Historicising the story through film and music: an intermedial reading of Heimat 2

Chapter 13

Historicising the Story through Film and Music: An Intermedial Reading of *Heimat 2*[1]

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My hypothesis in this chapter is that intermedial relations in film can serve to ground it in historical reality. In order to test it, I will focus on *Heimat 2: Chronicle of a Generation* (*Die zweite Heimat: Chronik einer Jugend,* 1992), the second part of the monumental *Heimat* TV and cinema series, which started with *Heimat: A Chronicle of Germany* (*Heimat: eine deutsche Chronik,* 1984) and continued with *Heimat 3: A Chronicle of Endings and Beginnings* (*Heimat 3: Chronik einer Zeitenwende,* 2004) and *Home from Home: A Chronicle of Vision* (*Die andere Heimat: Chronik einer Sehnsucht,* 2013), all scripted and directed by German filmmaker Edgar Reitz. Altogether, the project spans over 60 hours, *Heimat 2* being the longest instalment, with 13 episodes totalling more than 25 hours of film.

From its first series, the *Heimat* cycle has enjoyed milestone status as a sweeping representation of German political and artistic history, eliciting excellent scholarship, as well as heated debates on the accuracy of its historical representations. Indeed, history features high on the agenda of all four parts of the cycle, which are bookmarked by major historical events in Germany: the First and Second World Wars in the first *Heimat*, set between 1919 and 1982; the birth and development of new artistic movements, as well as the students' revolts between 1960 and 1970, in *Heimat 2*; the fall of the Berlin Wall in *Heimat 3*, set between 1989 and 2000; and the great wave of emigration from Germany to Brazil in *Home from Home*, where the story loops back to the 1840s. Binding all of them together runs a national as much as subjective motif, the untranslatable concept

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of *Heimat,* involving the ideas of 'home' and 'homeland', whose romantic and nationalistic overtones had been embraced by the sugary and conservative genre of *Heimatfilme* in post-WWII Germany and radically rejected by the 'anti-Heimat' films that made up a strand of the New German Cinema in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Rather than focusing on the representation of the past, however, my objective here will be to evaluate the ways in which the *Heimat 2* series *presents history in the making* by means of intermediality, that is, through the use of music as theme, diegetic performance and organisational principle of all episodes. Set in the clearly demarcated decade of the 1960s, *Heimat 2* is devoted to chronicling the development of the Neue Musik (New Music) movement amidst the artistic effervescence in Germany at the time, including the beginnings of what was initially known as *Junger deutscher Film* (Young German Cinema) and later *Neuer deutscher Film* (New German Cinema). Beyond its many allusions to real facts and personalities in film and music, all the musical roles in the series feature real instrumentalists, singers, conductors and composers, who were all, almost miraculously, also brilliant actors, able to enact on-camera as fiction their actual musical performances. It is in the reality of this musicianship, and the way it inflects the series' form and content, that lies, I wish to claim, an element of incontestable truth, beyond the inevitable, even necessary, betrayals of history taking place on the level of the fable. By being faithful to the contingent event of real-time musical performances, *Heimat 2* injects an element of unpredictable reality into the normative fictional situation that actualises history and constitutes the project's major political contribution, as my analysis in the following sections will hopefully demonstrate.

In *Heimat 2,* the conscious borrowing of techniques typical of another medium, in this case, music, sticks to the eye (and ear), positing it as an ideal object for an intermedial approach. Granted, the series is first and foremost cinema in the conventional sense, reliant as it is on the film medium's properties of spatio-temporal movement and real-life mimesis for narrative purposes. As in the other *Heimat* instalments, here too storytelling takes the upper hand by means of minutely crafted

life-like characters whose unfulfilled desires and ambitions propel the narrative relentlessly forward. Within this context, music could be simply seen as an element of cinematic function, at least as concerns the all-pervading non-diegetic music track, mostly authored by Greek composer Nikos Mamangakis, whose name was made precisely by his work on the first three of the four *Heimat* instalments, but also including a host of other existing classical and popular pieces. As customary in fiction film, this non-diegetic music is there to suture the seams between shots and scenes, provide the desired emotional atmospheres and fill in ellipses of time and space. Even the fact that music is the very subject of the series, in the form of the life story of instrumentalist, composer and conductor Hermann Simon, as well as of those musicians, filmmakers, poets and other artists around him, does not in itself pose a threat to the medium's specificity, aligning it instead with the consecrated cinematic genre of music biopics.

However, a radical intermedial intervention takes place on the diegetic level, in the form of the real-life musical performances mentioned above, which recur throughout the series' extended duration and punctuate the entire narrative. The effect of these passages is consistent with what Werner Wolf famously defined as 'overt intermediality', that is, when a medium other than the dominant one makes an appearance with its 'typical and conventional signifiers', remaining 'distinct and quotable separately' (1999: 43). This mode coexists with its companion piece, 'covert intermediality', which Wolf illustrates with 'abstract modernist works by Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Georges Braque and others that constitute a kind of musicalized painting: while the result is still painting, music (its rhythm, certain non- or self-referential patterns) is the avowed structuring principle of the artefact' (43). In *Heimat 2,* covert intermediality is equally at play, not only for being the subject of the fable but also for the stylistic and thematic continuum between diegetic and non-diegetic worlds provided by music, which is mostly in charge, in both cases, of the same composer, Mamangakis. As in the abstract art quoted by Wolf, music, consisting of a 'music-historical panorama of the 1960s', encompassing 'dodecaphonic, aleatory, bruitist, phonetic, theatrical, and electronic music' (Schönherr 2010: 130), inflects all aspects of the *Heimat 2* episodes, including

spoken language, camerawork, editing, mixing, colour patterns and the serial structure of storytelling itself.

This musical way of thinking film is inscribed into Reitz's filmmaking career—partly fictionalised in the series—going back to his early films, when he adopted a method of writing scripts in the form of musical scores, including a self-devised notation system (Reitz 2004: 184). In *Heimat 2*, music-making often took precedence over the writing of the script, as Reitz (177) retells:

> In *Heimat 2,* music is not a matter of post-production, but a constitutive part of the action. While still in the middle of script writing, I was already in contact with Nikos Mamangakis. In many of the film scenes music is played, and these musical pieces had to be ready long before the completion of the script, so that the actors could study them.[2]

It is this combination of overt and covert intermediality, contained in Reitz's method of filmmaking, that allows for historical realism to freely migrate from a true-to-life mode of production to an entirely fictional mode of address.

I have elsewhere explored the ways in which the utilisation of other media within film can serve as a passage to physical reality, for example, by the filming of the act of painting or theatrical performances as they happen (Nagib 2018). In *Heimat 2*, this passage is opened up by music, which provides film with the proof of the material reality at its base, by means of artists who take upon themselves the difficult task of representing as fiction their actual musical skills. This procedure, uncommon in standard biopics of musicians and other artists, is embraced here as part of director Reitz's own realist pursuits. As one of the founders and intellectual heavyweights of the New German Cinema, Reitz remained faithful in the *Heimat* project to the principles of the Nouvelle Vague, so influential on his generation of filmmakers, of breaking out of the studios and taking to the streets to make their films. For him, on-location shooting brings into the ready product 'a piece of

[2] All citations in German were translated into English by the author.

life [that] really took place', as well as forcing the filmmaker to think the film according to a place that is alive and evolving (Reitz 2004: 154-55). Thus, the fictional rural village of Schabbach, the home of the Simon family at the centre of the *Heimat* cycle, was obtained by the combination of locations from a group of around ten villages in the German region of the Hunsrück, where the dialect, domestic habits, art craft and housing were painstakingly reconstituted by piecing together lost and surviving traditions. In *Heimat 2,* viewers are presented with real Munich, with its recognisable districts and landmarks, though duly modified to fit its 1960s appearance; all other secondary locations are equally real, albeit adapted to a past-time period. But even when changes were required for the representation of the past, an effort was made to avoid studio at all costs, and instead identify real apartments, houses, shops and offices, as well as real used furniture, costumes and props, to compose the sets.

This insistence on historical realism that embeds presentation within representation is probably the reason why the *Heimat* project as a whole, and *Heimat 2* in particular, has often been understood as an attempt at faithfully retelling the history of the 1960s, rather than a historically-inspired fictional story, most notably by Johannes von Moltke (2003), who laments the flaws in the series' historical account of the New German Cinema. In a book chapter entitled 'Home Again: Revisiting the New German Cinema in Edgar Reitz's *Die Zweite Heimat* (1993)', von Moltke meticulously locates and weaves together all mentions, allusions and metaphors regarding this film movement in the series, noting its defeatist, nostalgic and melancholy tone, with its focus on individual artists and their emotional and professional dramas that ascribe a secondary and rather simplified role to the political struggles so prominent in the 1960s. However, I find little justification in the demand that *Heimat 2* 'mines the 1960s for the ways in which they speak to the film-historical present in Germany', a function more typical of written essays or documentary films than of an openly fictional work like this. On the other hand, the fact that the *Heimat* project was launched in the 1980s—precisely as the New German Cinema started to disperse and decline—and continued up until very recently is the proof of its successful attempt, not simply at mourning the past, but at

giving a new lease of life to this national film movement.[3] It is the permanent actualisation of history through its own existence as a life-long film that makes *Heimat* so convincing for critics and audiences alike.[4] In short, the fact that the *Heimat* project elicits such a reality effect cannot be dismissed without further reflection.

In what follows I shall attempt to locate history in the making within historical representation in *Heimat 2* by means of an intermedial approach to film and music. I will first examine music as a structuring principle that informs camerawork, colour pattern, editing and special effects in the series' episodes. I will proceed by focusing on musician actors, who contributed to fiction the reality of their own bodies and skills. The last section will investigate the ways in which the avant-garde and serial experiments portrayed in the film combine with the serial format of *Heimat 2*, giving it a sense of presentness and continuity that enables the spectator to immerse into a kind of parallel life and advances by a few decades the addictive effect of the series available on today's streaming services.

Film as Music

[3] The first *Heimat* series enjoyed huge success around the world, but in particular in Germany, where its official TV audience rating stood at 26%, meaning tens of millions of spectators (see Skrimshire 2012 for a full account of the *Heimat* reception career). *Heimat 2* garnered stronger enthusiasm internationally – and in Italy in particular – than at home, though there are records of rapturous receptions all over Germany, in marathon cinema screenings lasting for several days (Lentz 2005: 63ff). A veritable *Heimat* cult has emerged since the launch of the first series. Thanks to it, the Hunsrück became a tourist destination, with new hotels, restaurants and shops. Few films will have elicited such profuse fan pages, such as https://www.heimat123.de/ and https://www.heimat-fanpage.de/, containing hundreds of documents, photographs, films and links to related websites. This adds to Edgar Reitz's own highly informative homepage http://www.edgar-reitz.de and his foundation's online shop, http://shop.edgar-reitz-filmstiftung.de/, where browsers can find a host of *Heimat*-related materials for sale, not least the full soundtrack recordings of all instalments. Reitz himself has given a great number of long interviews and published widely on the *Heimat* project, including the scripts of the whole cycle, totalling thousands of pages.

[4] In a lecture entitled 'Film und Wirklichkeit' (Film and Reality), Reitz gives amusing accounts of the series' reality effect, including the cases of a lady who identified her own husband in the character of Horst, in the first *Heimat* instalment; of an English couple who came to one of the villages that make up Schabbach, in the Hunsrück, looking for the tomb of the Simon family; and of a doctoral student from Mannheim who wrote a thesis on the development of amateur photography in the twentieth century using as archival evidence the cameras and photographs shown in the *Heimat* cycle (Reitz 2008: 366-7).

I would like to start by looking at *Heimat 2'*s title musical piece, because it gives us the clue, in a nutshell, to the intermedial and structuring function of music in the entire series. Composed by Mamangakis, the piece that opens and closes all episodes is a variation of the theme the composer had devised to open the episodes of the first *Heimat* series, in which it appears over the series' title and Reitz's credit as director and screenwriter, prolonging into the first narrative scene. In *Heimat 2,* the theme is restricted to the opening vignette containing the title cards in red lettering, 'DIE ZWEITE HEIMAT', that advances towards the viewer in a zoom forward, followed by the line, 'CHRONIK EINER JUGEND IN 13 FILMEN von Edgar Reitz'; at the end of each episode, the theme re-emerges over the rolling credits. The vignette contains one single static, high-angle long shot of a city easily identifiable as Munich thanks to its picture-postcard framing of the town centre, with landmarks such as the church of St Michael (St Michael in Berg am Laim) on the centre-left of the picture, enveloped in bright yellow light, and the Cathedral of Our Lady (Frauenkirche), less prominent on the centre-right. Altogether the vignette lasts for 30 seconds, but in that very short period we see the cityscape quickly going from daylight to dusk and night thanks to the use of time-lapse photography, a trick that accelerates exponentially the passage of time. Thus, the lights on the windows of the apartment buildings go on and off in split seconds, whereas in reality this process would have taken hours. The same effect applies to the clouds that race across the top of the image and the several airplanes that traverse the frame in the blink of an eye like little dots of light.

Time-lapse filming technique had become popular in the 1970s and 1980s within Reitz's circle of filmmakers, being resorted to by Reitz himself since his first *Heimat* as well as by his colleague and collaborator Alexander Kluge, in order to, as Lutze (1998: 105) suggests in relation to the latter, 'compress time so that a relatively invisible movement is revealed or an entire process becomes visible'. In *Heimat 2,* the speed that compresses the day cycle is of a different nature, and in fact aimed at capturing the 'musical' quality of the city's dynamics, even when apparently in standstill. Mamangakis's imposing musical track, involving piano, orchestra and choir, as well as a number of synthesiser effects, is entirely conventional in its quaternary beat, tonal harmonic field in

F-minor, and repetitive cord of fifth (C) and octave, with a final unresolved modulation that makes room for the introduction of the film's storyline. Meanwhile, a loud, aleatory percussive line cuts across the orchestral arrangement in complete disaccord with its regular beat. On closer inspection, however, it becomes clear that this irregular drumming is remarkably in synch with the blinking lights of the apartment buildings, and even seems to be *caused* by them. The fact that the earlier version of this title theme, used in the first *Heimat* series, had no percussion suggests that the drumming line was created for *Heimat 2* to match the city's blinking lights as captured through time-lapse photography.

By this means, the vertiginous compression of time in the vignette unveils the musical shape of Munich with its irregular beating heart that anticipates the film's main subject: music. Indeed, in the first episode, immediately after the vignette, we find protagonist Hermann Simon grieving the end of his romance with his beloved Klärchen, who met with the opposition of his family for being almost twice his age and a mere servant in the parental home. On his knees in his bedroom, Hermann vows: 1) never to love again; 2) to leave forever his Schabbach Heimat, the horrible Hunsrück, his mother and the family home; and finally, 3) to make music his one and only Heimat. Having passed his Abitur (final school exam), Hermann then departs to Munich, where he is admitted into the Musik Hochschule, or Conservatoire, and plunges into a world of music, which identifies the city with his 'musical Heimat'.

Thus the opening vignette gives us a first example of overt intermediality, in which music and film are in dialogue with each other but can be quoted separately. It is equally a case of covert intermediality, in that music and film inform each other's organisation, by combining structured and unstructured elements, so as to highlight the emergence of unpredictable real phenomena within pre-established, conventional modes of music and filmmaking. The short vignette anticipates these counteracting, unstructured events, in the form of the avant-garde, serial and aleatory music performed in reality by Hermann and his music colleagues throughout the episodes, both in overt

and covert modes, as a counterpoint to the conventions of both filmic storytelling and non-diegetic music. They constitute irruptions of presentational reality within the fable's illusionist realism, which, clearly detectable as they are, do not go as far as breaking the fourth wall or disrupting the conventional musical and filmic boundaries around them.

This method is a late and compromising development in Reitz's filmmaking career, which started with a radical adherence to music as a filmmaking grammar. Still as a student, in the late 1950s, he regularly attended concerts of New Music in Munich, as well as the series 'Musica Viva' led by symphonic composer Karl-Amadeus Hartmann. He also frequented the circle around the electronic music composer Josef Anton Riedl, a former student of Carl Orff, in whose Munich studio he had the opportunity to meet avant-garde eminences, such as Pierre Boulez, György Ligeti, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Luciano Berio and Mauricio Kagel (Reitz 2004: 181). Nikos Mamangakis, a former student at the Conservatoire where Hermann enrols in *Heimat 2,* was also a member of that group. What impressed Reitz most about electronic music production of that time was its similarity to the process of filmmaking:

> First a kind of script was sketched, and then the material was produced with sound generators and recorded. The electronic means allowed for the production of rhythmic forms that could not be played manually. The music track would come together as in the shooting of a film. (2004: 181)

On the basis of that experience, Reitz devised a method of 'scoring' for films, which garnered the admiration and support of Norbert Handwerk, the owner of Insel Film, in Munich, who gave him carte blanche to create his short experimental films. Handwerk finds an endearing representation in *Heimat 2* in the figure of Consul Handschuh, head of the production company Isar Film, whose enthusiasm for Hermann's electronic experiments is so boundless that he offers to make him the heir of his company and fortune. As for Reitz's film scoring method, it was entirely based on movement and speed, which he justifies by the fact that 'until the mid-1970s progress was

synonymous with speed and car driving' (Reitz 2004: 184). Thus, his fascination with cinematic speed, as seen in the use of time-lapse photography in the *Heimat* cycle, harks back to his beginning as filmmaker in the late 1950s. But he finally had to compromise on this kind of 'pure cinema' (123), as it resulted in 'a world of forms that are not communicative anymore' (184). He says: 'The avant-garde opened up new worlds, but – and this is its tragedy – the contact with the audiences was broken' (184).

To redress this problem, Reitz had to resort to storytelling, i.e. to the language-based film script, which brings into cinema the impurity of literature (Reitz 2004: 123). *Heimat 2* deploys a veritable catalogue of the ways in which the two methods of 'film scoring' and 'film scripting' interact, resulting in covert and overt intermediality respectively. An example is the following scene of episode 2, 'Two Strange Eyes'. Having recently arrived in Munich, Hermann attends a concert by two prominent students of the Conservatoire, Volker Schimmelpfennig (incarnated by composer and piano virtuoso Armin Fuchs) and Jean-Marie Wéber (Martin Maria Blau), who pay homage to two of Reitz's filmmaker colleagues, Volker Schlöndorff and Jean-Marie Straub. The concert is a multimedia chamber opera, with the instrumentalists and singer dressed as clowns, playing music (in reality composed by Mamangakis) on a poem by Günter Eich entitled 'Wacht auf, den eure Träume sind schlecht!' (Wake up – your dreams are bad!). Meanwhile, a wide screen on the back of the stage shows Reitz's most emblematic scored film, *Speed* (*Geschwindigkeit,* 1963) – credited in the episode to Reinhard Dörr (Laszlo I. Kish), a nod to filmmaker Reinhard Hauff, and Stefan Aufhäuser (Frank Röth). In *Speed,* 'the protagonist is the camera' (Rauh 1993: 55), for which a new technique was developed that allowed for changes in the filming speed during the shoot. In permanent movement during the piece's 13-minute duration, the car-mounted camera captures landscape images in increasing velocity until they blur into abstraction. *Speed*'s original music score was composed by Riedl, but nowadays the film is often screened as part of avant-garde music concerts by other composers (Sobhani 1997: 201). However, in the scene, this piece of 'pure cinema' and its accompanying chamber opera are not allowed to speak for themselves, as the editing frequently

cuts away from the performers to focus on the intrigue going on amidst the audience: Jean-Marie taking his seat next to Clarissa, who looks back at an anxious Hermann, who is in turn being hassled by an overbearing wannabe actress, Renate; we are also introduced to the publishing heiress, Fräulein Elisabeth Cerphal, in the audience, accidentally sitting next to Juan Subercaseaux, the actual focus of this episode, who bluntly expresses his dislike for the concert. Thanks to these fictitious goings-on in the audience, the real-life avant-garde performance, itself a self-reflexive satire, is normalised and rendered 'communicative', in Reitz's terms.

This use of storytelling as a means to facilitate access to the intricacies of avant-garde art forms resonates remarkably with the idea of 'impure cinema' once formulated by André Bazin, in his anticipation of intermedial theory in the early 1950s. For Bazin, cinema, as a mass entertainment par excellence, had the mission to popularise the other arts:

> [T]he success of filmed theatre serves the theatre, as literary adaptation serves literature…In truth, there is no competition or replacement at work, only the addition of a new dimension, one gradually lost by the other arts since the Renaissance: an audience. (Bazin 2009: 137)

'Impurity' as a 'popular' device is even more clearly deployed in a scene in the first episode. Hermann has been given the key to a rehearsal room in the Conservatoire, but finds it already occupied by a group of musicians, led by Volker and Jean-Marie, who invoke their priority use of the room. They then resume the performance of an experimental piece for two pianos and two xylophones while the camera closes in on Hermann, who is visibly riveted. Rather than leaving the spectator on their own to grapple with the intricacies of the musical piece, the film brings in Hermann's voiceover to offer an explanation:

> *How I envied the older students. They were the lords of creation, haughty, against the whole world. They were the proud prophets of the New Music. Whatever shocked the old generation, they did it.*

By interpolating this explanatory voiceover, that verbalises the music's rebellious character, this very rebellion is neutralised, while the music remains audible in the background. Real-life performance, offering the actualised evidence of a historical musical movement, is by this means integrated into narrative, while history for the few turns into storytelling for the many.

Musicians/Actors/Characters

Biographism is a key element in obtaining actualisation of history in *Heimat 2*. A great deal has been said about the ways in which Reitz brings to the screen his own experience as filmmaker and music expert in the series, including sections of his own early films, such as the aforementioned *Speed,* but also his Mexican documentary *Yucatan* (1960), the multi-camera and multi-screen experiment *VariaVision* (1965) and the faux-documentary adaptation of E.T.A. Hoffmann, *Cardillac* (1969) (see further details in Sobhani 1997). Equally decisive, however, is the way in which the cast's own talents and abilities inform both form and content of the episodes. One notable case is that of Juan Subercaseaux, played by Chilean multi-artist and polymath Daniel Smith, who introduces the subject of language 'as' music. According to autobiographical details he relays to Hermann the first time they meet in a corridor of the Conservatoire, and which coincide in all with his own self-authored online CV,[5] Juan speaks 11 languages, or 'actually ten, music being my eleventh', as he states. This first dialogue between the two is captured with enhanced focus on Juan's lips as he speaks each of the words, bringing to the spectator's awareness the German declinations and the original sound of the names of each of the ten languages he speaks. The dialogue culminates with general merriment among the surrounding students when Hermann is called to the exam room and replies out loud: 'Eisch!' ('I'), giving away his provincial origin through his dialectal pronunciation of the high-German pronoun 'Ich'.

[5] See https://heimat123.net/actors/juan.html.

This sets out the pattern prevailing across the film of the use of language as music. Not only do we follow Hermann's uphill struggle in learning High German and its impossible 'ch' sound, but we are enlightened on the choice of people's names in the series according to their resonance, as in the case of Hermann's lovers, 'Klara, Klärchen, Clarissa', that he spells out to Juan. In the Cerphal villa, called Fuchsbau (Foxhole), where musicians and filmmakers gather under the heiress's protection, a lot of the artistic exercise revolves around language, including Clarissa's singing together with Juan in Spanish, a male avant-garde duo who turn words into guttural and percussive sounds with their mouths, and a kind of 'cadavre exquis' exercise between the poet Helga Aufschrey (a nod to filmmaker Helga Sanders-Brahms) and Hermann around the fortuitous word *Katze* (cat) and its derivations, which results in an atonal song, jointly authored by Helga and Hermann (in reality, a poem by Reitz set to music by Mamangakis), and subsequently sung by Evelyne Cerphal, the heiress's niece. As well as melody, language is percussion, as conveyed by Juan's marimba-and-drums piece 'Prelude', which he rehearses in the Conservatoire's majestic concert hall. Displayed as Juan's personal and cultural expression, which is misunderstood and rejected by the Conservatoire as 'folklore', the haunting marimba melody, authored by Smith himself, then migrates to the non-diegetic realm for atmospheric effect. The marimba scene resonates with another entertaining example of phonetics turned into bruitism, which is the improvised 'spoon concert', performed at the university cantina where students, joined by Juan, break out in concerted tongue noises, slapping their cheeks, groaning, stamping then resorting to cutlery to hit all objects around—crockery, radiators, kettles, the windows—while a rapidly sliding high camera surveys the tables in the same beat of the drumming, as if under its command. As Sobhani (1997: 203) points out, this concert is 'reminiscent of a performance by John Cage in 1942, when he created a savage rhythm with his percussion group by playing…anything they could lay their hands on in an attempt to make *all* the field of audible sound available to music'.

Thus the communicative vector is music in its widest sense, governing everything, not least the central love story between Hermann and Clarissa, whose arc is drawn by the sounds emanating

from their own biographies as pianist and cellist respectively, both in real life and on screen. They first bump into each other in the Conservatoire's stairs, where they merely exchange inquisitive glances. They are then shown having separate, but near-concomitant, encounters with their celebrity music masters. Hermann's is none other than Mamangakis himself, in a cameo that allows him to pass the baton of his real-life musicianship to the hands of his fictitious alter-ego (Figure 13.1).[6] Hermann, overawed by the famous master, very tentatively shows him a short dodecaphonic piece for piano, flute and voice. To his embarrassment, Mamangakis asks him to sing the melody, which is not at all Hermann's forte, but he obliges anyway, accompanying himself on the piano. The next shot, from Hermann's point of view, shows, through the window, Clarissa down below approaching the building with her cello. The reverse shot goes back to Mamangakis, who comments that 'our great composers wrote their best works for people they loved, a woman perhaps', a veiled reproach on the formulaic dodecaphonic piece Hermann has just presented and a premonition of the love story to come.

[place Figure 13.1 here]

The next scene offers us a similar set-up with Clarissa receiving a cello lesson from her own star Professor P., an elderly man who courts Clarissa explicitly, suggesting that she is excessively devoted to her cello and should enjoy herself more as a woman (Figure 13.2). Clarissa immediately rejects this approach, which points to a kind of abusive, even sinister side to this kind of master-student relationship. Clarissa had started by playing a romantic piece, Johannes Brahms's Cello Sonata in E-minor, Opus 38, and now the professor takes up the cello to show her how the Brahms piece resonates in a piece by an exponent of atonality and dodecaphony of the Second Viennese School, Anton Webern, 'Three Little Pieces for Cello and Piano', Opus 11. He first plays a 'very male,

[6] It should not be surprising that Mamangakis has only this opportunity of dialogue, alongside a second mute appearance conducting a concert for cello and orchestra authored by Hermann, with Clarissa as soloist: he is a clumsy actor and a rare case in which dubbing was used (albeit with his own voice), most likely to camouflage the mishaps in his live utterances.

aggressive' note, which is followed by what he describes as 'a very feminine, gentle reply', during which the camera zooms in on Clarissa's face who half smiles and raises her eyes away from the professor, as the image cuts back to Hermann now walking in a corridor of the Conservatoire. In these two scenes, it is the music, as produced by two actual musicians and their instruments, that dictates the acting, editing and sound scape, giving meaning and political content to the representation of romance within the fable. More pointedly these scenes enlighten the viewer on how best to appreciate serial and atonal music, as represented by Webern's and Hermann's piece, by interweaving them with a romantic melody and a love story.

[place Figure 13.2 here]

The stunningly beautiful notes by Brahms and Webern played on the cello by Clarissa and Professor P., moreover, launch the kind of power structure dominating the relationships among the characters. Professor P. is the first example, in *Heimat 2*, of the recurrent figure of elderly, lustful mentors longing for their young, attractive pupils, such as Hermann's former teacher in Schabbach, Herr Schüller, who suddenly turns up at his Munich accommodation accompanied by one of his young sexy pupils and former Hermann colleague, Marianne Elz. Clarissa herself is supported by an infatuated, soft-spoken and mildly repulsive elderly patron, Dr Kirchmayer, an ally of her autocratic mother, who has funded her cello learning from the beginning and finally buys her a priceless antique instrument with the undisguised intention to tighten his grip on her. The unfavourable light in which these elderly men are shown, an indictment of the kind of abusive behaviour in the artistic milieu brought to light by the #MeToo movement decades later, might also be understood as a disclaimer for Reitz himself, who became involved with Salome Kammer, the actress who plays Clarissa, during the shoot of *Heimat 2,* being 27 years older than her (they remain happily married up to this day).[7] Whatever the case, the 'politics of intermediality' here, to use Jens Schröter's (2010)

[7] Age difference among couples is an interesting thematic undercurrent in *Heimat 2.* Hermann's first love, Klärchen, who is nearly twice his age, is another example, purportedly lifted from Reitz's own biography.

term, is to question the liberating power of music Hermann and Clarissa abide by to the point of renouncing love. The aggressive male voice against the subdued female response in Webern's piece, played on the cello by Professor P., translates for Clarissa into an oppressive instrument. Later in the plot, Clarissa finds herself pregnant—the father could be either Volker, her future husband, or Jean-Marie—and develops sepsis as a result of a botched abortion. In her illness, she has nightmares of cello F-holes carved on her back, which she desperately tries to get rid of by asking the same charlatan abortionist to sew her fissured skin together. The nightmare is sparked by Hermann's first concert, 'Spuren' (Traces), which should have featured Clarissa on the cello, but which she has to miss in order to have the abortion. In the actual concert, Hermann then marks Clarissa's absence in the orchestra with a live naked model, carrying the cello F-holes on her back, exactly like in Man Ray's famous photograph, 'Le Violon d'Ingres' (Ingres's Violin) (Figure 13.3). As Mattias Bauer (2012: 67) comments:

> Clarissa's body thus becomes the scene of the inscription of the experiences she suffers; at the same time, the relation to Man Ray reflects the composition principle that governs *Heimat 2.* On the visual and aural, scenic and diegetic levels of the communication of plot and meaning, assonances and resonances, correspondences and inferences are introduced, which encourage the viewer and listener to perceive recurrent motifs…

[place Figure 13.3 here]

Biographical intermediality here makes room for the political as much as for the haptic perception of the film, according to one of the two main intermedial templates defined by Pethő (2011: 99) as a 'sensual' mode, which

> invites the viewer to literally get in touch with a world portrayed not at a distance but at the proximity of entangled synaesthetic sensations, and resulting in a cinema that can be perceived in the terms of music, painting, architectural forms or haptic textures.

Clarissa will go on, in the series' latter episodes, to abandon the cello and devote herself entirely to singing. A fact collected from Kammer's own biography, this move represents, in the fable, a break with the male oppressive power and the embrace of feminism. Together with a group of female musicians she had met on a US tour, she forms a troupe which performs the climactic spectacle, 'Hexenpassion' (Witches Passion), in the closing episode, with atonal music and *Sprechgesang* composed by Mamangakis on poems by expressionist writer Else Lasker-Schüler, focusing on the trial of the peasant Katherine Lips, accused of witchcraft in 1672 in Marburg. Again here the live performance of a historical fact injects an element of presentational truth into representation. As Schönherr (2010: 123) states,

> the textual collage of the historical interrogation records from the witch trials with Else Lasker-Schüler's poems establishes a musical memory for the suffering of women under patriarchy whose artistic reenactment certainly also implies a Utopian element that points to the future.

Historicising Storytelling through Film and Music Serialism

Now the question remains of where to place the *Heimat* project, and *Heimat 2* specifically, within the development of German film history. As von Moltke (2003) rightly points out, references to the New German Cinema abound in *Heimat 2*, to the point of it being perceived by him as an attempt at historicising the movement. A closer look however discourages us from such a reading, if we consider that the film ends in 1970, when the New German Cinema was just starting to conquer the screens. Rather than developing a complete historical picture of the movement, *Heimat 2* concentrates on its nascent phase in the early 1960s. It is the period of the watershed 1962 Oberhausen manifesto, the launchpad for the Young German Cinema—which preceded the New German Cinema—that proclaimed: 'Papas Kino is tot!' (Dad's cinema is dead!), mimicking the early

Nouvelle Vague and its disdain for the *cinéma du papa.* There is no lack of allusions to this memorable event, not least with Reinhardt and Stefan distributing stickers with this slogan all over Munich. There is also an 'anti-film' screening by the duo and Rob at the Foxhole, called *Brutalität in Stein* (*Brutality in Stone),* which is actually the title of the 1961 short film directed by two key figures of the Young German Cinema, Alexander Kluge and Peter Schamoni, though the piece screened at the Foxhole is by Reitz himself. People are constantly filming in the streets of Munich, in the early episodes, to the point of film crews having become a tourist attraction, as a cab driver explains to Evelyne, a newcomer to the city. Hannelore Hoger, in the role of Fräulein Cerphal, is another New German Cinema foundational figure, who came to prominence through her acting in Alexander Kluge's films, the same applying to Alfred Edel, a recurrent actor with Kluge and Werner Herzog, who carries his own name in a short-lasting role as an eccentric intellectual drunkard. More than anyone else, Kluge is the recurrent reference here, a filmmaker and philosopher with whom Reitz collaborated as cinematographer in the landmark *Yesterday Girl* (*Abschied von gestern,* 1966) and other works. In *Heimat 2,* Kluge is personified through the amusing figure of bookworm Alex (Michael Schönborn), the eternal philosophy student, who claims to be writing three philosophical compendiums at the same time and goes about explaining the love affairs around him in terms of Heidegger, Spinoza and Adorno, while remaining himself entirely chaste.

All these details demonstrate the focus on the infancy of the New German Cinema movement, and not on its later and more important history, offering no justification to von Moltke's expectations of a full assessment of the period. In contrast, in the early 1960s, the New Music movement had reached an apex marked by a dramatic change in its political direction, and this is the true focus of attention here. As Schönherr explains, most New Music representatives in the immediate postwar period had had direct experience of the horrors of the front, an example being Stockhausen, a prominent serialist composer in the 1950s, 'who was confronted almost daily with the brutality of the battlefield as a paramedic (and who lost his mother in a concentration camp and his father in combat)' (Schönherr 2010: 111). For this generation, according to Schönherr, serialism

was convenient as a kind of 'music that eliminated any historical and personal narrative and suspended the subject from working through its own trauma, guilt, and responsibility' (111). The 1960s, however,

> appear to have been a turning point in the postwar history of New Music, which entered a new phase of critical self-reflection and openness that led to a resemanticization reflected in the stylistic and programmatic diversity of the music of that period. (Schönherr 2010: 113)

This gives the opportunity, in *Heimat 2,* for history to make a decisive appearance, through the revelation of the horrors of the Holocaust at the very centre of creativity and romance: the Foxhole. Though the place where, in the prewar years, famous artists and thinkers had assembled, including Bertolt Brecht and Lion Feuchtwanger, as Elisabeth Cerphal repeats to all her guests, the wonderful villa, at the heart of the Munich artistic district of Schwabing, turns out to have been unduly appropriated by Elisabeth's father from his Jewish publishing partner Goldbaum, who perished in the war. Goldbaum's daughter Edith, once Elisabeth's best friend, was sent to the Dachau concentration camp thanks to a tip-off by her own SS-officer husband, Gerold Gattinger, now Elisabeth's 'financial adviser' and co-inhabitant of the Foxhole. The revelation of this fact constitutes a rite of passage to the young artists, adding a sense of guilt and responsibility to their hitherto unconcerned artistic exercises. With the old Cerphal's death and before Esther (Edith's daughter) can claim her right to the property, Elisabeth finally sells it to a construction company that razes it to the ground to make room for lucrative apartment buildings, leading to the artists' disbandment and forced independence.

While the innocence of Fräulein Cerphal, the eternal student and sympathetic patroness of young talents, disintegrates—Cerphal being a homonym of *Zerfall,* or 'decay', as von Moltke (2003: 130) notes—music acquires historical and political weight. In Reinhard's episode, where he meets Esther in Venice and commits to writing a film about the loss of her mother in the concentration camp, Mamangakis's non-diegetic music is extensively replaced by Olivier Messiaen's 'Quartet for

the End of Time'. Messiaen famously wrote this piece, one of the most important of his prolific career, in 1941, while a war prisoner in Görlitz, then Germany (now Zgorzelec, Poland). This heart-wrenching, poignantly beautiful piece for piano, violin, cello and clarinet was premiered at the prison-of-war camp by Messiaen himself and other musician inmates, with decrepit instruments and under the rain, on 15 January 1941, for c. 400 enraptured prisoners. The presence of Messiaen's music in *Heimat 2* is fitting in many ways, not least for the composer's status as one of the precursors of serialism, which he passed on to dedicated students such as Boulez and Stockhausen. This historical lineage, and the pain and mourning it carries, characterises many other musical choices in *Heimat 2,* the aforementioned Brahms imbedded in Webern being a similar case of historical affiliation with both romantic and sinister undertones.

Historical continuity finds a parallel, in the series, with the space-time continuum envisaged by avant-garde music, which included the breaking of the boundaries of established categories and art forms (Grant 2001: 110ff). Atonal, serial, aleatory and electronic music, as exercised within the New Music movement in Europe, as well as the 'indeterminate music' practiced by John Cage in the US, saw no frontiers between melodic sounds and noises, and even silence, as in the Cage-inspired concert, 'Persona', in *Heimat 2,* in which the musicians set up a stop watch to one minute, which is mostly filled with the players quietly mimicking the notes, and only producing actual sounds for five seconds. As it moved into the territory of electronics, avant-garde music dissolved its boundaries with engineering, architecture, mathematics and other sciences. And by surrendering on its specificity, it opened up for Reitz the possibility of intermedial cinema, which finds common ground with other arts as well as with real life. The *VariaVision* project, funded by Consul Handschuh and plagued by mishaps which are played out in slapstick style in *Heimat 2,* is based on one of Reitz's actual experiments that had no beginning or end. Combining 16 screens, a spoken text by Alexander Kluge and electronic music by Josef Anton Riedl, the installation integrated the mediums of film, literature and music in a continuum which the spectator could appreciate for hours or minutes as they liked (Sohbani 1997: 206).

Likewise, history serves Reitz's storytelling as an open-ended process, which time-based media such as music and film can accurately represent as form and fictionalise as content. By breaking away from the standard two-hour feature format for cinema, Reitz's 'life-long film' responded to a need for change felt by many of his generation. Around the same time when the first *Heimat* series was shot, in the 1980s, Kluge gave up on the feature-length format to devote himself entirely to short essayistic documentaries for television. Rainer Werner Fassbinder, in turn, launched his TV series in 14 episodes, *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1980), bringing experimentation into a field hitherto dominated by American commercial ventures. *Holocaust* (Marvin J. Chomsky, 1978) is an example of the latter, and actually what made Reitz conceive of his own series, a move that Murray Smith (2017: 172) qualified as

> …Reitz's refusal of the full-blooded, 'Manichaean' melodrama of *Holocaust,* along with his commitment to an alternative but still emotional form of drama: a kind of synthesis of Brecht's 'epic' and 'dramatic' modes.

Combining musical serialism with the television serial format, as a mode of telling history through the evolving form of music and film, Reitz ended up anticipating the artistically (and commercially) sophisticated series of our day, which offer to the viewer a kind of parallel reality in which to immerse for months or years of 'binge watching'. In other words, the actualisation of history by means of music gives material form to the virtual medium of film. Or, in Reitz's (1996: 132) words:

> Heimat means for me something that we have lost and maybe can retrieve in cinema as Heimat *Ersatz*.

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