signature tune, the definitive moment, the ultimate sound of what the process is about … to witness that cry was to witness the destruction of language."[49] For the first ninety seconds of the aria, the mezzo-soprano and soprano soloists (sung in the Market Theatre performance by acclaimed South African singers Sibongile Khumalo and Kimmy Skota, respectively) trade widely-spaced melodic fragments with the strings that are echoed by a recording of a woman's sobbing cry and a translator's dry recitation of the name "Nomonde Calata". As the interaction between soloist and strings continues, other fragments of TRC testimony appear atop a shimmering backdrop of choral humming.

Emerging from the haunting sounds of Calata's re-embodied cry, the testimonial fragments focus on the theme of sight, ranging from the repetition of Tony Yengeni's request heard earlier in *REwind* "to see it with my own eyes, what he did to me"—a reference to the 'wet bag' torture technique demonstrated by Jeffrey Benzien—to Evelyn Zweni's angry declaration "apartheid—I don't even want to see it anywhere I go", and Lucas Baba Sikoepere's acknowledgement "I feel what has brought my eyesight back is to come back here and tell this story". After more than three minutes of alternating between testimonial fragments and choral singing, the soloists and choir disappear, leaving the strings to enact a slow crescendo accompanied by

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[48] Alex Boraine, *A Country Unmasked: Inside South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 102.

[49] Krog, *Country of My Skull,* 42.

continuous repetitions of a single fragment of deponent and translator: "yes, I am ready to tell you. I would like to tell you what happened". This dissolves into a mélange of other fragments just as it reaches its loudest point. Out of this confusion the strings take up a driving rhythm that brings in the lower three soloists on the South African hymn "Thula Sizwe" (Be Still, Nation), punctuated by choral outbursts. Slowly, the music coalesces into a single chord played by the strings and overlaid by a woman's halting declaration: "but we are doing this because we believe that if, if people repeat again all— and they are hurt that they had—as they repeat the stories again, as they repeat the stories again, as they repeat the stories again." Following this three-fold repetition the strings offer a final chord, which by virtue of its isolation and soft dynamic might be expected to be a cadence, but replaces the expected resolution with a sense of tense anticipation. With the return to the concern for telling (and hearing) the stories that have caused so much pain, the cantata thereby comes full circle. In the Market Theatre performance the audience explodes into applause at the close of this movement, leading first the soloists and then the entire choir to offer a reprise of "Thula Sizwe" as an encore, or perhaps as a benediction.

In comparison with "Sorry Song", *REwind* is both technically and metaphorically intricate: a multifaceted work that mirrors the complexities inherent in participating in any large-scale reconciliation effort. Although the resulting narrative richness offers a fascinating series of glimpses into individual stories from the TRC, questions of how, what, and why we listen to them must give us pause. In the following sections I highlight a few of the issues underpinning *REwind,* including how the use of archival texts structures our understanding of the work and the potential impact of a narrative of forgiveness and reconciliation embedded within the work's latter movements. Finally, I turn to the relationship between *REwind* and South African society with particular interest in the potential for performances of *REwind* to act as a 'living memorial' to the individual and collective process of reconciliation in the post-TRC world. The chapter concludes by returning to "Sorry Song" in

order to draw connections between these two very different musical responses to national reconciliation efforts.

4.5 The stories we share: interpreting the archive

In *Country of My Skull*, Krog recalls the challenges in choosing twenty-second fragments of the TRC hearings that would encapsulate the force of a testimony without transgressing broadcasting codes. Even as she laments the destructive nature of such editing ("How quickly our own language changes—fantastic testimony, sexy subject, nice audible crying"), there is elation when, on the first day of Commission meetings, she turns on the radio to hear that "the voice of an ordinary cleaning woman is the headline on the one o'clock news".[50] This story reflects the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's aim of allowing people from all walks of life to share their stories, but it also highlights the inescapably mediated nature of TRC testimony. By the time someone appeared in a public deposition he or she had already told their story (perhaps multiple times) to the TRC researchers whose job it was to choose the roughly ten per cent of testimonies that would feature at the public hearings in a given area. From that point, the winnowing of testimony continued through broadcasting choices, special reports, and selective accounts like *Country of My Skull*.[51] Although the TRC archives contain information and background research on all those interviewed as part of the process, the sheer volume of information—not to mention human suffering— recorded therein prevents comprehension of the whole, even if were publicly accessible.[52]

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[50] Ibid., 32.

[51] Live radio broadcasts (and, in the initial stages, television broadcasts) of hearings were provided complete with translation into South Africa's official languages throughout the life of the TRC, but, as Krog mentions, it was the summaries of the day's hearings provided with the main news bulletins that had the broadest reach.

[52] See Cole, *Stages of Transition*, xviii–xx for a discussion of the difficulty researchers and victims have had in accessing materials.

With the notable exception of the original television and radio broadcasts (the latter of which have not been preserved), the material from the TRC is usually approached as a written record—one that culminates in the massive seven-volume *Final Report* produced between 1998 and 2003.[53] In the face of this torrent of written language, Catherine Cole has praised *REwind* for re-introducing the aural qualities of TRC deponents to the public, but this claim bears closer examination, as even the most emotionally raw moments of archival material are subject to multiple layers of mediation.[54] The most apparent intervening mechanism is the selection of testimonies both in terms of to whom audiences are exposed and of how much (or little) of their testimony is heard. The material found in *REwind* is necessarily only a tiny sliver of the extant evidence, but in a country where race, language, and accent are still powerful social signifiers, Miller's curatorial choices are loaded with meaning. His description of the seemingly random collection process reveals the hidden difficulties in selecting representative samples of testimony: "I began to get caught or almost snagged by a word or a phrase from the testifier and consequently I would rewind and listen again."[55] Hours of testimony are thereby splintered into seconds and then rearranged or put into new interpretive contexts within the cantata. Furthermore, according to Miller "there was no scientific method employed ... how could one person's pain be

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[53] Much of the original archival material, including tapes and backup documentation is controlled by the Department of Justice and remains closed to public access. Exceptions available online include the transcripts of the public hearings, available on the following website: http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/ (accessed 15 February 2016); and the weekly, hour-long television "Special Report", episodes of which are available on the South African Broadcasting Corporation's website: http://www.sabctrc.saha.org.za (accessed 15 February 2016).

[54] See Catherine Cole, "Reverberations of Testimony: South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Art and Media", in *Transitional Justice, Culture and Society*, ed. Clara Ramírez-Barat (New York: Social Science Research Council, 2014), 396–430.

[55] Miller, "Disrupting the Silence: The Past and Transnational Memory", [University of the Free State] Vice Chancellor's Lecture Series on Trauma, Memory, and Representations of the Past, 29 April 2015.

more significant than another's?"[56] Despite Miller's assertion of the primacy of sonic content over fleshed-out narratives, after making his initial selection he realised that he had chosen only the testimonies of black victims, and "even though I wasn't trying to tell the *whole* story I still had to be careful not to skew it completely."[57] Ironically, his solution to the inadvertently racialised nature of his first selection was to carefully choose further testimonies on the basis of the victim's race, including that of Bishop Frank Retief, whose church in Cape Town was the site of a 1993 massacre perpetrated by the black militarist group known as the Azanian People's Liberation Army. Retief's testimony, which appears in both the recitative-like "Rewind: St. James Church" and its companion aria for the tenor soloist "No Greater Than", is notable for its collective and forward-looking outlook: after a brief description of his personal experience on the day of the massacre, Retief switches to speaking on behalf of his congregation, using "we" to expound on how the violence visited on the people of his congregation had not shaken their religious faith, but had given them empathy for the decades of violence perpetuated on many others.

Miller's repeated insistence on the use of archival material (or, in the case of the sung text, transcriptions of archival material) reveals his obsession with fidelity to the narratives presented to the TRC. This could be interpreted as a mark of respect for the people whose worst experiences are thereby laid out in front of the audience, but although the aural texture of taped and sung testimony has obvious advantages over a written source, even the most faithful transcription and performance is inescapably incomplete when it comes to non-verbal communication. Missing from the aural record are such things as facial expressions and gestures—though both of these may be partially re-embodied (and interpreted) in live performance—as well as things

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[56] Ibid.

[57] Philip Miller, interview with Catherine Cole, 15 February 2007, quoted in Cole, "Dragons in the Living Room", 143.

such as the reactions of commissioners and other witnesses, which exert influence on interpretation of live experience. Less obvious are the ways in which the archive itself mediates our understanding of its contents, particularly when it comes to questions of race, gender, and cultural background. For instance, like the official archive of the Commission itself, Miller uses English translations for testimony not given in English. This is a practical consideration: even though only ten per cent of South Africans speak English as a first language (behind isiZulu, isiXhosa, and Afrikaans), its use as a language of government and media means that it is widely understood among the urban educated classes that make up the majority of Miller's current audience, if not necessarily his original sources.[58] But beyond the choice of language, many of the recorded excerpts used in *REwind* prioritise the sound of the translator over that of the deponent, thus obscuring some of the very 'realness' (or 'authenticity', to use his term[59]) that Miller values in the sound of taped testimony.

The tension between the undeniably compelling rawness of the material and the layers of interpretation runs throughout the work including through the relationship between the sound world and its visual accompaniment. The directorial touches are particularly evident in some of the latter elements, created by South African visual artists Gerhard and Maja Marx in conjunction with Miller.[60] Throughout the work, the English texts or translations of the testimonies Miller uses are projected on the screen that

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[58] Most South Africans are multilingual, and according to official figures, roughly half of all South Africans have a speaking knowledge of English (though this is unevenly distributed). The government's promotion of English in education and government is likely to increase this percentage.

[59] Philip Miller, interview with Liza Key in *REwind: A Documentary*, directed by Liza Key (Cape Town: Key Films, 2009).

[60] The quasi-filmic element was added after the 2006 premiere of *REwind* and consists of a combination of lighting, photos projected onto the scrim separating the choir from the rest of the stage, and (in some movements) scrolling text that replicates the testimony being sung onstage. Gerhard Marx was responsible for the photos and video themselves, whilst Maja was the director, but both worked closely with Miller during the process.

separates the choir from the rest of the stage, often scrolling across or appearing and disappearing in time with the music. From a practical standpoint this clarifies testimony that might otherwise be too fragmented, emotionally laden, or strongly accented to be immediately grasped by audiences. Nevertheless, it can also be a distracting feature, and tends to elevate the denotative visual and verbal planes of meaning over the connotative realms of the aural and emotive. Moreover, when the choir or soloists sing in a language other than English in non-testimonial contexts, for instance in "Siyaya" or "Liza Lis'idinga Lahko", translations are not always provided, leaving audiences to puzzle out the sense from other cues or accompanying material. Sometimes these cues can be found in the visual accompaniment of a series of images unique to each movement, but even so interpretation is not always straightforward. Some of these are difficult to integrate with the aural context; for example, the rapid succession of still photos showing the front doors of houses that accompanies "Siyaya".

Despite these difficulties, the images frequently offer a further layer of interpretive possibilities. Yvette Hutchison points out the similarity between the images accompanying "Edward Juqu" and "Rewind: The Bed"— respectively, a chair which is slowly stripped of its cover and has its stuffing pulled out, and a neatly made bed which is first rumpled, as though someone invisible is searching it, then stripped of pillow and sheets to reveal a bare mattress. She notes, "a bed is a very personal place, often related to safety and intimacy, but here it is a mnemonic for the violent deaths and absence of the loved ones."[61] Likewise, the chair is a sign for the domesticity of family and its violation mirrors that of the family and of South African society. Gerhard Marx himself describes creating the visuals in conjunction with the image of person going about his or her everyday life in contemporary South Africa even as, in

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[61] Hutchison, *South African Performance and Archives of Memory,* 67.

the back of their mind, the echoes of testimony are continually playing.[62] The mundane subjects of the images often contrast so strongly with the extra-mundane events being described so as to throw the verbal narrative into even higher relief. This leads Jessica Dubow to suggest that the Marxs' images and videos "exceed all explanatory frames. Like the content of a traumatic dream, the literalness of [Gerhard's] photographic images, their nonsymbolic insistence … don't so much align the visual sign to the traumatic event, but question of the nature of what this (curative) alignment might be."[63]

One clear example of the layers of interpretation surrounding testimony is the mezzo-soprano aria "Mrs. Plaatjies". "Mrs. Plaatjies" is unusual among the set of testimonial arias in that the story it presents is not taken directly from TRC testimony, but rather from an interview with Ethel Nobantu Plaatjies that was conducted by Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela and published in the latter's 2003 book *A Human Being Died That Night*. In performance, the identification of interviewer and interviewee appears on the scrim at the beginning of the aria, superimposed on an image of a loaf of white bread next to a tall glass of milk (see Figure 4.4).

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[62] Gerhard Marx, in "Gerhard Marx on Rewind", uploaded by Dayne Benjamin, YouTube video, 1'51", 11 April 2011 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fpxjhVbQ3zw (accessed 15 March 2016).

[63] Jessica Dubow, "Introduction to *REwind: A Cantata for Voice, Tape and Testimony*", in *Dramaturgy of the Real on the World Stage*, ed. Carol Martin (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 93.

Figure 4.4 Photo still of opening screen from "Mrs Plaatjies"

To view this image, please consult the copy of the thesis held in the University Library, University of Cambridge.

Although this information may seem straightforward, to the clued-in audience the inclusion of Plaatjies's forenames is significant, as it reveals that although the surname is recognizably of Afrikaans origin, the testifier is not white. Furthermore, the text on this opening screen reveals the trajectory of the story with the additional reference to Plaatjies as the "mother of Luthando, killed, 1986". Forewarned by this information, the opening of the movement with a haunting murmur emanating from the choir behind the scrim—and therefore hidden from the audience by the image—sets up a quietly mournful mood reinforced by a *pianissimo* (and *sul tasto*) cello ostinato in open fifths that is likewise difficult to place on the darkened stage. In the Market Theatre performance, the sudden appearance of mezzo-soprano Sibongile Khumalo silhouetted by a spotlight immediately focuses the audience's attention on the singer's rich, fluid melody. Although the language is simple, the text draws the listener in with detailed descriptions of what should have been an ordinary day: the chair "right there" where Mrs. Plaatjies was sitting when her eleven

year old son rushed in for a snack of peanut butter on a slice of bread; the mess he leaves all over the cupboard as he rushed out again; the fact that it was ten o'clock. The domesticity of the images painted by the clear and precise English text is highlighted by the largely syllabic text-setting.

The first twenty bars of the movement witness the incremental addition of various parts of the ensemble until the full choir, string octet, and soloist have joined together. Taken singly, each individual part is simple in construction and repetitive to the point of lulling the audience into a sense of security, but in combination the layering of different patterns of triplets and syncopated crotchet/quaver rhythms generates swirls of unease underneath the seeming calm. This sense is heightened by the whine of the viola's pitch slides and the lurching rhythmic instability in the violins. The surface tranquillity is only broken when the choir and violins drop out, leaving Khumalo to declaim ominously "it wasn't long, I heard shots outside some commotion and shouts!" Even though the audience instinctively knows what is to follow, there is a sinking sense of dread when the string ensemble suddenly locks into homorhythmic step with the soloist at the mention of the child's name "Luthando" (see Example 4.2).

The faint hope that there will be some other Luthando is shattered in the next moment when the choir—suddenly illuminated behind the scrim—calls out to Khumalo/Mrs. Plaatjies in a thundering *forte* "Maka Luthando! [Mama Luthando]". Immediately, the choir and strings return to their initial motives and quiet dynamic, but this time the illusion of security is gone as the soloist recounts feeling her son's last breath leave his body just as he had left the cupboard covered in crumbs moments earlier. A halting reprise of the moment of discovery that the victim of the shots is Luthando re-inscribes Mrs. Plaatjies's horrifying realisation, and then the piece dies away with a single wordless iteration of the mezzo-soprano's initial undulating melody.

Example 4.2 Philip Miller, "Mrs. Plaatjies", bars 39-41

Although the musical narrative Miller constructs from Plaatjies's story is affecting, the aria is also an excellent example of how Miller's choice and setting of a given text works in conjunction with Marx's visual media. Throughout the movement the words Khumalo sings are projected on the screen atop the image of loaf and glass of milk. This image initially seems to reflect the quotidian nature of Luthando's actions in making himself a snack but on another level also connote childhood and domesticity. At the moment of Luthando's death, however, the audience becomes suddenly aware that the image is not in fact static. First, the glass begins to empty, milk draining away by some unseen force. When the glass is empty but for a ring of residue, the loaf of bread begins to crumble into nothing piece by piece, ending in a pile of crumbs next to the glass. The range of ideas Marx's visual accompaniment draws on include the passage of time, decay, and destruction by an unseen (and therefore unstoppable) force. Seen in conjunction with the story of "Mrs Plaatjies", the image is a poignant reminder of the emotional and physical detritus created by childhoods cut short and families destroyed under

apartheid: without taking away from the text's specific story of the destruction of a home and a life, the image also points to the wider destruction wrought by shadowy and often unknown forces of senseless apartheid violence.

To engage with this extended testimony is to face up to the devastation wrought by violence in a new way, by which I mean both that it is a new technique within *REwind*, and that the story this movement bears is new. Although the narrative arc is the same, Miller's audience experiences a performance in "Mrs. Plaatjies" that is worlds away from her original statement that caught Miller's attention. From being "a very small, but very detailed" account of Luthando's death, Plaatjies's story has been transformed into a profound multimedia spectacle.[64] Of course, legal proceedings have been compared to shows before: William Kentridge has claimed that the TRC itself was "exemplary civic theatre"[65], and in that sense, the layers of interpretive possibilities *REwind* generates reflect the dramatic character of its source material. Nevertheless, in spite of Miller's claims for transparency, the guiding hand of the composer is evident in the arrangement of both aural and visual components. In a perceptive comment that reveals a sensitivity to *REwind*'s highly mediated nature, Dubow suggests that the piece as a whole is made up of multiple "penetrations of witnessing: individual testifier, witness to the self; chorus and soloist, witness to the memory of others; testifier, chorus, soloist and audience witnesses to the process of witnessing itself."[66] As Dubow intimates, the idea of *REwind* as spectacle raises the question of what role(s) the piece and its audience take on, but before I take up this question, I explore the knotty relationship between *REwind* and religious ideas concerning confession, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

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[64] Miller, in *REwind: a Documentary*.

[65] William Kentridge, Director's Note for *Ubu and the Truth Commission*, by Jane Taylor (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 1998): ix.

[66] Dubow, "Introduction to *REwind*", 93.

4.6 The shadow of religion

Catherine Cole has argued that the TRC as a whole was "shadowed by an overtly Christian discourse of forgiveness and atonement" embodied by the appointment of Desmond Tutu, then the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, and Alex Boraine, an ordained minister in the Methodist Church, as the TRC's chairperson and deputy chairperson, respectively.[67] Moreover, the connection to Christian practice seems built into the structure of the Commission: as Leigh Payne notes, the South African TRC is distinct even amongst other similar truth commissions for requiring applicants to confess their crimes as a pre-condition for receiving amnesty.[68] This serves the legal and historical purpose of establishing culpability and promoting revelation of the truth, but it also reinforces the influence of Christian religious traditions surrounding sin. From one perspective, the pervasive influence of religion on South Africa's transitional justice process is not surprising as South Africa as a whole was a deeply religious and largely Christian country throughout the twentieth century; however, the consistency with which religious concepts are referenced in materials surrounding the TRC confirms the key role of religious belief. The connection between the TRC proceedings and religious belief in practice was further strengthened by the fact that each day of public hearings opened ritually with prayer and the singing of hymns in addition to the singing of the national anthem and official swearing-in procedures that might be expected from the quasi-legal set-up of the Commission hearings.

The link between the TRC's undeniable interest in confession and Cole's "discourse of forgiveness and atonement" is strongly critiqued by Audrey R. Chapman in *Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa*. She analyses

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[67] Cole, "Dragons in the Living Room", 129.

[68] Leigh Payne, *Unsettling Accounts* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 3. In the introduction to their book *Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa*, Audrey R. Chapman and Hugo van der Merwe note that the South African TRC was also the first such commission to have reconciliation as an explicit aim on par with establishing truth (see Chapman and van der Merwe, *Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 1–19).

depositions given in the human rights violations hearings for discussions of forgiveness, and her research demonstrates a surprising lack of a discourse of forgiveness, "suggesting that the majority of [deponents] did not perceive [religious beliefs about forgiveness] as relevant to the TRC hearing process despite the pervasive religious symbols and atmosphere."[69] Nevertheless, even though forgiveness was not an explicit part of the TRC proceedings—much has been made of the fact that amnesty applicants were not required to apologise or even express regret for their actions—religious discourse permeated what was supposed to be a secular process. The deeply-held beliefs of many participants in combination with signals such as the archbishop's tendency to preside over hearings in full clerical vestments and to conclude hearings with miniature sermons mean that for many, religious convictions about confession, forgiveness, and reconciliation were an integral, if implicit, part of the TRC. Miller reflects the distinctly religious discourse of the TRC on the micro level by choosing testimonies that mention ideas of confession and forgiveness and on the macro level by linking unrelated fragments underneath a religious theme. The threads of confession, atonement, and forgiveness are thereby woven throughout the entire cantata.

The first hints of a religious narrative appear midway through the cantata with the "Offering of the Birds". The titular reference is to the Jewish tradition of animal sacrifice as atonement for sin, confirmed by the movement opening with a quotation from Leviticus 5. The fragment—the only direct Biblical quotation in the cantata—outlines how those who were too poor to afford to sacrifice a sheep should bring to the Temple "two turtledoves or two pigeons" as a sin offering. The aria-like movement for soprano soloist, choir, and strings combines this Biblical command with two strikingly different testimonies: the first from infamous security policemen Captain Jacques

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[69] Audrey R. Chapman, "Perspectives on the Role of Forgiveness in the Human Rights Violations Hearings", in *Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa*, ed. Audrey R. Chapman and Hugo van der Merwe (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 71.

Hechter and the second from Bayeni Ennie Silinda.[70] Thematically speaking, these testimonies are linked by references to birds, with Hechter remembering the presence of guinea fowl whilst on an assassination mission and Silinda describing her son, who had been badly burnt by a group of young men on suspicion of being a police informer, as "open[ing] his burnt mouth like a bird". Two further avian references in the movement are not textual but aural, in the form of bird-call samples of a dove and guinea fowl, and each is used as a scene-setting device that prefaces the selection from Leviticus and Hechter's testimony, respectively.

The movement as a whole falls into a clear three-part structure with slow, sparsely-textured sections encompassing the Levitical quotation and Silinda's testimony surrounding the faster-paced, restless compilation of Hechter's testimony. Through this framing, and also through shared melodic contour, Miller identifies Silinda's testimony with the Biblical sacrifice. In contrast, driving string rhythms that generate a feeling of tension and unease underlie Hechter's fragmented testimony—itself sung by the soprano and choir in a series of melodic fragments that seem to retain only tenuous connections to the notated key of E♭. This sense of dislocation carries over into the final section, which, although it returns to the largely step-wise contour and measured tempo of the first section, ends with a melodic descent through the seventh from G5 to A♮4, flouting the ostensive key (see Example 4.3).

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[70] Hechter was a captain in the South African security police and part of a death squad that included other well-known names such as Paul Van Vuuren, Jan Cronje, and Joe Mamasela. In his amnesty application and hearing Hechter admitted to killing twenty-six people, but in his examination he was unable to remember many important details, leading some to suggest that he either suffered from severe PTSD or was deliberately withholding information. Silinda's son Frank was accused of being an informer; on a visit home he and some others were taken from their homes by a crowd and 'necklaced'—a particular form of black-on-black violence wherein a rubber tire filled with petrol was put around a victim and set alight. Frank was also hit on the head with an axe; he later died of his wounds.

Example 4.3 Philip Miller, "Offering of the Birds", bars 89-94, soprano vocal line only

The connection of these two testimonial fragments with the Jewish tradition of atonement makes explicit the tensions between admission of guilt, apology, and the possibility of restitution that plagued the TRC as a whole, but Miller refuses to linger here. "Offering of the Birds" is the first strike that opens the confessional seam within *REwind*, but like the earlier (and similarly sacrificially resonant) selection "Rewind: The Goat", it is a tantalizing snapshot of testimony that refuses to be fully integrated into a narrative.

The narrative of confession and atonement promised by "Offering of the Birds" comes to fruition in the final section of the cantata, comprising "Who's Laughing" through "Tshwarelo". Characteristically unwilling to shy away from controversy, Miller opens this section with a caricature of one of the most feared and hated men in contemporary South Africa: former Prime Minister and State President of South Africa and notoriously unrepentant apartheid supporter P.W. Botha. The origins of the text of "Who's Laughing" are notable in that they are not testimony at all: Botha was speaking to the press in 1998 after his court appearance for refusing to heed the TRC's summons to give evidence (he was eventually fined and given a suspended sentence for refusing to appear before the TRC). His text, alternately presented as archival recording and as embodied by the baritone soloist, is a troubling combination of an attempt at re-branding apartheid, self-justification as a righteous man, and disavowal of responsibility for apologising for anything before the TRC. Botha's words are couched in religious language throughout, from the declaration "ek is 'n gelowige mens, ek is 'n benadigde mens [I am a believer and I am blessed by my Creator]" to

the blistering retort, when asked by a reporter if he would apologise for the people who died under his rule, "no, I am praying for them."[71]

Surrounding this narrative within the movement is the incantation of anti-apartheid slogans, ululation, and the dance form of *toyi-toyi*[72] performed by the chorus and baritone soloist, thereby linking this movement with the earlier "Siyaya" in addition to providing a turbulent musical and emotional backdrop to Botha's claims. After the initial section of protest, the chorus is transformed from a third-party commentator into an active participant in a striking moment of interaction between textural elements, first echoing Botha's claims before breaking into derisory laughter. Meanwhile, the baritone soloist moves upstage to become Botha, known as 'die Groot Krokodil [The Big Crocodile]', himself. In the Market Theatre performance the incongruity of this double enactment is intensified by the fact that the soloist Kaiser Nkosi is black, giving this performance the same ironic edge that many journalists savoured in the sight of Botha appearing before a black magistrate. Both soloist and choir accompany their text with censorious wagging fingers—an unmistakeable reference to Botha's own habit of lecturing his listeners—that intensifies the sense of role-playing.

Audiences have warmly received the onstage impersonation of Botha, with one reviewer calling it one of the performance's "peak energy moments [in which baritone Kaiser] Nkosi spat fire".[73] Nevertheless, despite Miller's humorous treatment of Botha, "Who's Laughing" raises serious questions about the tangled nature of apology and confession in a social context where some of those accused of violence claim religion as a defence against truth-

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[71] Transcripts and translations available on SABC website for the TRC *Special Report*, Episode 79. Available at http://www.sabctrc.saha.org.za/tvseries/episode79/section2/movie.htm (accessed 15 February 2016).

[72] *Toyi-toyi* is a dance form originating among black Africans in which groups of people stamp their feet and chant. It played a prominent role in protest movements before, during, and after apartheid and remains an evocative form of both protest and celebration today.

[73] No author, "Giving Voice to the Past, Hope to the Future".

telling. Catherine Cole considers the song "haunted by the menace of Botha's wagging finger and the fury that lies behind the *toyi-toyi*'s physical agitation.[74] After all, until his death in 2006 Botha remained a rallying point for a segment of South African society that believed—and perhaps still believes—that they have nothing for which to apologise.

From the disconcerting and combative speech of P.W. Botha, the cantata continues in a religious vein with Miller's setting of the isiXhosa hymn Liza Lis'idinga Lakho. Although like "Who's Laughing" this movement does not include any direct testimony, it is nonetheless strongly associated with the TRC. Written around 1865 by Tiyo Soga—the first African to become an ordained Presbyterian minister—the hymn was regularly sung as part of the opening ceremonies of TRC hearings. In its first iteration, Miller alludes to this congregational style of singing by setting the text in massed four-part harmony underscored by the pulse of a gently syncopated string ostinato. This musical texture and style of singing persists throughout the entirety of the movement, though different verses feature different groups of singers and occasional rhythmic alterations. In the Market Theatre performance, this movement spreads out to encompass not only the performers but also the audience, who provide encouragement (in the form of ululation and clapping/stamping in time with the music) and eventually join in with the singers.

Although the text of the hymn focuses on praising God, it is also attuned to the larger Christian narratives of confession, forgiveness, and redemption. Jessica Dubow notes that the hymn is widely known as "Confession of our sins makes us whole" (even though the first line translates as "Fulfil your promise"), and the verses remind listeners that "all nations of this land must receive redemption" attained through the mercy of a God who withholds his righteous judgment of the nation's sins (see Figure 4.5).

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[74] Cole, "Dragons in the Living Room", 145.

Figure 4.5 Text of "Liza Lis'idinga Lakho"

Verse 1	Verse 1
Lizalis'idinga lakho,	Fulfil your promise
Thixo, Nkosi yenyaniso!	Lord, truthful God
Zonk'iintlanga zalo mhlaba	All nations of this land
Ma zizuze usindiso	Must receive redemption

Verse 2	Verse 2
Amadolo, kweli lizwe,	Every knee in this land
Ma kagobe phambi kwakho;	Must bow before you
Zide zithi zonk'iilwimi	Until every tongue
Ziluxel'udumo lwakho	Proclaims your glory

Verse 3	Verse 3
Law'la, law'la, Nkosi Yesu!	Reign, rule, Lord Jesus!
Koza ngawe ukonwaba	Through you shall joy and happiness come
Ngeziphithi-phithi zethu	Because of our struggles
Yonakele imihlaba	The world is damaged

Verse 4	Verse 4
Bona izwe lakowethu,	Behold this land of ours
Uxolel'izono zalo;	Forgive our sins
Ungathob'ingqumbo yakho,	Do not send your wrath
Luze luf'usapho lwalo	Lest your children perish

Verse 5	Verse 5
Yala singatshabalali,	Save us from perishing,
Usiphile ukhanyiso;	For you have given us light;
Bawo, ungasibulali	Father do not destroy us
Ngokudela inyaniso	For despising the truth

Verse 6	Verse 6
Nkosi khawusikelele	Lord, sustain
Imfundiso zezwe lethu;	The teachings of our land
Uze usivuselele	And revive us
Siphuthume ukulunga	That we strive for goodness. [75]

Of particular importance within the narrative of confession and forgiveness are the final three verses wherein the singers plead with God to forgive the sins of the nation, save its people, and return them to seeking after goodness and truth. Miller highlights the fourth verse by setting it for the vocal soloists alone, whilst the sixth verse's request for revival appears twice: first sung a cappella by the full choir, then repeated with string accompaniment to close the movement. Although the hymn's text is

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[75] Translation by Ben Khumalo-Seegelken.

evocative, its setting within *REwind* relies on the overall familiarity of the hymn and its symbolic association with the TRC as much as on the specific meaning of the lyrics, as the latter are sung in isiXhosa.

The rich texture and vibrant harmonies that close this movement evoke the same congregational setting with which it opened, but, perhaps unexpectedly, this is not the final appearance of "Liza Lis'idinga Lakho". Within *REwind*, this movement is unique in that it forms the first part of a double-act, with the hymn tune connecting "Liza Lis'idinga Lakho" to the "Liza Lis' idinga Lakho Trio" that follows it. The Trio also returns to the immediate world of TRC testimony, this time incorporating the words of Father Michael Lapsley. Lapsley, an Anglican priest and pacifist from New Zealand, became active in the anti-apartheid movement in the 1970s, for which he was deported from South Africa. In 1990, whilst he was living in Zimbabwe, he was sent a letter bomb in what became one of the highest-profile cross-border assassination attempts by South African security forces.

Lapsley's testimony stands out within *REwind* for its reflective quality. Like many TRC deponents, he includes a wealth of specific detail in his description of opening the letter bomb, but what sets this testimony apart is the clinical manner in which he describes the experience of losing his hands and one of his eyes, of having his eardrums blown out by the bomb's blast, and the matter-of-fact acknowledgement that it was the small detail of the height of the table at which he sat that saved even his life. Moreover, partway through his testimony, Lapsley shifts his focus from what happened to him to those who caused it, wondering:

> In my mind there was somebody obviously who typed my name
> on an envelope ... also somebody who made it, who created [the
> bomb]. And I have often asked the question about the person
> who made it—the person who typed my name: what did they
> tell their children that night that they did that day, how did they
> describe when they said how was your day today? What did they
> say that they actually did that day?

This leads him to the question of personal forgiveness and reconciliation, which reveals his inner conflict. Eventually, Lapsley admits that although he

might not be able to cope with an unrepentant bombmaker, he would gladly forgive someone who expressed contrition.

Lapsley's words are certainly arresting, not least for the clarity with which they are communicated. Whilst many of the other voices we hear belong to those victims of assault or whose lives have been forever altered by the loss of family members, Lapsley is one of the few survivors of direct personal attack to appear. Furthermore, for an English-speaking audience, the impact may be heightened because Lapsley speaks without a translator, thereby eliminating the mediation or flattening of emotion present in other testimonial extracts. In addition to its content and style, Lapsley's testimony is significant for its length: in fact, the "Trio" is the longest movement in *REwind*. In order to accommodate the amount of text, Miller reverses his ordinary compositional process of blending fragments of taped testimony and fluid sections of newly-composed music by pairing lengthy quotations from Lapsley's testimony with fragmentary melodic interjections based on the hymn tune. This results in one of the more striking elements of the "Trio" in the contrast between the straight forward manner of Lapsley's testimony and the fragments of hymn tune, which seem distorted or even torn apart by the ugliness he is describing. In its appearance in the previous movement, the undulating melody of "Liza Lis'idinga Lakho" rests solidly within B♭ major, with cadences on the tonic every four bars. In the "Trio", this regularity is disrupted, first by the fragmentation of the melodic lines and second by the tune's obstinate delay of any arrival on the new tonic of F (compare Example 4.4 and Example 4.5).

Example 4.4 Mezzo-soprano melody from Miller, "Liza Lis'idinga Lakho"
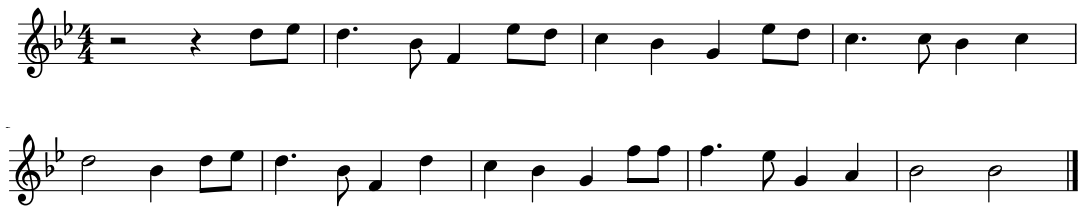
Example 4.5 Transcription of mezzo-soprano and baritone melodies from Miller, "Liza Lis'idinga Lakho Trio"
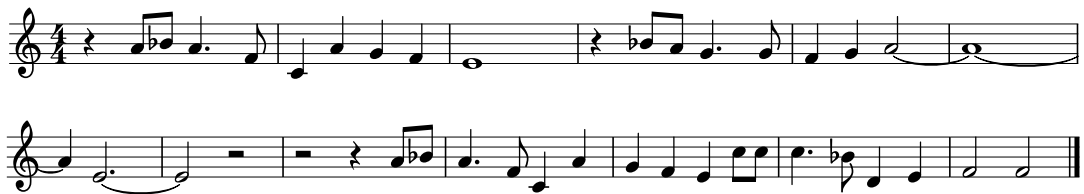
This avoidance of a cadence on the tonic is emphasized by the fact that after the initial, complete presentation of the hymn tune as a melody shared between the mezzo-soprano and the baritone, the closing melodic phrase is dropped from the texture. The vocal line's insistent preference for ending the melody's first half on the leading tone of E♮ is repeated half a dozen times within the movement's first sixty bars, resulting in a sense of profound instability within what is otherwise a largely consonant sonic texture. The restrained mournfulness of both vocal lines and testimony is supported by sustained, throbbing strings that alternate between providing a shimmering, rhythmically indistinct harmonic background and triplet over duplet interjections that drive the music forward. At times the music seems almost to depict the testimony, as when clashing open fifths divide the cellos and violas from the violins and vocal lines just as Lapsley relates his own indecision over whether or not he would want to meet the person who sent him the bomb. The resolution to a D minor chord that follows marks the beginning of a

return to harmony both musical and metaphorical that in the final bars of the movement sees both strings and vocalists united on an F major chord as Lapsley closes his testimony with the words "I'd love to be able to say to them of course *of course* I forgive you".

Lapsley's qualified extension of forgiveness to those who wished to murder him is the closest link thus far to a Christian narrative of forgiveness and reconciliation, but the connections between his testimony and "Liza Lis'idinga Lakho" seem more tenuous. After all, the hymn is addressed to God and places the singer in the position of intercessor on behalf of the nation, which seems at odds with Lapsley's magnanimous, if also cautious, offer of forgiveness to his unknown attacker. Nevertheless, a closer look at how the hymn text is presented suggests a rather different story—that of Lapsley himself standing in for a nation which has been torn asunder. The segmentation of the text obscures the fact that Miller uses only three of the hymn's six verses: the first, which asks God to fulfil the promise of redemption for all peoples; the fourth, which begs for mercy and forgiveness for the nation's sins; and the fifth, which pleads for salvation despite the people's failure to embrace God's truth. As in the previous movement, here Miller has chosen three verses that present a clear message: if South Africans come forward to admit their sins and accept truth God will have mercy and save the people.

Lapsley and Botha occupy opposite ends of the political spectrum, but as they appear in *REwind* they are linked by religiously-inflected language about individual confession and forgiveness. However effective each of these movements is, neither touches on the broader picture of national reconciliation that was one of the aims of the TRC. Therefore, the culmination of *REwind*'s forgiveness narrative comes in its penultimate movement, tellingly entitled "Tshwarelo", or "forgiveness". The movement opens with the tape of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's infamous admission before the TRC of her knowledge about "factors" in "those painful years when things went horribly wrong"—a veiled reference to the crimes committed by members of her personal bodyguard, the Mandela United Football Club. Her expression of

contrition leads into a brisk, propulsive instrumental rhythm that pits bowed sextuplets in the violins against pizzicato quavers in the violas and celli. It is perhaps moments such as these that reminded *New York Times* reviewer Steve Smith of Philip Glass and John Adams, but the energy these patterns generate keeps the music moving forward.[76] From the emblematic character of Madikizela-Mandela Miller turns to the still more iconic figure of Tutu, presenting a section of the Archbishop's closing address on the first day of TRC Human Rights Violations hearings in which he summarized his beliefs about what the Commission had accomplished (and would continue to accomplish): "We have been moved to tears. We have loved. We have been silent and we have stared the beast of our dark past in the eye and we have survived the ordeal." The truth about the past, the Archbishop seems to claim, has been forced into the open where it can be examined, suggesting by extension that the time for reconciliation has now come. At this point in the movement, the narrative threads are taken up by the chorus: using both English and South Sotho, it repeatedly exhorts the audience to forgive (see Figure 4.6).

The choir thereby offer a powerful commentary on the need for forgiveness, echoing Tutu's call to "face the bad times" and to "wipe the tears away and forgive". This conciliatory message is interrupted only once, by the ruminations of Andrew van Wyk, the victim of an APLA[77] bombing who steadfastly refuses to absolve anyone who does not come forward to admit culpability, saying, "I am not able to forgive a faceless person." After this uncomfortable intrusion the choir offers a stern rejoinder to "walk towards a

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[76] Smith, "Bringing Life, Death and Sight to Sound".

[77] APLA stands for the Azanian People's Liberation Organization, which was the military wing of the Pan Africanist Congress. Formed after the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre, the APLA was noted for attacks on white civilians. Van Wyk's restaurant in Queenstown was the site of a bombing on 3 December 1992 in which one person was killed and twenty-one injured. Although the APLA claimed responsibility, no perpetrators were identified or prosecuted.

glorious future where each person counts", which brings the movement towards the climactic acclamations of forgiveness.

Figure 4.6 Choral text for "Tshwarelo".

> To forgive, forgive
> Tshwarela, utshwarele
> Aretobeng mathata ka mahlong
> [Let's face our troubles/look them right/straight in the eye]
> Rephumule meogo re tshwarele
> [Let's wipe away the tears away and forgive]
> Empa re se lebale
> [but let us not forget]
>
> Having looked the beast of the past in the eyes
> Inehele kapelo yohle
> [give yourself wholeheartedly]
> We forgive
> Re tshwaretse, re tshwarele
> [we have forgiven, we must forgive]
> Empa re se lebale
> [but let us not forget]
> Utshwarele
>
> Give for
> Shut the door on the past
> Let it not imprison us
> Kutlwelano bohloko
> [let us have compassion]
>
> Walk towards a glorious future where each person counts
> To forgive
> Re tshwarele, tshwarela
> Forgive, tshwarela
> Give for, tshwarela [78]

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[78] Translation by Charlotte Maseremule, obtained through personal communication with the author. An alternative, partial translation by Jessica Dubow appears in "*REwind*: A Cantata", in *Dramaturgy of the Real on the World Stage*, ed. Carol Martin (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 107.

In the movement's final twenty bars the voices crescendo steadily as they alternate between "forgive" and "tshwarela" in a series of dominant-function tonal gestures. This comes to a head in bars 134–137 where the choir finally offers a resolution from an F minor triad to the tonic of B♭ major (see Example 4.6.[79] This ending cadence is reinforced by the oscillating open fifths from B♭ to F in the strings and thus offers one of the more tonally conclusive finales of *REwind*.

Example 4.6 Miller, "Tshwarelo", bars 134–137 (reduction)

"Tshwarelo" is as close as Miller comes to directly urging his audience to action, but although the desire for South Africans to offer each other forgiveness and reconciliation is clearly articulated, it is curiously restrained. Miller refrains from making judgements about who in South Africa is guilty or who should forgive, for what, or how. This reluctance to pass judgement is an

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[79] I have analysed the chords in bars 134–135 as F minor in spite of the fact that both D♭ and B♭ are prominent in this section. An alternative could be to see this passage as containing a seventh chord on D♭ in bars 134–135, perhaps with a passing F minor triad in bar 136 that gives way to a B♭ in bar 137. I have chosen the former interpretation due to the prominence of the vocal parts (the lone D♭ on the downbeat of bar 134 is buried in the second tenor line), the correspondingly weak aural impact of the off-beat D♭s in the strings in bars 134–135, and the strength of the overall aural impression of a dominant-tonic tonal gesture.

intriguing feature, in part because from the outside it seems as though moralising about apartheid should be easy. After all, a key purpose of the TRC was to encourage national healing by establishing responsibility for historic atrocities, but it seems as though neither apology nor forgiveness comes easily. Insofar as it exists, the exhortation for forgiveness is communicated primarily through the chorus, who, like their counterparts in Greek drama, stand inside and outside the action as commentators on and participants in the musical proceedings. Perhaps the combination of appeals for reconciliation and moral restraint indicate that Miller agrees with Calata, who mused that forgiveness is "a decision that perhaps one should make by yourself ... maybe because of being a human being it will happen by itself in my heart, but I'm still feeling that I have been robbed of my husband by people who just didn't care at that moment."[80] Perhaps it is also an acknowledgement that—like modern South Africa itself—the moral space that Miller develops within *REwind* must encompass Botha, Lapsley, and Madikizela-Mandela alike.

4.7 Rewinding in a fast-forwarding world

Milan Kundera has written that "the struggle of humanity against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting."[81] The TRC was given an impossible task: to simultaneously uncover as much truth as possible about the horrors great and small that took place under apartheid, and to forge from such truth a new history for the South African people. Former South African President F.W. de Klerk called on the TRC to "hammer out a common version of our past", a process for which "the commissioners should have been locked in a room until they emerged with a version of our history with which all of us could associate."[82] Volumes have been written on the perceived successes and

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[80] Nomonde Calata, in *Rewind: A Documentary*.

[81] Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, trans. Aaron Asher (London: Faber and Faber, 1996), 4.

[82] Sheena Adams, "F.W. Backed TRC, but 'It Failed' in a Big Way", *Pretoria News*, 8 April 2006, 1. Quoted in Cole, "Dragons in the Living Room", 122.

failures of the TRC in this regard, but comparatively little scholarship exists on the artistic endeavours that seek to understand the past in post-TRC South Africa. In this context it is appropriate to examine *REwind*'s role as part of a continued engagement with the issues surrounding guilt, forgiveness, and reconciliation raised by the TRC.

One of the most common questions the TRC commissioners asked was what the deponents hoped the Commission would do for them. Miller includes Eunice Miya's response in "Rewind: a Memorial": lamenting the lack of memorial services honouring her son immediately after his murder, Miya asks for "a crèche or a building or a school" to be named for Jabulani and the others known as the Gugulethu Seven. In this way, the memory of these victims of apartheid could be preserved for the nation as well as for their families. This is a common practice, but the question of what constitutes appropriate remembrance is a difficult one, particularly in a society that disagrees about who or what should be memorialised.[83] Of course, not all means of remembering require edifices or the re-naming of streets, and several examples of what Albie Sachs calls "living memorials of reconstruction" exist in South Africa, including the infamous Robben Island prison and Cape Town's District Six Museum.[84] Sachs's argument for these types of efforts is based on his belief that "the liveliest, the most important memorial is not out there; it is in our heads, conveyed through words and images, songs, and gestures."[85] By performing extracts from the TRC archive, Miller creates in *REwind* a living memorial that preserves more than just the names of those

[83] For example, a museum in the town of George is home to a wing dedicated to P.W. Botha, and Botha was known to brush off requests to explain his actions as State President with the suggestion that all the information the public needed could be found in the museum.

[84] Albie Sachs, quoted in *Dealing with the Past: Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa*, ed. Alex Boraine, Janet Levy, and Ronel Scheffer (Rondebosch, South Africa: Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa, 1994), 130.

[85] Albie Sachs, address to the Cape Town Memory Project, 11 June 2005, cited in Cole, "Dragons in the Living Room", 135.

who died: it embodies the memories of its participants and deponents through body, language, and sound.

The idea of a living memorial can thus be profitably applied to artworks, through which it is possible to preserve, renew, or even re-create knowledge. As I discuss in Chapter 1, in *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, Diana Taylor argues that a repertoire of performance and embodied practice can propagate cultural memory in ways distinct from those of the official archive. Like music itself, Taylor's repertoire is physically immediate and only has full existence within a live temporal space, whilst the archival material that surrounds it—including reviews, recordings, photographs, and scores—are capable of acting at a distance. These distinct spheres of action give the repertoire the capacity to complement, or even contradict, the archive. Moreover, in the case of traumatic or contested memories, the liveness of embodied practice allows their transmission through "the shared and participatory act of telling and listening" in ways that may subvert official narratives.[86] Although Taylor's insistence on the liveness of performance raises questions about the possibility of post-event analysing of performance as a repertoire of memory, her assertions about the repertoire's power of re-enacting the parts of memory that are suppressed in the archive are relevant to *REwind*.

Applying Taylor's terms to *REwind* proves to be complex. In a literal sense, *REwind* preserves the aural traces of the TRC through the use of taped testimony, but as I have already argued, this is a translation of the archive into a different medium rather than an embodied activity. In contrast, the enactment of testimony through the vocalists' role-playing initially seems closer to the idea of the repertoire, but the very individuality of testimony divides even its re-embodiment on *REwind*'s stage from Taylor's transmission of collective cultural memory. Hutchison offers a third option when she draws

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[86] Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 167.

on Taylor's language to suggest that Miller's use of traditional African musical styles—whether hymns, protest songs, or *toyi-toyi*—"trigger memories that individuals and groups carry within their bodies. … Miller's cantata draws on these repertoires, but also makes them strange and new through the multiple layering of the performance".[87] I suggest that this difficulty in mapping ideas about the archive and the repertoire onto *REwind* stem not from inherent difficulties within the concepts but from the way in which *REwind* confuses the categories of archive and repertoire. After all, *REwind* performs the archives, thereby moving archival elements into the realm of the repertoire. Once there, the cultural memories thus embodied can be transmitted to and internalised by new audiences, thereby preparing for a time when apartheid's original witnesses are no longer present.

The interest in bringing the record of the TRC into contemporary consciousness is not unique to Miller and *REwind*: South African artists have created works that touch on the truth and reconciliation process for the theatre (*Ubu and the Truth Commission, Truth in Translation, The Story I am About to Tell*), film screen (*Long Night's Journey into the Day, Forgiveness, In My Country*), and opera stage (*Winnie*), amongst other media. There is a parallel with other attempts to deal with societal trauma through art, including most seriously the large number that engage with the Holocaust. The diverse approaches to the Holocaust through art demand a far more extensive treatment than is possible in this space, but their recurring themes of memory and witnessing suggest a link with the attempts to negotiate South Africa's traumatic past.[88] Yet, both memorialising and witnessing are enmeshed in questions of mediation. In his article "Between History and

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[87] Hutchison, *South African Performance and Archives of Memory*, 64–65.

[88] See inter alia S. Lillian Kremer, ed., *Holocaust Literature: An Encyclopedia of Writers and Their Work* (New York, Routledge: 2003); Philip Rosen and Nina Apfelbaum, eds., *Bearing Witness: A Resource Guide to Literature, Poetry, Art, Music and Videos by Holocaust Victims and Survivors* (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 2002); and Amy Lynn Wlodarski, *Musical Witness and Holocaust Representation* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

Memory: Les Lieux de Mémoire", Pierre Nora argues that the memories these activities attempt to recreate are not true memories at all, but rather "memory transformed by its passage through history" into something which "relies entirely on the materiality of the trace, the immediacy of the recording" for its force.[89] Despite accepting Nora's distinction between history and memory, Rachel Bennett suggests that the artistic staging of traumatic histories "offer[s] an opportunity, by translating experiences ... for the audiences to become witnesses."[90] This resonates with Hutchison's claim, in her examination of artistic representations of the TRC, that

> [T]he move from a theatrical to a musical engagement with the TRC is significant, because it represents a shift from the individual speaking voice to multiple singing voices, exploring dialogue between individual soloists and the choir, and thus offering us ways of experiencing layers of witnessing and engaging with memory, both from the Commission and our own repertoires.[91]

Even though the idea of witness-creation is not an explicit aim of *REwind*, with the assistance of the historical archive Miller participates in the continual temporalizing of TRC testimony, thereby invoking the archival memories as breathing, sounding experiences for new audiences.

Although the widespread desire for memorialisation of apartheid victims on the part of their family members is understandable, it relies on an engagement with the past that seems to conflict with views amongst the wider South African population. Cole cites the results of the 2006 *South African Reconciliation Barometer* in which eighty-one per cent of the 3500 respondents agreed with the statement: "I want to forget about the past and

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[89] Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire", *Representations* no. 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter Memory (Spring 1989): 12.

[90] Rachel E. Bennett, "Staging Auschwitz, Making Witnesses: Performance Between History, Memory and Myth", in *History, Memory, Performance*, ed. David Dean, Yana Meerzon, and Kathryn Prince (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 168.

[91] Hutchison, *South African Performance and Archives of Memory*, 64.

get on with my life."[92] This resonates with the questions a radio journalist put to Miller just before *REwind*'s 2006 premiere of why so many artists were obsessed with the "bad old days of apartheid": "shouldn't we start fast-forwarding instead?"[93] One component in this impatience with retrospection may be the relative youth of South Africa's population. Between 2000 and 2001, when James Gibson conducted his large-scale survey of South African public opinions about reconciliation, forty per cent of the black population was under thirty, meaning that at that time "upward of one-half of the black population in South Africa most likely [had] never experienced apartheid directly, at least not as adults, the age when the full force of apartheid was felt."[94] This trend has accelerated: in the 2011 census, the median age for a black South African was a mere 21, and more than three-quarters of the black population (and two-thirds of the overall population) were under the age of eighteen when the laws undergirding apartheid were dismantled.[95] Once again, this has a surprising corollary for music performance: Miller has spoken more than once about the shock of having to explain the context of *REwind* to the "born frees"—choristers and musicians too young to have listened to TRC testimony.[96]

The reported strength of the desire to 'move on' is not to say that the narratives of guilt and forgiveness have been stripped of their power: the same 2006 *SARB* survey reveals that two-thirds of respondents agreed with the

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[92] J.H. Hofmeyr, *Sixth Round Report: The SA Reconciliation Barometer Survey* (Wynberg, South Africa: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2006), 43. Cited in Cole, "Dragons in the Living Room", 133.

[93] Miller, "Disrupting the Silence: The Past and Transnational Memory", 2.

[94] Gibson, *Overcoming Apartheid*, 36.

[95] Gibson chooses 1988 as the cut-off date of apartheid, splitting the difference between the revocation of the pass laws in 1986 and the unbanning of the ANC in 1990. See Gibson, *Overcoming Apartheid*, 34–38.

[96] Philip Miller, in Charlene Scott, "Cantata Recalls Wounds of Apartheid", National Public Radio; Philip Miller, "Disrupting the Silence: The Past and Transnational Memory", 10.

statement "I am trying to forgive those who hurt me during apartheid", including over seventy per cent of black, Coloured, and Indian respondents.[97] Nevertheless, the reluctance to continue engaging with a painful past— particularly when present-day South Africa faces significant social, political, and economic challenges—is perhaps one reason why *REwind* has been performed as often outside the country as it has inside South Africa. Far from Miller's original concept of performances of *REwind* re-tracing the TRC's own journey across South Africa, performance occasions in the country have been limited to its 2006 Cape Town premiere, the 2008 Johannesburg Market Theatre production, and the 2011 return to Cape Town at the Baxter Theatre.[98] In between these appearances *REwind* has been abroad, beginning with a pre-premiere developmental workshop at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art in 2006, continuing with appearances at New York City's Celebrate Brooklyn! Festival and at Williams College, Massachusetts, in 2007, and capped off by a short run at London's Southbank Centre in 2010. As I have already mentioned, Miller's work has been disseminated through other media, including a CD recording and Key's *Rewind: A Documentary*, described as "a bricolage of interviews, news archive and extracts from the Market Theatre performance" that strives to continue the stories told in *REwind*.[99] In a lecture delivered at the University of the Free State in April 2015, Miller admitted that he has no plans to stage *REwind* "any time soon".[100] Although *REwind* is perhaps Miller's best-known work, future performances seem increasingly doubtful.

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[97] Hofmeyr, *Sixth Round Report*, 45.

[98] "Philip Miller's Masterpiece at Baxter", *Artslink*, 29 April 2011. http://www.artlink.co.za/news_article.htm?contentID=26986 (accessed 15 November 2015).

[99] Accompanying description to *Rewind: A Documentary*, directed by Liza Key (Cape Town: Key Films, 2009).

[100] Miller, "Disrupting the Silence: The Past and Transnational Memory", 11.

Again, this raises the question: why rewind? For how long should any society be caught up in judging their past? It has been twenty years since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission opened its first public hearing on human rights violations, but the sense of unease Miller expressed in 2006 about *REwind* remains: "Is it cathartic or is it a way of … re-traumatizing? … Was I sort of opening up things that should in fact be kept closed? Should those testimonies just stay in the archives?"[101] Calata, who—like many other deponents whose words appear in the cantata—was present at *REwind*'s 2006 premiere, thinks not. After seeing the cantata she said:

> It was very painful to watch. It brought back very painful memories and I had butterflies in my stomach. My body feels cold to think back on the bad things that happened to people. But I think this cantata will go very far and will also help the next generation to understand what happened in the past. Everyone who watches this will take away a message.[102]

4.8 Following the songlines

This chapter has examined two examples of music written in countries with a history of racial discrimination and violence. As these countries struggle to disentangle themselves from this heritage, it is pertinent to take a broader look at how this music might be implicated in that history. First is the lingering question of how race and privilege are intertwined in musical production. Both composers featured in this chapter are members of the privileged white European social group, though as I have suggested, each has demonstrated his or her on-going concern with social justice issues that face their societies. Nevertheless, neither Fletcher nor Miller compose in a talent vacuum, and the question of why I have not chosen to investigate works by

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[101] Miller, interview with Liza Key, Cape Town, 15 December 2006. Quoted in Cole, "Dragons in the Living Room", 140.

[102] Nomonde Calata, quoted in "Giving Voice to the Past, Hope to the Future".

Indigenous Australian musician Archie Roach or Xhosa composer Bongani Ndodana-Breen (to name only two) is a valid one. After all, Roach, together with his partner and fellow member of the Stolen Generations Ruby Hunter, has been one of the best-known advocates for Indigenous Australians in recent decades, and his breakout song "Took the Children Away" (1990) is a searing account of his own removal from his family and the need to be reunited with his family and the country where he was born. Ndodana-Breen, a rising star in the South African musical world, opens the 2011 opera *Winnie: The Opera* with Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's appearance before the TRC in which she is called to account for her actions under apartheid, including the notorious kidnapping and murder of the fourteen-year-old Stompie Seipei. Like *REwind*, the opera, with a libretto written by Warren Wilensky and Mfundi Vundla, does not shy away from presenting the contradictions between victim and perpetrator that existed under apartheid, but by exploring the life of an individual, the opera lacks some of multivocality I suggest is an important feature of *REwind*. Although Roach and Ndodana-Breen write powerfully of their own and others' experiences, their best-known work does not engage directly with narratives of guilt, forgiveness, or reconciliation. These, along with the topics of contrition and apology, have primarily been explored in music by members of the dominant social groups in Australia and South Africa; thus, despite the compelling nature of these and other artistic endeavours, I have chosen to focus on composers who articulate the importance of those narrative strands.

Of course, the fact of Fletcher and Miller's ethnic heritages does not mean that they do not engage with narratives that attempt to encompass the experience of racial groups other than their own, but it does caution against wholesale acceptance of their versions of these narratives. I have already indicated that Madjitil Moorna, with whom both Fletcher and "Sorry Song" are closely associated, are deeply concerned with integrating Indigenous and Western musics. Likewise, Miller uses a mixture of musical elements derived from both Western art music and native South African traditions in *REwind*. Although this could be interpreted as an act of appropriation, the consistency

with which Miller is applauded for his use of South African musical traditions suggests that his audience sees his work as fitting.[103] In addition to the use of well-known or traditional texts, including "Siyaya", "Hamba Kahle", and "Liza Lis'idinga Lakho", Miller incorporates stylistic features of South African music. This is most evident in the choral parts, reflecting the long heritage of choral music in black South African culture.[104] For an example of these different levels of interaction I will briefly return to the choral movement "Liza Lis'idinga Lakho" which is a particularly concentrated, if not unique, moment of collision between compositional worlds.[105]

When I first heard it, this movement struck me as bearing the unmistakeable stamp of traditional Western four-part congregational singing. In the first two verses, the sopranos and tenors double the melodic line, whilst the altos fill in a third above and the basses emphasise the roots of the chords in a part that deviates only slightly from the other three in terms of rhythm. The melodies are flowing, expressive and metrically regular, recalling those of

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[103] See Cecilia Russell, who calls Miller someone who "not only intimately understands all the musical forms he deconstructs, and is steeped in the histories he retells, but [who] trusts his collaborators, and director-designer Gerhard Marx, to synergise his conceptual visions into edgy contemporary theatricality driven by integrity and authenticity" in "Compelling Theatre Rewinds the Horror of a Grim Past", *The Star* [Johannesburg], 29 April 2008; as well as Zina Titus, who writes, "The singular highlight of the work is perhaps the blending of opera and traditional South African styles" in "Review: A Cantata for Voice, Tape and Testimony", *What's On in Cape Town* [n.d.], http://www.whatsoncapetown.com/post/rewind-a-cantata-for-voice-tape-testimony/ (accessed 14 January 2017).

[104] The history of choral singing in South Africa, its tangled relationship with racial politics, and the centrality of music in black South African culture have been addressed by Grant Olwage, Veit Erlmann, David Coplan, and Lara Allen, amongst others.

[105] Here I draw on a number of excellent scholarly efforts that examine different aspects of musical hybridity in South Africa. For further research into this area see *inter alia* Grant Olwage, "Black Musicality in Colonial South Africa: A Discourse of Alterities", *Gender and Sexuality of South African Music*, ed. by Chris Walton and Stephanus Muller (Stellenbosch, South Africa: SUN ePReSS, 2005), 1–10; Dave Dargie, "Christian Music Among Africans", in *Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social and Cultural History*, ed. by Richard Elphick and Rodney Davenport (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 319–326; Denis-Constant Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, Identity and Politics in South Africa* (Somerset West, South Africa: African Minds, 2013); Veit Erlmann, *Nightsong: Performance, Power, and Practice in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); and Grant Olwage, "Scriptions of the Choral: The Historiography of Black South African Choralism", *South African Music Studies* 22 (2002): 29–45.

folk-influenced hymns. Later verses introduce variety in the form of dynamics and vocal timbre, but the overall texture remains the same. This style of music making is European in origin, but has a long history in black South African culture. Christian congregational singing, and in particular John Curwen's tonic sol-fa style of notation that continues to hold sway in the black choral tradition, was imported into black South Africa by missionaries during the nineteenth century.[106]

As I listened further to this hymn, I became conscious of the level of parallel movement Miller employs in both harmonic and melodic realms. Such parallel constructions are considered a general feature of sub-Saharan harmony, with Dave Dargie characterizing the resulting open sound as "identifiably African".[107] In "Liza Lis'iding aLakho", these planed harmonies in the vocal parts are paired with a series of open fifths and fourths in the strings, with the consequent texture evoking both twentieth and twenty-first-century minimalist techniques and a generalised 'folk'-style drone. In listening to this movement now, I am reminded of Christine Lucia's description of contemporary South African choral music as sounding "strangely familiar yet unfamiliar", as though "it rearranged codes and conventions from an earlier tonal era but projected them onto a flatter surface."[108] Like one of the most famous South African musical works, the hymn-turned-national anthem "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika", "Liza Lis'idinga Lakho" "lies audibly at the interface between European traditions of 'common-practice' harmony and African

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[106] Grant Olwage, "Singing in the Victorian World: Tonic sol-fa and Discourses of Religion, Science, and Empire in the Cape Colony", *Muziki* 7, no. 2 (2010): 193–215.

[107] Dave Dargie, "Christian Music Among Africans", in *Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social and Cultural History*, ed. by Richard Elphick and Rodney Davenport (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 320.

[108] Christine Lucia, "Back to the Future? Idioms of 'Displaced Time' in South African Composition", in *Composing Apartheid: Music For and Against Apartheid*, ed. Grant Olwage (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 2008), 11.

traditions of communal singing.'"[109] Nevertheless, this nexus is not the only place where musical strands cross.

In contemporary discussions of black South African musical styles one is inevitably confronted by *isicathamiya*, a creole tradition of a cappella singing popularised outside South Africa by groups such as Ladysmith Black Mambazo. Originating in the black townships as a form of musical entertainment by migrant workers, the traditional structure involves an all-male choir led in call-and-response singing by a male soloist whilst engaging in a smooth, subtle form of dancing.[110] Yet, despite its prominence both within and without South Africa, *isicathamiya* has minimal impact on *REwind*. The closest we come to hearing it is in the two selections employing call-and-response, namely, "Siyaya" and "Who's Laughing", but neither of these employs the bass-heavy vocal lines, Christian-influenced isiZulu lyrics, or shuffling dance steps characteristics of *isicathamiya*. Instead, both of these selections draw on a different tradition: the protest dance-cum-music genre of *toyi-toyi*. I have previously mentioned *toyi-toyi*—a military-style dance combining a rhythmic stamping motion with chanting, ululation, and call-and-response—but it is worth noting its impact again here. *Toyi-toyi* is closely associated with the anti-apartheid protests of the 1960s through the 1980s, but it remains a potent form of social protest even today. Miller's use of it in *REwind* (complete with a dancing choir in the Market Theatre performance) ties together the protest anthem of "Siyaya" and the apartheid apologism of Botha in "Who's Laughing". The dancing underscores the dramatic tensions these movements exhibit, but it seems out of place within *REwind* as a whole. Although this perhaps says as much about presuppositions about how cantatas or indeed concert music is 'supposed' to work as about the work's

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[109] Nicholas Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction* (London: Oxford University Press, 1998), 76.

[110] For more on *isicathamiya*, see Veit Erlmann, *Nightsong* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

internal coherence, the jarring juxtaposition of multiple genres is another reminder of South Africa's multi-vocality.

These are but two examples of how Miller incorporates traditional musical styles into *REwind*, but it is instructive to note that despite the non-Western character of some of his materials, they are integrated into a largely Western tradition. Percy Zvomuya, writing for South Africa's *Mail and Guardian*, nods to the Western dominance within *REwind* by calling it "a sort of postmodern Wagnerian opera minus the libretto, but one that relies on the listener's poetic sense to construct meaning and narrative."[111] In Zvomuya's conception, the work becomes a "postmodern mélange", its music unified in the listener's experience by the harrowing textual content it underpins. This raises important questions of the cultural hegemony of Western art music, heightened by long-standing questions over the use of so-called 'ethnic' traditions by Western musicians. As a white man occupying a privileged societal position in South Africa and trained in European musical styles, is Miller—borrowing Kofi Agawu's analogy—simply using local 'dress' to highlight the perception of the music's authenticity?

Miller objects to the accusation on the grounds that he is, in fact, a local. In one of his frequent first-person plural assessments, he claims, "if you have your ears open it is very hard not to absorb what is going on around you. ... This is part of our public domain, our oral history."[112] Indeed, in the reviews I have cited previously there are few suggestions that the music of *REwind* is received as being racially charged: even Zvomuya seems to approve of the mixture between Western art music and South African traditions. Yet, cultural appropriation is a delicate issue, and Miller is sensitive to the charges that his work might both symbolise and enact entrenched hierarchies. At a press

[111] Percy Zvomuya, "The Reverb of Rewind", *Mail & Guardian* [South Africa], 18 April 2008., http://mg.co.za/article/2008-04-18-the-reverb-of-rewind (accessed 14 January 2017).

[112] Philip Miller, quoted in [no author], "Testimony Rewind Cantata", *Independent Online* [South Africa], 15 April 2008, http://www.iol.co.za/tonight/testimony-rewind-cantata-957711 (accessed 14 January 2017).

conference preceding the most recent performance of *REwind* in May 2011, Miller described his desire to "put across some sense of the complicatedness of being white, living in South Africa, being privileged, yet being aware that things were not quite right. … It is not a purging. It is a case of being able to say I can be a part of this history."[113]

The experience of white South Africans struggling to find a new mode of being in South Africa, and specifically, trying to find a common history with their non-white compatriots, is equally reflected in the quotation from Krog's *Country of My Skull* that opens this chapter.[114] Since 1997, the South African anthem has been a combination of musical traditions wherein isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sesotho, Afrikaans, and English lyrics are sewn together in a way that acknowledges the diversity of South African society.[115] When placed in this context, the hybridization of traditions in *REwind* reflects a core characteristic of the music of the 'rainbow nation', but it also may be interpreted as enacting the cultural harmony hoped-for by the TRC's convenors.

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *</p>

In my discussion of *A Survivor from Warsaw*, I reference the writings of Maurice Blanchot, who suggests that salvation from the impossibility of

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[113] Philip Miller, quoted in Jane Mayne, "TRC recalled via Heavenly Voices", *The Cape Times*, 4 May 2011.

[114] Incidentally, Kofi Agawu has called for a rejection of realism in ethnography in favour of open fictionalisation as a method of ensuring an ethical approach to representation. See "Contesting Difference: a Critique of Africanist Ethnomusicology", in *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert, and Richard Middleton (New York: Routledge, 2012), 124–126. This offers a suggestive parallel to Krog's much-criticised "quilting" technique in *Country of My Skull* in which she weaves together fact and fiction. See one of Krog's responses to the uproar here: "Last Time, This Time", *LitNet Seminar Room* 20 March 2006, http://www.oulitnet.co.za/seminarroom/krog_krog2.asp (accessed 16 January 2017).

[115] In 1994, the isiXhosa hymn "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika" was adopted as co-anthem along with the Afrikaans "Die Stem van Suid Afrika". In 1997, the two were combined, with "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika" sung in isiXhosa, isiZulu, and Sesotho, followed (after a modulation and a change of tune) by a extract from "Die Stem" in Afrikaans and a newly composed verse sung in English.

thinking the holocaust might be found in remembering "the mortal intensity, the fleeing silence of the countless cry."[116] Harry Greenspan agrees that revelation is found in language's failure: "when voice breaks, retelling dissolves or starts to wander. At such times we see destruction … as an imprint *on* survivor's accounts—that is, as a wound."[117] The implication is that such wounds are not healed through language, and, tellingly, in the music under consideration in this chapter it is the cry of the people that is the fount of healing words. Fletcher's "Sorry Song" makes the connection explicit in that before the non-Indigenous singers are able to sing "together with hope burning strong" with their Indigenous counterparts they must first weep with them over the wrongs of the past. So, too, *REwind* begins with the non-verbal gasp of Eunice Miya and ends with Nomonde Calata's haunting outburst; the latter of these, in Miller's instructions, should not be sung, but cried.[118] In Elaine Scarry's powerful formulation, this represents "a reversion to the pre-language of cries and groans, whereby we witness the destruction of language".[119] These musical works suggest that only once we have lost language will we find the way forward into a new language of reconciliation.

Miller calls his testimonial fragments "vocal shards"; the image that figure of speech creates is an evocative one of individual lives and collective histories shattered. *REwind* collects these slivers but—like South Africa itself—finds that the past is both dangerously sharp-edged and impossible to reassemble. The very fragmentation that in *REwind* makes it difficult to pin

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[116] Maurice Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, trans. Ann Smock (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 47.

[117] Harry Greenspan, "Voices, Places, Spaces", in *Remembering Mass Violence*, ed. Steven High, Edward Little, and Thi Ry Duong (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 44.

[118] Miller, in Key, *REwind: A Documentary*.

[119] Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Unmaking and Making of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 6. For another treatment of the affective properties of screaming see Aida Mbowa, "Abbey Lincoln's Screaming Singing and the Sonic Liberatory Potential Theater", in *Taking it to the Bridge: Music as Performance*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Richard Pettengill, 135–154 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2013).

down the past also prevents it from being reduced to a single story. Instead, Miller accepts the discontinuities and uncertainties that dog any restoration project and turns the spaces in between testimonies into a vehicle for audiences to reflect on the continuing process of truth and reconciliation. As he states, "making *REwind* has never been about finishing or competing or being the definitive commentary on the TRC in any way. But sometimes the particular can speak for the universal. The specific for the general."[120] A decade on from *REwind*'s initial appearance, it remains to be seen whether and for how long South Africans will engage with the TRC-era past that Miller's composition so powerfully invokes.

"Sorry Song", in contrast, fulfils different social and musical functions. In place of a plethora of evocative first-person vocal shards, Fletcher offers a unified narrative of reconciliation that encourages non-Indigenous Australians to identify themselves first with a difficult past and then with the Indigenous Australians who continue to suffer from history's wrongs. The very simplicity of both message and medium of communication means that "Sorry Song" has already been performed before far more people than *REwind*. In Australian schools it is a tool for teaching a difficult part of history, and in performance it offers performers and audiences a means for acting out apology and reconciliation across the country. Nevertheless, the picture of reconciliation in Australia is not as straightforward as that depicted in either Fletcher 's composition or the 2008 Madjitil Moorna performance. The National Apology itself came hard on the heels of the establishment of the Northern Territory National Emergency Response (NTNER), an initiative aimed at tackling social woes amongst the Indigenous population that various commentators have noted echoes the language of the very child removal policies for which the Apology asked forgiveness.[121] As of 2017, the NTNER remains controversially in

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[120] Miller, "Disrupting the Silence: The Past and Transnational Memory", 6.

[121] John Pilger, "Another Stolen Generation", *The Guardian*, 21 March 2014 https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/mar/21/john-pilger-indigenous-

place and the legacy of discrimination so hopefully absent in "Sorry Song" continues to have an impact on Australian society.

Both of these compositions engage with history in such a way as to suggest that people of different races and social groups must confront the darkness of the past in order to move forward. Likewise, in the preface to the first volume of the TRC's final report, Tutu wrote: "The past, it has been said, is another country. The way its stories are told and the way they are heard change as the years go by. The spotlight gyrates, exposing old lies and illuminating new truths. As a fuller picture emerges, a new piece of the jigsaw puzzle of our past settles into place."[122] In different ways, both *Rewind* and "Sorry Song" seek to shed light on the past and thereby bring historical lived experience to bear on the present.

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australian-families (accessed 25 October 2016); Matt Young, "Australia In The Grip Of A New 'Stolen Generation'", *News*, 2 August 2014, http://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/real-life/australia-in-the-grip-of-a-new-stolen-generation-indigenous-children-forcibly-removed-from-homes/news-story/88e06e6db098dfddf39e8412674734c0 (accessed 25 October 2016).

[122] Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report*, vol. 1 (London: MacMillan, 1999), 4.

5 CONCLUSION: WE TELL STORIES NOT TO DIE OF LIFE

What was any art but an effort to make a sheath, a mould in which to imprison for a moment the shining, elusive element which is life itself—life hurrying past us and running away, too strong to stop, too sweet to lose?

—Willa Cather, *The Song of the Lark*[1]

This thesis is predicated upon the idea that a study of the music people engage with can enrich our comprehension of how they understand themselves and their societies. Simon Frith phrases this belief in terms of individual identity when he writes "Music constructs our sense of identity through the direct experiences it offers of the body, time and sociability, experiences which

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[1] Willa Cather, *The Song of the Lark* (London: Virago Press, 1982), 378.

enable us to place ourselves in imaginative cultural narratives."[2] In a similar vein, Tia DeNora argues "that music is much more than a decorative art; that it is a powerful medium of social order. Conceived in this way, and documented through empirical research, music's presence is clearly political, in every sense that the political can be conceived."[3] I agree with both Frith and DeNora, but each presents only part of the picture. If, as Frith suggests, we "place ourselves in imaginative cultural narratives" through music, music also shapes the kinds of cultural narratives that are possible to imagine (*à la* DeNora). Music gives us tools with which we may comprehend and order not only our internal lives but also our external ones. Moreover, the inner and outer facets of our lives exist in a reciprocal relationship with each other, with music as one of the things that connects them. In this thesis I have examined how conceptions of guilt, forgiveness, and reconciliation appear in music in ways that can affect how we imagine ourselves by presenting alternative experiences. By offering the opportunity to perform forgiveness and reconciliation, this music also has the potential to influence the cultural and individual narratives by which we live. The case studies I have chosen to demonstrate this reflect the breadth of my approach to the topic, but in this chapter I balance their variety and flexibility with an exploration of the connections that link them.

5.1 Music and relational space

As I mention in my introduction, each of the works I examine hones in on a particular type of human relationship, ranging from the intimate to the transcendent and from the individual to the communal. Furthermore, as

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[2] Simon Frith, "Music and Identity", in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: SAGE Publications, 1996), 124.

[3] Tia DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 163.

implicated in the topic of guilt and reconciliation, each of the relationships evoked or enacted in this music is initially a broken one, although the causes of that separation vary. In the instances of individual relationships, as in both *The Sparrow and the Crow* and the *Misereres*, the primary poetic speaker is cast as the guilty party through a text that acknowledges their own failings. They then seek forgiveness from a silent, though perhaps not entirely absent, figure whom they have wronged. In each case, the promise of reconciliation is suggested, if not always realised, in the music. The process of confessing guilt and requesting forgiveness is more complicated in the context of the communal relationships enacted in both "Sorry Song" and *REwind*. In part this has to do with each piece's relationship to a contested past, which is acknowledged, though not explored, in the text of "Sorry Song", but which in *REwind* features heavily as a point of reflection. However, it is also partially a natural consequence of the multi-voiced nature of these compositions and their dependence on constructing or appealing to a viable collectivity for their embodied 'we'.

The capacity of musical performance to model the relationships that exist between individuals or between social groups has clear import for identity formation. This can be seen operating in a multitude of different ways in my thesis. Fitzsimmons offers a clear example of how a particular identity, in this case that of the penitent confessant, can have unexpected resonances. Nine years after the release of *The Sparrow and the Crow*, Fitzsimmons himself is no longer in the position of needing to apologise to his ex-wife, but the imprint of his confession on that album has lingered on in the minds of his audience, who continue to respond to songs from that period in Fitzsimmons's output as though they were still a part of his day-to-day experience. This close identification between Fitzsimmons as performer and as human being is an important part of his appeal for an audience that adopts his music as a soundtrack for their own experiences of guilt and heartbreak.

Identification with the persona evoked in performance is also important for listeners to the *Misereres*, but both the inherently communal nature of a choral piece and the conventions and expectations surrounding

concert performances of Western art music render the identification with the performer a less intimate one than in the case of Fitzsimmons. In a choral performance, the poetic speaker loses the distinctive individuality of the original psalmist to become an Everyman who offers a narrative of personal, but non-specific, confession that may be internalised by audience members and performers. Pärt addresses this phenomenon by saying "the repentance emanates from a single person, always in the first person singular, an 'I' as in the 'I' form of a literary work. So in *Passio* there are four voices singing the part of the Evangelist. Here in *Miserere* the same thing happens: there are five singers, but everything comes from the same person."[4] If we expand this beyond *Miserere*'s soloists to encompass the audience, we find that the enacted community of a choral performance encourages the individual to find him- or herself within the group. Bernhard Gliesen claims that "myth and ritual form guide our actions in liminal situations even if we are not aware of the original version of the mythological or ritual pattern,"[5] and in the *Miserere*s both the audience and the performers are balanced between the aesthetic experience traditionally associated with Western art music and the much older traditions of religious rituals governing confession and absolution. The *Misereres*, and with them the figures of the penitent human and just but merciful God they invoke, stand at the crux of these two frames, offering a bridge between them. Through this blend of references, both MacMillan and Pärt seek to bring together the ancient traditions of the Christian church with the modern concert experience.

In contrast to the identification with a particular persona emphasized by these works, the relational nature of both "Sorry Song" and *REwind* is more diffuse. In engaging with a performance of either work the audience is

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[4] Arvo Pärt, in Enzo Restagno, "Arvo Pärt in Conversation", in *Arvo Pärt in Conversation*, trans. Robert Crow (Champaign, France: Dalkey Archive Press, 2012), 73.

[5] Bernhard Gliesen, "The Trauma of Perpetrators", in Jeffrey C. Alexander et al., *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 133.

confronted by both an abstract entity in the form of communal history and a disturbingly present, yet foreign, 'other' in the shape of another's lived experience. The linguistic structures of "Sorry Song" give voice to the tensions between the variously-constructed 'us' and 'them' factions that face all multi-cultural societies. Fletcher first establishes this classification of difference as essential for the act of apologising before encouraging her audience of both singers and listeners to move beyond the binary with the recognition that 'we' must include members of different ethnic and social groups. Like the *Misereres*, *REwind* draws on Christian narratives of guilt and forgiveness, but from within a political context in which the division of society into those who are in need of forgiveness and those who may forgive is politically and emotionally fraught. The traumatic history it draws on is both more violent and more pervasive than that acknowledged in "Sorry Song": in TRC Commissioner Mary Burton's evocative image, the dragons of the apartheid past are not even exiled to the patio, but inhabit the living room of the new South Africa.[6] *REwind* nonetheless attempts to deconstruct any easy differentiation between victim and perpetrator as part of an attempt to forge a society that can include all people.

My reiteration of how music acts as an interface between oneself and others emphasizes the crucial role it plays in mobilising our relationships. This is not only a core tenet of relational musicology, but also may be something more fundamental: as Ian Cross writes, "musical listening is not only active, it appears to have its roots in processes central to human *interaction*."[7] Through processes of entrainment, music can connect us with each other in performance, but my cases studies suggest that this social phenomenon is not limited to those individuals who are physically co-present in any given

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[6] Mary Burton, quoted in Catherine Cole, "Dragons in the Living Room: Truth and Reconciliation in Repertoire", in *Performing South Africa's Truth Commission: Stages of Transition* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010), 122.

[7] Ian Cross, "Listening as Covert Performance", *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 135, Special Issue no. 1 (2010): 75.

performative instance. My study of Fitzsimmons has shown how the online dissemination of recordings creates virtual communities that relate to each other through their relationship with the performer and his music. Meanwhile, the re-situating of religious ritual within the concert hall in the *Misereres* foregrounds audience members' relationships to God—relationships that are not bound by the temporal or spatial boundaries of the concert hall— by placing the audience within a ritual of confession that links them to centuries of religious practice. Participants in "Sorry Song" performances are asked to enact an empathetic identification with others, whether by corporal action such as standing in respect or joining hands, or through musical harmony. Finally, *REwind*'s audiences are confronted with the physical manifestations of a past that is quickly fading out of living memory but which carry within them the reminder that the stability of present society rests on a precarious relationship with the past.

5.2 How we remember ourselves

One of the most significant ways the music I examine in my thesis serves to structure identities is through its structuring of memory. As W. James Booth notes, memory is "at the core of identity, and in ways that go beyond the explicit and self-conscious gestures of narratives, memorials, archives, and civic history to the memory contained in habits of the heart and in locales." [8] Booth's vision of memory is of something built up over time that anchors the individual to a community and that allows the individual narrative to be contextualised within that of a family, religious group, or society. The destruction of a community thus ruptures the collective memory of a culture.

This communal narrative-building function of memory is an important motif throughout my project, beginning with Arnold Schoenberg's *A Survivor*

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[8] W. James Booth, *Communities of Memory: On Witness, Identity and Justice* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 39.

from Warsaw, one of the earliest compositions to directly confront the legacy of the Holocaust. Through the plight of a narrator who can only remember isolated fragments of his experience, Schoenberg evinces a deep concern with the nature of memory and its connections to traumatic experiences. The implications for music's role in facilitating memory in *Survivor* are two-fold. The first implication is clear from the work's overall structure, as the high point of the narrative and the core moment of the narrator's re-constructed memory is a musical event: the singing of the *Shema Yisrael*. It is this instance of sung defiance that brings the other shards of memory together and it is to this moment that they, and the work as a whole, point. Reciting the *Shema Yisrael* is a religious rite that lies at the heart of Jewish religious identity, and to sing it is a powerful assertion of that identity. Furthermore, it is instructive to note that, even in the secular world of *Survivor*'s imagined concentration camps, it is a religious ritual in the form of the "long-forgotten creed" that serves to crown the action. In this way it prefigures Pärt's and MacMillan's assertions of ritual power in their *Misereres*.

A second indication of the relationship between music and memory can be found in the fact that the entire episode is set to music. This may seem like a facile observation: setting things to music is what composers do. But by allowing the story to unfold surrounded by musical figuration, Schoenberg implies that there is something about the production of music that is crucial for the revelation of this traumatic past. Here, Schoenberg is supported by the extensive literature on the therapeutic value of music, both for accessing painful memories and for enhancing fluidity of expression.[9] Outside of the specific confines of music therapy, M.J. Grant has noted that music can bring

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[9] See *inter alia* Jos de Backer and Julie Sutton, eds., *The Music in Music Therapy* (Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2014); Julie Sutton, ed., *Music, Music Therapy and Trauma: International Perspectives* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2002); David Read Johnson, "The Role of Creative Arts Therapies in the Diagnosis and Treatment of Psychological Trauma", *The Arts in Psychotherapy* 14, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 7–13; Dorit Amir, "Giving Trauma a Voice: The Role of Improvisational Music Therapy in Exposing, Dealing With and Healing a Traumatic Experience of Sexual Violence", *Music Therapy Perspectives* 22, no. 2 (2004): 96–103.

people together in a "safe and neutral space, creating unifying and cathartic dynamics [and enabling] the dissipation of disruptive emotional tensions", which ties in with Ian Cross's empirical investigations of how music can be used to manage situations of social uncertainty.[10] The essential identity of the Survivor is irrevocably tied to his memories, which themselves are not only framed as part of a musical performance but are inspired by the final sung proclamation of Jewish belief.

Although *Survivor* offers one way of understanding music's relationship with memory and identity, it is only one option among several that emerge from the growing literature on the subject. The specific path of inquiry often differs by sub-discipline. For instance, within scholarship oriented to the cognitive sciences there is significant research being done on how music might help us jog our memories, on the emotional connection between music and memory, and on techniques we use to remember music. In ethnomusicology, by contrast, memory is often framed as cultural memory, with music's role in defining an individual's place within a culture being of particular interest. Meanwhile, popular music studies evinces a strong concern with how music interacts with discourses of youth, 'coolness', and nostalgia, while the broad category of music and conflict studies looks at the varying roles of music in times of internecine struggles. The works I study here synthesize elements present in these existing literatures in different ways. For example, Fitzsimmons's music works within a particular sub-culture defined by a popular music genre and predicated on wider discourses of authenticity to facilitate the processing of a traumatic experience that is not collective but at once extremely personal and widely relevant. This kind of small-scale pain features in general studies of music's role within mood regulation, and occasionally in popular music studies of genres such as 'emo', but otherwise it

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[10] M.J. Grant et al., "Music and Conflict Transformation: Interdisciplinary Perspectives", *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews* 35, no. 2 (2010): 191; Ian Cross, "The Evolutionary Nature of Music Meaning", *Musicae Scientiae* Special Issue on Music and Evolution (2009): 179–200.

has not been a significant subject of scholarly inquiry.[11] My study of Fitzsimmons demonstrates that the bold gestures of large-scale works such as *REwind* are not the only, or even the best, material from which people understand their lives. Such official musical responses to tragedy have their place in the collective musical life of a society, but the connections they make with the processes of memory are necessarily distinct from those of individual voices.

One way of parsing the different relationships between music and memory demonstrated in my thesis is to separate them by what and how things are remembered. With the exception of "Sorry Song", all of my case studies focus on individual lived experience, but the way in which this experience is constructed varies substantially. In *The Sparrow and the Crow*, the object of memory is not particular events, but rather a spectrum of emotions that are only occasionally punctuated by discrete incidents. This 'feeling-memory' is in strong contrast to the performative memory evident in "Sorry Song", which has an acknowledgement of the specific experience of the Stolen Generations woven into the performance of apology. When seen through the frame of religious ritual, the *Misereres* also offer a kind of performative memory-through-doing; however, this type of memory becomes individualised within the frame of the concert performance in which listeners and performers might interact with the music and its underlying ritual qualities in different ways. For those sensitive to its ritual nature, the *Miserere* is a profoundly communal and historically-situated act; as Patricia K. Tull acknowledges, "To pray as 'I' with the psalmist is to bring our unique and unrepeatable selves, with our unique dilemmas, to a common path, to place ourselves as hedged about on all sides by the host of others who have travelled

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[11] Cf. Suvi Saarkallio, "Music as Emotional Self-regulation Throughout Adulthood", *Psychology of Music* 39, no. 3 (July 2011): 307–327; Bernhard Leipold and Tim Loepthein, "Music Reception and Emotional Regulation in Adolescence and Adulthood", *Musicae Scientiae* 19 (March 2015): 111–128; Aaron P. Anastasi, "Adolescent Boys' Use of Emo Music as Their Healing Lament", *Journal of Religion and Health*, 44, no. 3 (Fall, 2005): 303–319.

from lament to reconciliation before us."[12] The final kind of memory-work demonstrated by these case studies is a translated or transferred memory of the experience of others via the hearing of testimony. This is clear not only from *REwind* and *The Sparrow and the Crow*, but also from *A Survivor from Warsaw*, wherein listeners are invited to act as secondary witnesses to another's experience and thereby propagate knowledge of these experiences to a new audience. All of these types of memory contribute to the ways people conceive of themselves as individuals and as members of society.

5.3 Musical memorials

As I mentioned briefly in the chapter on "Sorry Song" and *REwind*, the interaction between these collective musical works and memory actually bleeds over into the area of memorialisation, which both requires memory and is distinct from it. Although in the space of this conclusion I can only touch on the connections between these works and musical memorialisation, a few words should suffice to intimate the relationship. As Leigh Payne has noted, "without language to describe them, violent acts disappear from memory"[13], and so we create memorial narratives of those acts we wish to keep before us. To be memorialised is not, or at least not only, to be remembered, but also to have one's experiences acknowledged as important beyond oneself. As Erika Doss has demonstrated, conflicts over memorials often have roots in wider social tensions over what and who should be acknowledged.[14] This is most familiar in discussions of physical edifices, but music offers another, more dynamic, kind of memorial.

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[12] Patricia K. Tull, "Bakhtin's Confessional Self-Accounting and Psalms of Lament", *Biblical Interpretation* 13, no. 1 (2005): 55.

[13] Leigh A. Payne, *Unsettling Accounts* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 242.

[14] Erika Doss, *Memorial Mania* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); for more on recognition see Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition" in *Multiculturalism*, ed. Amy Gutmann (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 25–73.

Commemorative compositions are a long-established part of musical history but their ephemerality leads Alexander Rehding to characterise them as "sounding souvenirs".[15] Despite this formulation's implication of low value, Rehding argues that the interplay of music and commemoration reveals an array of cultural values otherwise obscured. Of the works I discuss, *REwind* is the only one conceived in the monumental terms suggested by Rehding: in a review by Robyn Sassen for the Cape Town *Times*, Miller is quoted as calling *REwind* "a living sound memorial" that "develops its own sense of dialogue and engagement."[16] His positioning of *REwind* as an enduring tribute aligns it with what James Young argues is the purpose of all public art, namely "to create shared spaces that lend a common spatial [and in the case of *REwind*, temporal] frame to otherwise disparate experiences and understanding", and in this way to "propagate the illusion of common memory."[17] I contend that the common memories constructed by *REwind* are first collapsed into a single musical frame, then placed alongside official histories in South Africa. This positions musical performance as a profoundly historical act of memory, both as it encapsulates and propagates knowledge of the past and as it is utilised in the creation of a collective future. This process is not without a certain amount of danger, particularly as memory itself can be supplanted or re-written by memorial efforts. Walter Benjamin warns that "memory is not an instrument for exploring the past but its theatre", while Pierre Nora suggests that memorials actually inhibit memory: "The less memory is experienced from the inside, the more it exists through its exterior scaffolding and outward

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[15] Alexander Rehding, *Music and Monumentality: Commemoration and Wonderment in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 73–108.

[16] Philip Miller, quoted in Robyn Sassen, "Paeans of Pain-Filled Hope Return", *Times* (Cape Town), 30 April 2011 http://www.timeslive.co.za/opinion/2011/04/30/paeans-of-pain-filled-hope-return (accessed 2 February 2016).

[17] James Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 6.

signs".[18] This is how national myths are written, and it is not difficult to imagine how *REwind* might contribute to the production of a shared South African past—however illusory—through the preservation of certain moments from the ravages of history's gyrations.

A memorial is often thought of as a structure that commemorates something in an enduring fashion as a means of preserving a particular memory. This is true to an extent, but as Neil Smelser reminds us, "a memorial also conveys the message that now that we have paid our respects to a trauma, we are now justified in forgetting about it."[19] To extend Steven Mithen's image of downloading memories into material artefacts to encompass this duality, memorials—musical or otherwise—are like a computer's external hard drive that is dutifully updated, but only accessed for specific purposes. Smelser's point is that remembering is inevitably bound up with forgetting, and indeed this captures much of what he and others mean by 'remembering rightly'. Even though the other case studies in this thesis are not monumentalised in the same way as *REwind*, they are also committed to questions of enacted memory and forgetting.

One of the key elements in musically-performed memory is that music's iterative nature provides the opportunity for memories to be passed on to new audiences, thereby preserving them as a part of a collectively imagined history. This is sometimes conceived of as musical witnessing, although Avishai Margalit has argued persuasively that true witnessing in a moral sense is only possible in the first person—a position given pithy expression in Paul Celan's declaration *Niemand/zeugt für den/Zeugen* [No-

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[18] Walter Benjamin, "A Berlin Chronicle", in *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, trans. Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), 314; Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire", *Representations* no. 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter Memory (Spring 1989): 13.

[19] Neil Smelser, "Psychological Trauma and Cultural Trauma", in *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, by Jeffrey C. Alexander et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 53.

one/bears witness for the/witness].[20] Nevertheless, in musical performance, audiences can be transformed into 'witnesses to a witnessing' by partaking in what Alison Landsberg calls "prosthetic memory", or memories that are mediated through film, television, and experiential museums.[21] Landsberg's idea is echoed in the work of advocates for 'active externalism', including Mithen, whose argument for our capacity to download memories to material objects has already been mentioned, and Andy Clark, whose concept of the "extended mind" suggests that externalized repositories of information are as much a form of memory as internal ones.[22] Although these authors do not specifically reference music, I argue that it can function in a similar way to other media by creating "shared social frameworks for people who inhabit, literally and figuratively, different social spaces, practices, and beliefs" and "encouraging people to feel connected to, while recognizing the alterity of, the 'other'."[23]

The concept of the musical witness gains particular significance in contexts where radical evil seems to demand perpetual remembrance. The imperative of memory embodied in *Survivor* is reflected in the wider treatment of the Holocaust, which, since the 1960s, "has acquired the quality of a civil religion" in which "the fatal polarity between perpetrator and victim could never be reconciled, but it could be overcome by a shared memory based on an empathetic and ethical recognition of the victim's memories."[24]

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[20] Avishai Margalit, *The Ethics of Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); Paul Celan, "Aschenglorie hinter", l. 24–26.

[21] Alison Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory; The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

[22] See Steven J. Mithen, "A Creative Explosion: Theory of Mind, Language and the Disembodied Mind of the Upper Paleolithic", in *Creativity in Human Evolution and Prehistory*, ed. Steven Mithen (London: Routledge, 1998), 185–192, and Andy Clark and David Chalmers, "The Extended Mind" *Analysis* 58, no. 1 (Jan 1998): 7–18.

[23] Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory*, 8–9.

[24] Aleida Assmann, "From Collective Violence to a Common Future: Four Models for Dealing with a Traumatic Past", in *Other People's Pain*, ed. Martin Modlinger and Philipp Sonntag (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2011), 49.

Aleida Assmann argues that the singularity accorded to the Holocaust (in spite of knowledge of other horrific mass murders) means that its cry of 'never forget' is often invoked, but rarely adopted as a model for dealing with the past. Calls for remembering are entangled with the necessity of forgetting; in other words, "remembering is not implemented to memorialize an event of the past into an indefinite future but is introduced as a therapeutic tool to cleanse, to purge, to heal, to reconcile ... to forge a new beginning".[25] Assmann notes three interlocking models for remembering in order to forget: first is the Christian confession, where sins must be publicly proclaimed before being forgiven, followed by the philosophical concept of catharsis, wherein trauma is re-lived in order to be overcome, and finally the legal conception of witnessing, in which memory supports the judicial process but serves little purpose outside of it. The parallels between these models and the memory work accomplished in each of my case studies suggest new ways to approach the relationship between music and memory by conceiving of performers and audiences as occupying distinct roles including those of witness, confessor (or confessant), and mediator.

Whether thought of in terms of prosthetic memory or the interlocution of memory and its absence, different models of the relationship between audience, music, text, and context are apparent in these pieces of music. Yet, the question of what these musical memorials do is somewhat less clear. One perspective suggests that by transforming confession, apology, and reconciliation into rituals, musical memorials facilitate not only forgetting, but also catharsis, as guilt, resentment, or other negative emotions are subsumed into a wider narrative. This is particularly evident in the narrative of the Miserere mei. The author of Psalm 51 begins by publicly remembering his guilt before God, but once this recitation of memory is complete, his confession turns to a confident expectation of not just forgiveness, but reconciliation. God's wilful forgetting of confessed sin is implied by the request "hide thy face

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[25] Ibid., 50.

from my sins and blot out all mine iniquities" (Ps. 51:11), and this plea for erasure is reiterated throughout the Penitential Psalms. In their modern incarnations of the psalmist's cry, MacMillan and Pärt adapt a text that is general in its confession and therefore open to adaptation for a variety of situations. As this confession is transferred to the modern concert hall, audiences are under no obligation to see themselves reflected in the poetic speaker. Nonetheless, some do identify with the music's redemptive arc: as Peter Phillips puts it, "nothing is being demanded of you, you're not being told to think of anything in a concert, and yet you may well have a fantastic experience of a religious nature".[26] In this sense, the *Misereres* offer confessional narratives that are catholic in their outlook even as they proclaim their anchorage in Western Christian religious traditions. So long as audiences continue to find this music and the rituals they reference compelling, they are likely to remain part of the classical repertoire and thus, available as narratives of confession and redemption.

In contrast to the *Misereres*' widespread applicability, the individual confession present within *The Sparrow and the Crow* is more narrowly focused. Fitzsimmons's appeal is predicated in part on the perception that his music is an authentic revelation of a true inner self. Although this is at least partly constrained by the creation of a performing persona and the expectations of indie music in general, this has not prevented audiences from exploring his work as it resonates with situations in their own lives. The theme revealed in discussions of these powerful vicarious experiences is how people use Fitzsimmons's music—including its confessional content—as a way of understanding themselves and narrating their lives. Even though Fitzsimmons as an individual may no longer feel any need to continue apologising for his past actions nor experience any catharsis when he does so, the nature of his performing persona and the strength of his audience's identification with that

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[26] Peter Phillips, quoted in Jonathan Arnold, *Sacred Music in Secular Society* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 68.

persona require that he continue performing songs from *The Sparrow and the Crow* long after the personal experiences that inspired the songs have faded. It is through the vicarious understanding of guilt and confession that his audience can themselves achieve some sense of catharsis. The intensity and intimacy of the relationship between Fitzsimmons and his audience means that it is concentrated on Fitzsimmons as an individual. Although by his own admission he strives to re-inhabit his own past experiences as fully as possible for the duration of the performance, the specificity of Fitzsimmons's lyrics and their close coupling with his persona suggest that—despite the existence of cover versions created by fans—*The Sparrow and the Crow* is unlikely to have a life beyond Fitzsimmons.

The music of Fitzsimmons, Pärt, and MacMillan is strongly individual in its approach to guilt, forgiveness, and reconciliation, but the implications of remembering the past rightly and the attendant forgetting are equally significant when written large in society. In her discussion of remembering in order to overcome, Assmann positions the South African TRC as the consummate model for dealing with traumatic pasts. She writes:

> The Truth and Reconciliation Commission as designed by Bishop Tutu und [sic] Alex Boraine created a new form of public ritual, which combined features of the tribunal, the cathartic drama, and the Christian confession. In these public rituals a traumatic event had to be publicly narrated and shared; the victim had to tell his or her experiences and they had to be witnessed and acknowledged by the accused before they could be relegated to the shared past.[27]

Miller draws on this same combination of factors in constructing *REwind* as a living memorial that allows people to remember in order that they may forget. By limiting himself to excerpts of dramatic re-tellings of traumatic individual experiences Philip Miller shines a powerful light on the role of memory and forgetting in a country facing significant social upheaval. Yet, as a work

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[27] Assmann, "From Collective Violence to a Common Future", 51.

devoted to the experiences of a particular group of people and in many ways addressed specifically to that group, *REwind* faces an uphill battle in acquiring widespread popularity amongst audiences who lack historic, social, or geographic connections to South Africa. For these external audiences there are no latent memories to be awakened and exorcised; instead, the piece relies on evoking empathetic identification amongst its audience via a shared prosthetic memory. In other words, performing or listening to *REwind* may be powerful for African-Americans in Brooklyn and "blue-rinsed English ladies"[28] alike, but the experiences of both are likely to differ from those of the Gauteng Choristers, not to mention those South Africans who find their own subjective experiences refracted through *REwind*'s testimony. As the case study demonstrates, even those to whom the piece is addressed seem unsure how to incorporate the memories it embodies. *REwind* leaves open the question of forgiveness and reconciliation and as time goes on its re-vivifying of testimony in performance may yet turn out to be just another layer of information recorded in the sprawling archive of South Africa's traumatic history. This uncertainty is reflected in the fact that the very violence and societal divisions highlighted in *REwind* continue to reverberate in South Africa in ways that seem to belie the optimism of the 'rainbow nation'. In the difficult economic situation and conditions of social unrest currently enveloping South Africa, the success of *Rewind* as a model of overcoming is far from certain.

As I note in the previous chapter, Milan Kundera warns us that "the struggle of humanity against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting."[29] Many writers have borrowed these words in order to argue for the necessity of memorials, commemorative events, and other public memory

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[28] Miller, quoted in Sassen, "Paeans of Pain-Filled Hope Return", http://www.timeslive.co.za/opinion/2011/04/30/paeans-of-pain-filled-hope-return (accessed 2 February 2016).

[29] Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, trans. Aaron Asher (New York: Harper Perennial, 1996), 4.

aids so that we "never forget"[30], but what is sometimes missing from these exhortations to remember is the acknowledgement of memory's limits. Lurking at the back of this project is the question for how long should we remember, how often do we need to drag up the past in order to apologise for it all over again? As the South African reporter exclaimed, surely at some point we must fast-forward? Like almost all music that has ever existed, these pieces will eventually be lost from the repertoire, but that does not mean that they will have had no impact. What each of these works suggests is that music offers a means for audiences and performers to enact memory and forgetting in ways that shape their relationships with themselves, others, and society. Like the processes of memory and memorialisation themselves, all of these works are essentially conservative in the sense that they perpetuate the past; nevertheless, they do so in order to move towards an imagined future wherein the wrongs of the past can be rightfully forgotten. Furthermore, they are not limited to introspection, but work actively to shape their audiences' relationships with each other and with society. Taken together, they suggest that acknowledging the past even while walking into the future can bring to light potential for shared understanding that might otherwise be hidden.

5.4 Music and the transformation of conflict

Thinking about music as a means of communicating one's guilt or extending forgiveness leads naturally to thinking about the potential role of music in reconciliation efforts. In my previous chapters, I examine reconciliation on multiple levels in society, from interpersonal relationships to intergroup or societal relationships to an individual's relationship with God. Unlike some studies of music and reconciliation, I make no attempts to quantify my case

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[30] This slogan has been put to a number of uses including references to 9/11 in the United States and to Remembrance Day in the United Kingdom. It has particularly strong resonances of Holocaust remembrance, evidenced by its prominence in materials relating to the celebration of YomHaShoah.

studies in terms of changes in the level of perceived reconciliation as a result of performances. This is largely due to the abstract nature of the pieces in question. As I suggest in the chapter dealing with Fitzsimmons, there may have been a time when the performance of *The Sparrow and the Crow* directly enacted confession, self-forgiveness, or catharsis, but in more recent times, his performances operate within the domain of symbolisation. For the singer, the broken relationship that lies at the heart of *The Sparrow and the Crow* has been healed, but not mended—to put it another way, forgiveness has been extended and peace restored, but reconciliation has been abandoned. This is itself symbolised by the final track on *The Sparrow and the Crow*. Entitled "Goodmorning", both the track's echo of Fitzsimmons's earlier album *Goodnight* and the implication of a fresh start are deliberate. This is reinforced by its simple message: time will pass, your heart will mend, and—some good morning—you will find love. The same division between enaction and symbolisation distinguishes the concert-hall *Miserere*s from the rituals in which they originate. They refract the confessional narrative of Psalm 51 in new contexts, but they are not sacraments and the concert is not a religious service, even if individual listeners might find their performances deeply moving to the point of being transformative. The potential viability of the musical works I discuss as vehicles of conflict transformation is thus decidedly mixed. Perhaps this is not unexpected: Hollywood might suggest that a carefully chosen serenade can reunite people, as in the rendition of "Can't Take My Eyes Off of You" used by Patrick Verona (played by Heath Ledger) to woo Kat Stratford (played by Julia Stiles) in *10 Things I Hate About You*, but real life is more complex than the movies make it out to be.

For works that take a more active role, there are clear, if as yet not fully explored, implications for the study of music as a factor in promoting the resolution or transformation of conflict in society. *REwind* combines aspects of both enaction and symbolisation, but even though Miller addresses the continuing nature of reconciliation in his work it is nevertheless difficult to map it onto specific outcomes. For many in South Africa, reconciliation, which implies a restoration of a previous state, is unthinkable in a society whose

tenuous grasp on a lasting peace depends on not relapsing into former, familiar, racial hierarchies. As a politically-pointed exploration of human rights abuses, *REwind* has the capacity to complicate easy oppositional narratives and to propagate collective memories of a traumatic history; however, without continuing performances and engagement on a broad social level, the impact of a work such as *REwind* on wider processes of conflict transformation is inevitably limited.

Of the pieces I examine, only "Sorry Song" has the explicit purpose of fostering conflict transformation. Tellingly, it is also the case study that has the most limited archival existence in Taylor's sense of the term; given that it is structured as a conversational address between two specific groups of people, it might be argued that "Sorry Song's" most effective mode of existence is not as an enduring musical work, but as something performed in real time, i.e., as repertoire. In performance, "Sorry Song" aims to bring together two groups of people (often, as I noted previously, in mixed groups) to stimulate greater cultural understanding through the acknowledgement of different and traumatic histories. In addition to the reconciliation it effects in the physical nature of its performance (holding hands, moving together, etc.), "Sorry Song" also enacts reconciliation through sound as when the lyrics of the final verse and chorus shift from "I" to "we" and the underlying harmonies reflect this closure. The clearly-articulated structure and purpose of "Sorry Song" as a tool for reconciliation suggest the possibility of an empirical investigation of attitudes among Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians who participate in performances of it: this might provide specific evidence of its role in the on-going efforts to transform race relations in Australia.

Despite the difficulties I outline above, the idea that music has an important role to play in conflict transformation continues to have traction. In the introduction to *Music and Conflict*, John M. O'Connell and Salwa el-Shahan Castelo-Branco suggest that music's flexibility of interpretation is an advantage in areas of conflict:

> Music rather than language may provide a better medium for interrogating the character of conflict and for evaluating the quality of conflict resolution. While language as prose tends to delimit interpretation according to the partial dictates of authorial intention, music as practice serves to liberate interpretation according to the multiple views of audience reception.[31]

Music's openness to different interpretations allows for the intellectual space necessary for finding a shared reality in the midst of conflict. Olivier Urbain rhapsodizes about music as possessing "a tremendous power to move people in any direction, towards peaceful and noble goals, or violent and destructive ones" while Anne-Marie Gray follows up by characterizing music as a "bridge between a shared past and reconciliation. It allows a society to understand itself in terms of its own interpretation of reality, but also to conceptualize the experiences of adverse groups by emphasizing common ground and by communicating in both directions".[32]

The consistency with which scholars employ similar language to describe music's power suggests that there is something broadly appealing about this conception, and musical projects that claim to bring together conflicting groups have frequently been the subject of widespread adulation. One of the best known of these projects, the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, was founded in 1999 by Daniel Barenboim and Edward Said as evidence (according to their website) of the conductor/pianist and cultural theorist/literary critic's "hope to replace ignorance with education; to humanize the other; to imagine a better future".[33] The ensemble's lofty goals

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[31] John M. O'Connell and Salwa el-Shawan Castelo-Branco, eds., *Music and Conflict* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 2.

[32] Olivier Urbain, Introduction to *Music and Conflict Transformation: Harmonies and Dissonances in Geopolitics*, (London: I.D. Tauris & Co., 2008), 1; Anne-Marie Gray, "Music as a Tool of Reconciliation in South Africa", in *Music and Conflict Transformation: Harmonies and Dissonances in Geopolitics*, ed. Olivier Urbain (London: I.D. Tauris & Co., 2008), 64.

[33] West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, http://www.west-eastern-divan.org (accessed 27 June 2016).

are picked up in Western media accounts of their performances: Alexandra Coghlan proclaimed "the symbolism of Daniel Barenboim's West-Eastern Divan Orchestra has never been more potent or necessary" in an *Independent* review from 2014; George Hall notes that they are "uniquely inspiring" for the *Guardian* in 2015; and in 2006, the *Observer* claimed that "here is peaceful collaboration in action; young people from communities which, though apparently hopelessly divided, have come together to make music."[34] In a parallel stamp of approval, the United Nations has designated the Orchestra as a Global Advocate for Cultural Understanding. Despite the general optimism characterizing the reception of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, scholars such as Rachel Beckles Willson have taken a more measured stance. Beckles Willson argues that such projects "share a legacy of nineteenth-century European idealism, and often a conviction that the symphony orchestra can transcend some of the dilemmas of an alarmingly fractured world" that may not be reflected in the day-to-day experiences of the musicians.[35] As Beckles Willson notes, the question of whether those who participate in the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra (or indeed any number of similar projects) return to their homes after the workshops, concerts, and tours with permanently changed attitudes towards a cultural 'other' is not only difficult to answer but also reflects a suspiciously one-sided vision of music as intrinsically edifying.

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[34]Alexandra Coghlan, "Prom 46—review", *The Independent*, 21 August 2014, http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/classical/reviews/prom-46-daniel-barenboim-west-eastern-divan-orchestra-review-9682536.html; George Hall, "West-Eastern Divan Orchestra", *The Guardian*, 19 August 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/music/2015/aug/19/prom-44-west-eastern-divan-orchestra-barenboim-review (accessed 27 June 2016); The quotation is from a leading article, "Barenboim's Harmonious Message Goes Beyond Classical Music", 30 April 2006, originally printed in the *Observer* and now accessible via the *Guardian*, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2006/apr/30/arts.classicalmusicandopera (accessed 27 June 2016).

[35] Rachel Beckles Willson, *Orientalism and Musical Mission: Palestine and the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 3. See Rachel Beckles Willson, "The Parallax Worlds of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra", *Journal of the Royal Musicological Association* 134, no. 2 (2009): 319–347 for a more in-depth exploration of how this thesis is evident in the work of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra.

The idea that music can bring people together is not necessarily untrue, but it needs to be complicated by the realization that the identity-confirming function of music can be used to divide as well as to unite.

By contrast, although it is important not to oversell the potential uses of music, a number of scholars have posited that music allows us to become more empathetic to the experiences of others. This is not to suggest that music will function as some sort of panacea for social divisions; nevertheless, the assertions of music's value in resolving conflict have garnered some empirical support. The empirical studies of the project "Music, Empathy, and Cultural Understanding" undertaken by Eric Clarke, Tia DeNora, and Jonna Vuoskoski produced what the authors call "narrow but 'hard-nosed' evidence for music's positive inter-cultural potential" in demonstrating that passive listening to music can heighten empathetic responses in listeners with high dispositional empathy.[36] Although the results of this study are preliminary, they are nonetheless suggestive. This capacity of music is glossed by Felicity Laurence, who argues that it "offers a specific potential to enable, catalyse and strengthen empathic response, ability and relationship, and that it is this *potential* capacity which lies at the core of music's function in peace-building".[37] Whether by enacting harmony and community, as Cook suggests is a function of all choral performances,[38] or by allowing for people to conceptualise themselves within particular relational contexts, music's capacity for a variety of different meanings or 'aboutnesses'—in Ian Cross's

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[36] Eric Clarke, Tia DeNora, Jonna Vuoskoski, "Music, Empathy, and Cultural Understanding: Final Report", 20. http://www.music.ox.ac.uk/assets/Cultural-Value-Music-Empathy-Final-Report.pdf

[37] Felicity Laurence, "Music and Empathy", in *Music and Conflict Transformation: Harmonies and Dissonances in Geopolitics*, ed. Olivier Urbain (London: I.D. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2008), 14.

[38] Nicholas Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 75.

term, its "floating intentionality"[39]—can provide spaces of connection and catharsis for its audience.

This function of music is of special significance within the specific context of post-conflict societies wherein previously antagonistic groups seek new ways of interacting with each other and with their history. South African author Ingrid de Kok offers one of the most suggestive ways of interpreting the TRC and artistic responses to it when she claims:

> Nobody believes that the TRC will or can produce the full 'truth',
> in all its detail, for all time. It is in the multiplicity of partial
> versions and experiences, composed and recomposed within
> sight of each other, that truth 'as a thing of this world', in
> Foucault's phrase, will emerge. In this mobile current individuals
> and communities will make and remake their meanings.[40]

This finds resonance in Ralph Goodman's defence of *A Human Being Died that Night* and *The Cry of Winnie Mandela*, two literary works that grapple with the moral quandaries raised by the TRC: "In order to make constructive use of memory … our underlying sense of history needs to become a fragmented one, constructed from many different accounts of the same times and events."[41] There is a clear parallel between Goodman's call for "many different accounts" of history and the fragmentation of narrative propagated by *REwind*; likewise, the importance of listening to and acknowledging marginalised voices drives "Sorry Song". Beyond these specific situations, the insistence on multiplicity and on the value of different voices is a key component of musical interventions in the field of conflict transformation as broadly conceived.

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[39] The term is from Ian Cross, glossed as "[Music's] aboutness—its intentionality—can vary from context to context, within a context, and from individual to individual." In "Music and Biocultural Evolution", in *The Cultural Study of Music*, eds. Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert, and Richard Middleton (New York: Routledge, 2003), 23.

[40] Ingrid de Kok, "Cracked Heirlooms: Memory on Exhibition", in *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Memory in South Africa*, ed. Sarah Nuttall and Carli Coetzee (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1998), 61.

[41] Ralph Goodman, "History, Memory and Reconciliation: Njabulo Ndebele's *The Cry of Winnie Mandela* and Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela's *A Human Being Died That Night*", *Literator* 27, no. 2 (Aug. 2006): 3.

From the perspective of both artists and audiences, composing and recomposing experience in performance offers a valuable opportunity of working through guilt, forgiveness, and reconciliation as a means to meaning in situations of conflict.

5.5 Final thoughts

In a discussion of postmodern art's self-conscious interplay between past, present and future, Susan Suleiman asks: "How does one create a future that will acknowledge and incorporate the past—a past that includes, in our very own century, some of the darkest moments in history—without repeating it?"[42] Although Suleiman couches her question in general terms, it is the same question anyone who has wrestled with the implications of wrongdoing has had to answer for herself. Each of the artists featured here engage with the same issues, though not all have chosen "some of the darkest moments in history" on which to focus. I have selected these works not on the basis of aesthetic exceptionality, but because taken together they demonstrate the range of musical explorations of human guilt and forgiveness within relationships. By addressing the import of guilt, forgiveness, and reconciliation in the romantic-personal, religious, and political spheres of human life, they provide examples of how we might structure our own lives within the complex, messy web of human associations. This has resonance with Cook's assertion that "music is not just an escape from the world but a way of learning how to be in the world ... a flight simulator for social life".[43] Cook's point is couched in the context of ensemble performance in which different performers come together in a highly nuanced enactment of community, but

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[42] Susan Suleiman, *Subversive Intent: Gender, Politics, and the Avant-Garde* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), xv.

[43] Nicholas Cook, "Writing On Music or Axes to Grind: Road Rage and Musical Community", *Music Education Research* 5, no. 3 (November 2003): 251.

in my thesis I look beyond the web of connections that unites performers sharing a stage or rehearsal hall to examine the audience and the wider culture they represent. Participating in these works of music, whether as player or audience, enmeshes us in a performance not only of music, but also of multiple social identities and relationships. Musical performance is, to borrow Frith's description, "a fusion of imaginative fantasy and bodily practice" that is simultaneously an "integration of aesthetics and ethics"[44]—and one that has the potential to act powerfully in our world.

The diversity of this project suggests a number of possible avenues for further research, including such general areas such as the processes of identification and fandom in popular music, the interrelationship of artifice and authenticity in pop performance, and the continuing influence of ritual on music. Foremost amongst these is a project I am developing on musical commemoration in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries that explores how music composes narratives of collective memory that construct our understanding of the past. Although my thesis case studies of *Survivor* and *REwind* provide an introduction to the subject of musical memorials, I build on these to investigate other narratives of memory created by societies as they grapple with traumatic and contested pasts. To date, little work in musicology has combined music's social and narrative character with its memorial function.[45] In this proposed study of musical memorials dedicated to war, genocide, and terrorism, I bring together concepts of embodied performance as visceral pedagogy, drawn from Alison Landsberg and Diana Taylor, with concepts of secondary witnesses and postmemory. As developed by Marianne Hirsch, postmemory describes the relationship of the 'generation after' to the cultural and personal traumas they experience second-hand; postmemories

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[44] Simon Frith, *Performing Rites; On the Value of Popular Music,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 275.

[45] A notable exception is Alexander Rehding, *Music and Monumentality: Commemoration and Wonderment in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

are thus those memories which are mediated by the stories and images transmitted by the first generation.[46] Audiences for these memories adopt certain aspects and discard others, thereby becoming retrospective, or secondary, witnesses of events. By focusing on how later generations perceive historical traumas and how these narratives are perpetuated, I examine a series of shifting narratives of memory that reveal how the past is re-composed to serve the present. Given the multitude of dark histories available to contemporary societies, the central question I seek to answer is how people use musical memorials as a means of living with and in ruination.[47]

Understanding how musical performance helps audiences negotiate multiple overlapping identities is key to understanding music's wider applicability: as David Hesmondhalgh puts it, "music's ability to enrich people's lives is fragile, but I believe it can be defended better if we understand that fragility, and not pretend it floats free of the profound problems we face in our inner lives, and in our attempts to live together".[48] Throughout this project I have held that the often-fragmented individual experiences of audiences can provide a framework for reception studies by illuminating wider historical trends. This thesis itself is an analogue to this: through an exploration of guilt, forgiveness, and reconciliation, it points towards a particular conception of the multivalent relationship between contemporary music, memory, conflict, and trauma.

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[46] See Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

[47] I use ruination here in the sense of Ann Laura Stoler, who defines it as "an *act* perpetrated, a *condition* to which one is subject, and a *cause* of loss." *Imperial Debris: On Ruins and Ruination* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), 11.

[48] David Hesmondhalgh, *Why Music Matters* (Chichester, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2013), 171.

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